

COMMUNICATIVE EXCHANGES



FRAME 1

1. A: Nǐmen zhùzai nǎli? B: Tā zhùzai fàndiànli, wǒ zhùzai zhèli.	Where are you all staying? He's staying in a hotel. I'm staying here.
2. A: Lǐ Xiǎoyuè ne? B: Tā zhùzai péngyou jiā.	How about Lǐ Xiǎoyuè? She's staying at a friend's house.
3. A: Tā péngyou jiā zài nǎli? B: Tā péngyou jiā zài nǎli.	Where is her friend's house? Her friend's house is over there.

Notes

1. Verb Suffix -zai. Zhùzai nǎli? literally means "live at where." The verb zài, "to be in/at/on," is used as a verbal suffix, similar to the preposition "at." It loses its tone in this position in a sentence.

Place Words. Nǎli? nǎli and zhèli are common variants of nǎr? nǎr and zhèr in non-Peking dialects of Standard Chinese. The forms with r endings are Peking dialect forms. Note particularly the difference in tone between nǎr? and nǎli? This is because -li has a basic Third tone, and the first of the two adjoining Third tone syllables changes to Second tone: nǎ-lǐ = nǎli?

Mǎ Tóngzhì xiànzài zài nǎli? (nǎr?)
Where is Comrade Mǎ now?

Wǒmen zhùzai nǎli. (nǎr.)
We are staying there.

Hú Tàitai zhùzai zhèli. (zhèr.)
Mrs. Hú is staying here.

Positional Nouns/Localizers. The bound word -li is a positional noun or localizer meaning "inside" or "within." Fàndiànli means "inside a hotel."

Wǒ zhùzai fàndiànli.

I live in a hotel.

Wǒ zhùzai tā jiāli.

I live in his house.

Context Determines the Meaning. Nīmen zhùzài nǎlǐ? may mean any one of the following depending upon the context:

Where are you staying?

Where are you living?

Where do you stay?

Where do you live?

FRAME 2

4. A: Nīmen <u>yǒu</u> <u>háizi</u> ma? B: Yǒu. (Wǒmen yǒu háizi.)	Do you have any children? Yes. (We have.)
5. A: Nīmen yǒu <u>jǐge</u> háizi? B: (Wǒmen yǒu) Sānge. (háizi)	How many children do you have? We have three children.
6. A: Nīmen yǒu jǐge <u>nánháizi</u> , jǐge <u>nǚháizi</u> ? B: (Wǒmen yǒu) <u>liǎngge</u> <u>nánháizi</u> yíge <u>nǚháizi</u> .	How many male and female children do you have? We have two boys and one girl.

Notes

4. Indicating Possession with yǒu. The verb yǒu has several usages. In this frame it means "to have." Later you will find it has additional meanings.

In B above, the first yǒu is translated as "yes." The usual way to give short affirmative answers is to repeat the verb used in the question.

Singular and Plural of Chinese Nouns. In general, Chinese nouns have the same form for singular and plural. Háizi may be either "child" or "children." Usually the context will make clear whether a noun should be translated as singular or plural, but not always. In Lesson 3 you learned that the suffix -men is attached to the personal pronouns wǒ, nǐ and tā to change them into plural personal pronouns. This same suffix -men may be used as a pluralization marker for personal nouns and titles in certain contexts (and often at the speaker's choice). Compare the following examples. Where a number (two or more) precedes the personal noun, plurality is automatically indicated.

Wǒmen yǒu liǎngge háizi.

We have two children.

Háizimen xiànzài búzài zhèlǐ. The children are not here now.

Tāmen yǒu yíge háizi.

They have one child.

Other personal nouns and titles which may carry the suffix -men:

péngyou	péngyoumen
gege	gegemen
didi	dīdimen
jiějie	jiějiemen
mèimei	mèimeimen
nǎnrén	nǎnrénmen
nǚrén	nǚrénmen
tóngzhī	tóngzhīmen
xiānsheng	xiānshengmen
tàitai	tàitaimen
xiǎojie	xiǎojiemen

Omission of Subject. In 4B, yǒu "have," the object háizi is left understood, a common Chinese pattern. It would be equally correct to give the full answer: Yǒu háizi. Wǒmen yǒu háizi. It is also correct to give the specific number of children.

5. Question Word jǐ-? In the sentence Nǐmen yǒu jǐge háizi?, jǐge is a question word. In Beijing, jǐ, "how many," is usually used only when the answer expected is 10 or less. But in many other parts of China, speakers use jǐ- regardless of the number expected in the answer.

Measures. In Chinese a noun cannot be counted or specified without the addition of a specific bound word or a measure to indicate the sort of thing specified or counted. English has similar measures, such as "head" in head of cattle, "flock" in flock of sheep, and "loaf" in loaf of bread. The measure used in a particular instance depends on the noun specified or counted.

The measure -ge is called a general measure and is used with nouns that do not have a special measure. You may find in colloquial speech that nouns that have special measures are sometimes used with -ge but this tendency is discouraged by educated speakers.

Here are the numbers 1 through 10 with the measure -ge. Note that the number 2 has a special form before a measure: liǎng-, not èr-.

Yīge, liǎngge, sānge, sìge, wǔge, liùge, qīge, bāge, jiǔge, shíge.

The words for 1, 7 and 8 (yī, qī and bā) have a Rising or Second tone before -ge because -ge is basically a Falling or Fourth tone syllable.

Apposition with yīge and liǎngge. Two or more expressions may stand in apposition to one another:

Tāmen liǎngge rén yǒu sānge
gēge.

The two of them (They two
persons) have three older
brothers.

Wǒ yíge rén shì Qīngdǎorén.

I alone (I one person) am from
Qīngdǎo.

In the first sentence, tāmen, "they," and liǎngge rén, "two persons," are the same subject.

6. Nán-, nǚ-. The words nán- "male," and nǚ- "female," are known as bound forms (BF) or bound words. These are word elements carrying individual meaning and thus are distinct from particles. Nán- and nǚ- appear in such compounds or combinations as: nánrén "man," nǚrén "woman," nán péngyou "boyfriend" or "male friend," nǚ péngyou "girlfriend," nán de "male persons," nǚ péngyou "girlfriend," nán de "male persons," nǚ de "female persons."

Tā yǒu nán péngyou, wǒ yǒu
nǚ péngyou.

She has boyfriends, I have
girlfriends.

Nǐ de péngyou shì nán tóngzhì
háishì nǚ tóngzhì?

Is your friend a male comrade
or a female comrade?

Zhāng Tóngzhì shì nán de
háishì nǚ de?

Is Comrade Zhāng a man or a
women?

FRAME 3

7. A: (Nǐ) jiāli yǒu shénme rén? B: (Yǒu) wǒ tàitai gēn sānge hái zi. Nǐ jiāli ne?	What people are (there) in your family? There're my wife and three children. How about in your family?
8. A: (Yǒu) wǒ fùqin, mǔqin, gēge, jiějie gēn mèimei.	There're my father, mother older brother(s), older sister(s) and younger sister(s).
9. B: (Nǐ) yǒu méiyǒu dìdi? A: (Wǒ) Méiyǒu. (dìdi)	Do you have a younger brother? I don't have a younger brother.

Notes

7. Nǐ jiāli. Literally this phrase means "in your home" (jiā,

"home," -lǐ, "in"). In this sentence it is extended to mean "the people in your home" or "your family."

Shénme rén? and jǐge rén? "What people?" and "How many people?." In B's reply to the question Nǐ jiāli yǒu shénme rén? he gave the expected answer detailing not the number of people, but who they specifically were. Had the question been Nǐ jiāli yǒu jǐge rén? his answer would have been the specific number, i.e., Yǒu wǔge rén. In all likelihood, he would have gone on to detail the individuals: Yǒu wǒ, gēn wǒ tàitai, yě yǒu sānge háizi. In other words, both forms of questioning are essentially the same, and expect the same answer. Yǒu jǐge rén? simply expects the number, but anticipates the details.

Impersonal Use of yǒu. This is the second usage of yǒu. In Frame 2 it meant "to have." In this so-called impersonal construction Nǐ jiāli yǒu shénme rén? it becomes "What people are (there) in your family?"

In exchanges 7B and 8A, the verb yǒu is translated in the answer as "there's." Some English speakers may find this translation too colloquial. The answer can also be translated by simply listing the family members, with no English verb. However, some Chinese do keep the verb in the answer to a question, whereas in English the tendency is to leave it out.

Words for "And." Chinese has several words for "and." Gēn is "and" when joining nouns or noun phrases. Yě is "and" when joining verbs, verb phrases or whole sentences. Compare:

Wǒ bú xìng Lǐ, <u>yě</u> búxìng Lù,	I'm not surnamed Lǐ, <u>and</u> I'm
wǒ xìng Lǚ.	not surnamed Lù; I'm
	surnamed Lǚ.

Yǒu wǒ mǔqīn <u>gēn</u> wǒ tàitai.	There's my mother <u>and</u> my
	wife.

Chinese tends to use a word for "and" when the noun phrases being joined are not parallel, and not to use one when the phrases are parallel:

NOT PARALLEL

Yǒu wǒ tàitai <u>gēn</u> sānge háizi.	There're my wife and three
(noun) (noun)	children.

PARALLEL

Yǒu liǎngge nánháizi, yíge nǚháizi.	There are two boys and
(noun) (noun)	one girl.

While "and" is often omitted in Chinese, it may be added for emphasis between nouns and between noun phrases, just as in English. Compare the following:

Wǒ yǒu gēge, yě yǒu dìdi.

I have older brothers and younger brother too.

Wǒ yǒu liǎngge gēge yíge dìdi.

I have two older brothers and one younger brother.

Wǒ yǒu gēge dìdi, yě yǒu jiějie mèimei.

I have older and younger brothers, and older and younger sisters too.

("Brothers" can be expressed by combining gēge dìdi without gēn. The same can be done with "sisters," jiějie mèimei. Also see note on Exchange 8.)

8. Family Members. Chinese is much more precise than English in its terms for family members. There is not just one word for "brother" or "sister," but words for "older brother," "younger brother," "older sister" and "younger sister." While gēge dìdi, jiějie mèimei are frequently used to form "brothers" and "sisters," you will later learn more specific words which combine both older and younger brothers, and older and younger sisters.

9. Negation Using méi. Nǐ yǒu méiyǒu dìdi? The Verb méiyǒu, "Don't Have." All the verbs you've learned so far form the negative with bù (bùhǎo, bùjiào, bùxíng, bùshì, and búzài). Méi is the negative used with yǒu. Bù is never used with yǒu.

Méiyǒu is frequently abbreviated to méi. You will see this usage in future lessons. Compare:

Tā méiyǒu tàitai.
Tā méi tàitai.

He is not married.

Wǒ méiyǒu Zhōngguó míngzi.
Wǒ méi Zhōngguó míngzi.

I don't have a Chinese name.

Tā méiyǒu hái zi.
Tā méi hái zi.

He doesn't have children.

In questions:

Nǐ yǒu tàitai méiyǒu tàitai?
Nǐ yǒu tàitai méi tàitai?

Do you have a wife?

Nǐ yǒu méiyǒu Zhōngguó míngzi? Do you have a Chinese name?
Nǐ yǒu Zhōngguó míngzi méiyǒu?
Nǐ yǒu Zhōngguó míngzi méi Zhōngguó míngzi?