

Mistake #2 Assuming “and” = “和(hé)”

English speakers often assume that the Chinese word “和 (hé)” is equivalent to the English word “and” . This assumption is wrong.

The English word “and” can connect words (e.g. I like apple and oranges), phrases (e.g. I like playing soccer and watching movies) and sentences (I am John and I am American). However, the Chinese word “和 (hé)” can only connect words or phrases. It CANNOT connect sentences.

For example, it’ s wrong to say “I am John hé I am Amerian” . “hé” cannot be used to connect these two sentences “I am John” and “I am American” .

Now you are probably wondering, which word should I use when I want to say “I am John AND I am American.”

There are two ways to do this:

First, it’ s okay if you ONLY say “I am John. PERIOD. I am American.” Simply don’ t insert any word in between the two sentences. That’ s how most Chinese would say it: We just omit the word “and” . If you think about it, it’ s actually a bad habit in English to use “and” all the time because “and” is merely a filler word here that contributes almost nothing to the meaning of the sentence.

Second, if you feel compelled to use the word “and” , use the Chinese word “还有 (hái yǒu)” instead. “hái yǒu” means “in addition, also” . Again, it’ s really unnecessary. If you have to find a word to say “sentence + and + sentence” , use “hái yǒu” instead of “hé” .

English	Pinyin	Chinese
I can speak English and Chinese.	wǒ huì shuō yīng wén hé zhōng wén .	我会说英文和中文。 我會說英文和中文。
I like reading books and watching movies.	wǒ xǐ huān kàn shū hé kàn diàn yǐng .	我喜欢看书和看电影。 我喜歡看書和看電影。
I am John and I am American.	wǒ shì John。 wǒ shì měi guó rén .	我是John。 我是美国人。 我是John。 我是美國人。
	wǒ shì John。 hái yǒu, wǒ shì měi guó rén .	我是John, 还有, 我是美国人。 我是John, 還有, 我是美國人。