

Hello Beijing!

I landed in Beijing two weeks ago and so far my favorite thing about Beijing is the subway. It's so easy to use, even for those of us who don't speak the language yet, and it allows me to freely explore this huge city.

I'll be in Beijing until mid-December. As part of the Fulbright grant I received a Critical Language Enhancement Award which is 3-1/2 months of intensive language study in Beijing prior to beginning my research grant in Jingdezhen, China. Basically, I'm in Beijing for language boot camp. I'm here with 20 other students at a program called CET. It's based in Washington DC but has language programs in many different countries. The students in the program with me this term are undergrads wanting to improve their Mandarin.

We are in class 3-4 hours a day, 5 days a week, and I spend about 6 hours doing my homework and preparing for class. We have pledged to only speak Mandarin on campus. I don't know much Mandarin yet, but I'll speak to anyone who will listen. When someone asks me where I'm going I say, "I go buy things" because I can't remember the word for supermarket. I have difficulty remembering vocabulary, and my communication lacks nuance because I don't know much grammar. I am also learning to read and write. Writing is my favorite part because it's a lot like drawing. It's all so much to remember I feel like I'm drowning a little. It will get easier though, and I'm already experiencing some improvement. I'm glad to have this opportunity to learn as much language as I can before I head to Jingdezhen.

There are so many two-wheeled vehicles here. I snapped these for Chris.

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*I think this is an electric bicycle. Not a scooter, but a fun two-wheeled vehicle with a buddy seat.*



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*Scooter delivery service*