

# CL-150 Cohort Lesson of the Month – September 2019

As of September 2019, there are more than 7,870 Cohort lessons published in the CL-150—and counting. Let's take a look at one lesson each month to find out how language professionals are maintaining proficiency on the job with Cohorts.

## What are CL-150 Cohorts?

If you're not familiar, CL-150 Cohorts are weekly lesson streams designed specifically for USG language professionals maintaining proficiency on the job. Each lesson provides a 2-hour "workout" at a specific ILR level, based on a professionally relevant, authentic source.

Learn more about CL-150 Cohorts and try a sample lesson [here](#).

## Cohort Lesson of the Month

This month's featured lesson comes from the Mandarin Chinese ILR 3 Cohort: [ILR 3, 09/09/19: Does Learning Chinese Drive You Nuts? Check This Out! \(Culture/GreatDaily\)](#)

The screenshot shows a language learning application interface. At the top, it says "Chinese • Reading Comprehension" and "50 % Complete". Below that, there's a prompt: "Read the text on the left, then respond to the prompts on the right". The main content area is split into two columns. The left column contains a video player with a play button and a progress bar (1:40 / 4:08). Below the video, there's a title: "ILR 3, 09/09/19: Does Learning Chinese Drive You Nuts? Check This Out! (Culture/GreatDaily)". The text in the left column asks: "你见过让歪果仁最抓狂的汉语句子是什么?" and "小伙伴们都知道，中华文化博大精深，而汉语更是堪称“世界上最难掌握的语言”，把很多歪果仁都逼疯了。于是我就在某网站上发起了一个话题：你见过让歪果仁最抓狂的汉语句子是什么？没想到居然收获了500多个答案，今天我就把一些特别好玩超级逗比的网友分享贴上来给大家看看。一、知名up主“歪果仁研究协会”曾经做过一个街头采访，罗列了五个难以理解的中文句子来考研那些在中国生活了一年以上的歪果仁。". The right column is titled "Questions" and contains two questions. The first question is: "校长说，校服上除了校徽别别的。" with three options: "第一个别是不要", "第二个别是戴上去", and "第三个别是另外的". The correct answer is "以上皆对". The second question is: "今天下雨，我骑车差点摔倒，好在我一把把把把住了。请帮忙把这四个“把”正确的断句。" with three options: "我一把，把把把，住了", "我一把把，把把，住了", and "我一把，把，把，把住了". The correct answer is "我一把，把，把，把住了". At the bottom right of the questions section, there is a green "DONE" button.

All Cohort lessons are based on authentic sources, created by native speakers for native speakers. Our Cohort authors put a lot of care and creativity into their search for sources so that sustainers are immersed in the same information streams as their native speaking counterparts, including news reporting, podcasts, YouTube videos, literature, and even advertisements.

**Guaysheen, the author of this month's featured lesson, took inspiration from a very unique authentic source: XiaoAi, a Chinese voice command app.**

“I didn’t think Siri and Google could tell me Chinese jokes, so I got XiaoAi to tell me some jokes. Among them I found this challenging sentence full of homonyms: ‘毒蛇会被毒死吗?’ (Will poisonous snakes be poisoned to death?) I thought this would be a good starting point for an ILR 3 lesson. It uses simple words, but even native Chinese speakers get confused at first glance. It’s kind of like the English, ‘can you can a can as a canner can a can?’”

In the sentence, Chinese learners see the character 能 used as a noun, verb, and adjective all within the same sentence. Guaysheen used this idea as the basis for a lesson, but the next step was not to write something, because Cohort lessons are only built around authentic, native content. Instead Guaysheen went looking and tracked down an authentic article and street interview video in which Chinese learners discuss the most difficult sentences they can think of:

“I am very pleased that I found a perfect video for the lesson. This is a tough lesson but tons of fun to learn. The vocabulary is simple, but if they don’t get the grammar right, they won’t get the meaning right either. The text is the mix of grammar, double meanings, triple meanings, intonation, and punctuation.”

It’s an ideal authentic source: in addition to being fun and current, it allows Chinese learners to practice listening comprehension with many different voices and reading comprehension with tricky grammar and nuances. And since most Cohort lessons are built around recent articles on economics and international affairs, it’s a nice change of pace for learners.

**Maintaining Chinese proficiency? Complete this month’s [featured lesson](#) and see if you can conquer the toughest Chinese sentences.**

**Sustaining another language? Explore our [available Cohorts](#) and stay tuned for next month’s featured lesson for more behind-the-scenes action from our Cohort team.**