

COMMUNICATIVE EXCHANGES



FRAME 1

1. A: Tā shì Wáng Tàitai ma? B: Tā shì Wáng Tàitai.	Is she Mrs. Wáng? She is Mrs. Wáng.
2. A: Nǐ shì Wáng Xiānsheng ma? B: Wǒ shì Wáng Dànián.	Are you Mr. Wáng? I am Wáng Dànián.
3. A: Nǐ shì Mǎ Xiānsheng ma? B: Wǒ shì Mǎ Tíngfeng.	Are you Mr. Mǎ? I am Mǎ Tíngfeng.

Notes

§1 The marker ma may be added to any statement to turn it into a question which may be answered "yes" or "no."

Tā	shì	Wáng Tàitai.		(She is Mrs. Wáng.)
Tā	shì	Wáng Tàitai	ma?	(Is she Mrs. Wáng?)

The reply to a yes/no question is commonly a complete affirmative or negative statement, although, as you will see later, the statement may be stripped down considerably.

FRAME 2

4. A: Nǐ shì Mǎ Xiānsheng ma? B: Wǒ <u>bùshì</u> Mǎ Xiānsheng.	Are you Mr. Mǎ? I'm not Mr. Mǎ.
5. A: Nǐ shì Wáng Dànián ma? B: Wǒ <u>bùshì</u> Wáng Dànián.	Are you Wáng Dànián? I'm not Wáng Dànián.

Notes

§4 The negative of the verb shì, "to be," is bùshì, "not to be." The equivalent of "not" is the syllable bù. The tone for the syllable bù depends on the tone of the following syllable. When followed by a syllable with a High, Rising, or Low tone, a Falling tone is used (bù). When followed by a syllable with a Falling or Neutral tone, a Rising tone is used (bú).

bùfēi (not to fly)

bùféi (not to be fat)

bùfěi (not to slander)

bùfèi (not to waste)

Almost all of the first few verbs you learn happen to be in the Falling tone, and so take bù. But remember that bù is the basic form. That is the form the syllable takes when it stands alone as a short "no" answer - Bù - and when it is discussed, as in "bù" means 'not.'

Notice that even though shì, "to be," usually pronounced in the Neutral tone in the phrase búshì, the original Falling tone of shì still causes bù to be pronounced with a Rising tone: bú.

Wǒ		shì		Wáng Dànián.
(I		am		Wáng Dànián.)
Wǒ	bú	shì		Mǎ Xiānsheng.
(I		am	<u>not</u>	Mr. Mǎ.)

FRAME 3

6. A: Nǐ xìng Fāng ma? B: Wǒ búxìng Fang.	Is your surname Fāng? My surname isn't Fang.
7. A: Nǐ xìng Wáng ma? B: Wǒ bùxìng Wáng.	Is your surname Wáng? My surname isn't Wáng.
8. A: Nǐ xìng Mǎ ma? B: Wǒ búxìng Mǎ. (Wǒ) xìng Wáng.	Is your surname Mǎ? My surname is isn't Mǎ. My surname is Wáng.

Note

§8 It is quite common in Chinese - much commoner than in English - to omit the subject of a sentence when it is clear from the context.

9. A: <u>Nín guìxìng?</u> B: <u>Wǒ xìng Wáng.</u>	Your surname? (polite) My surname is Wáng.
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Notes

§9 Nín is the polite equivalent of nǐ, "you."

Guìxìng is a polite noun, "surname." Guì means "honorable." Xìng, which you have learned as the verb "to be surnamed," is in this case a noun, "surname."

Literally, Nín guìxìng? is "Your surname?" The implied question is understood, and the "sentence" consists of the subject alone.

FRAME 5

10. A: <u>Nǐ jiào shénme?</u> B: <u>Wǒ jiào Dànián.</u>	What is your given name? My given name is Dànián.
11. A: <u>Nǐ jiào Mínglǐ ma?</u> B: <u>Wǒ bújiào Mínglǐ.</u> (Wǒ) <u>Jiào Dànián.</u>	Is your given name Mínglǐ? My given name is not Mínglǐ. It's Dànián.

Notes

§10 Jiào is a verb meaning "to be called." In a discussion of personal names, we can say that it means "to be given-named."

FRAME 6

12. A: <u>Nǐ hǎo a?</u> B: <u>Wǒ hǎo, nǐ ne?</u> A: <u>Hǎo, xièxie.</u>	How are you? I'm fine, and you? Fine, thanks.
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Notes

§12 The Chinese greeting Nǐ hǎo a? is the exact equivalent of Nǐ hǎo ma?, "How are you?" Although in these two expressions the question markers a and ma are interchangeable, in any other

cases they are not. The difference in use not being a simple one will be treated later in the course.

Notice that the low tones of wǒ and nǐ are pronounced as Rising tones before the Low tone of hǎo: Nǐ hǎo a? Wǒ hǎo.

Hǎo is a stative verb, sometimes called an adjectival verb. It means "to be good," "to be well," "to be fine." It functions like the verb "to be" plus an adjective in English. Note examples on the following.

Wǒ	hǎo
(I	am fine.)
Nǐ	hǎo a?
(You	are fine ?)

The marker ne makes a question out of the single word nǐ, "you": "And you?" or "How about you?" Ta ne? would be "How about him?"

Xiè is the verb "to thank." "I thank you." would be Wǒ xièxie nǐ. Xièxie is often repeated: Xièxie, xièxie.

FRAME 7

13. A: Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi? B: (Wǒ) jiào Mínglǐ. A: Tā ne? B: (Ta) jiào Bǎolán.	What is your given name? It's Mínglǐ. How about her? It's Bǎolán.
14. A: Nǐ shì Hú Měilíng ma? B: Wǒ búshì Hú Měilíng. Wǒ xìng Hú jiào Bǎolán.	Are you Hú Měilíng? I am not Hú Měilíng. My surname is Hú (but) my given name is Bǎolán.

Notes

§13 Míngzi means "given name." Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi? is another way to ask what someone's given name or full name is.