

COMMUNICATIVE EXCHANGES



FRAME 1

1. A: Nǐ shì Měiguó rén ma? B: Wǒ shì Měiguó rén.	Are you an American? I'm an American.
2. A: Hú Xiānsheng, nǐ shì Zhōngguó rén ma? B: Wǒ shì Zhōngguó rén.	Mr. Hú, are you Chinese? I'm Chinese.
3. A: Wáng Tàitai, nǐ shì Yīngguó rén ma? B: Wǒ búshì Yīngguó rén.	Mrs. Wáng, are you English? I'm not English.

Notes

§1 Rén is a noun, "person" or "persons;" so Měiguó rén is a noun phrase, literally "America person." Sometimes, "however, it is preferable or necessary to translate expressions of this sort as adjectives or prepositional phrases.

Tā shì Měiguó rén.	He is <u>an American</u> . (noun phrase)
Tā shì Zhōngguó rén.	He is <u>Chinese</u> . (adjective)
Tā shì Shāndōng rén.	He is <u>from Shāndōng</u> . (prepositional phrase)

Although Měiguó rén is translated here as "an American," in other contexts it may be translated as "the American," "American," or "the Americans." Later you will learn the various ways to indicate in Chinese whether a noun is definite or indefinite, singular or plural.

The syllable -guó usually loses its tone in expressions like Měiguó rén. (Some speakers drop the tone when the word stands alone: Měiguó.)

FRAME 2

4. A: Hú Xiǎojie, nǐ shì <u>Èguó</u> rén ma? B: Búshì. A: Nǐ shì <u>Fǎguó</u> rén ma? B: Shì.	Miss Hú, are you Russian? No. Are you French? Yes.
5. A: Mǎ Tóngzhì shì <u>Déguó</u> rén ma? B: Búshì, tā búshì Déguó rén. A: Tā shì <u>Cháoxiān</u> rén ma? B: Shì, tā shì Cháoxiān rén.	Is Comrade Mǎ German? No, he is not German. Is he Korean? Yes, he is Korean.

Notes

§4 The short "yes" answer shì is really the verb "am" of the longer, more complete answer. The short "no" answer búshì is really the "am not" of the longer answer.

It is possible to reduce a "no" answer to bù (note the Falling tone), but polite usage requires that you follow it up with a more complete answer. Both the short answers shì and búshì are commonly followed by complete answers.

For instructional purpose, sometimes a short answer such as shì "yes" búshì "no," etc. is given without a following complete answer in order to show various ways of responding to a question.

FRAME 3

6. A: Nǐ shì <u>něiguó</u> rén? B: Wǒ shì <u>Rìběn</u> rén.	What is your nationality? I'm Japanese.
7. A: Tā shì <u>něiguó</u> rén? B: Tā shì <u>Yuènnán</u> rén.	What is his nationality? He is Vietnamese.

Notes

§6 Něi - meaning "which" in questions is a bound form - a form which cannot stand alone - not a free form.

Něi-	guó	rén
(which)	country	person)

FRAME 4

8. A: Nǐ shì nǎrde rén? B: Wǒ shì Shànghǎi rén.	Where are you from? I'm from Shànghǎi.
9. A: Tā shì Fāng Bǎolán de xiānsheng, tā shì Qīngdǎo rén.	He is Fāng Bǎolán's husband, he is from Qīngdǎo.
10. A: Tā shì nǎrde rén? B: Tā shì Shāndōng rén.	Where is he from? He's from Shāndōng.
11. A: Nǐ shì nǎrde rén? B: Wǒ shì Jiāzhōu rén.	Where are you from? I'm a Californian.

Notes

§8 Nǎr is the question word "where." The syllable -de is the possessive marker; it functions like the English possessive ending 's.

nǎr	-de	rén
(where	's	person)

Therefore, this means "a person of where," or "a person from where."

§9A To clarify the role of -de, note the following example in which it functions exactly as the English possessive ending 's:

Fāng Bǎolán	-de	xiānsheng
(Fāng Bǎolán	's	husband)

FRAME 5

12. A: <u>Nimen</u> shì Rìběn rén ma? B: Shǐ, wǒmen shì Rìběn rén.	Are you (pl.) Japanese? Yes, we are Japanese.
A: <u>Tāmen</u> shì Hánguó rén ma? B: Búshì, tāmen shì Yuènnán rén.	Are they Koreans? No, they are Vietnamese.

Notes

§12 The suffix -men is attached to personal pronouns wǒ, nǐ and tā and changes them into plural personal pronouns, wǒmen "we, us," nimen "you (plural)" and tamen "they, them."

FRAME 6

13. A: Fāng Xiānsheng, nǐ tàitai shì něiguó rén? B: Tā shì Yīngguó rén.	Mr. Fāng, what's your wife's nationality? She's British.
14. A: Tā búshì Déguó rén ma? B: Tā búshì Déguó rén. Zhāng Tàitai shì Déguó rén.	Isn't she German? No, she isn't German. Mrs. Zhang is German.

§13 Nǐ tàitai. Notice the absence of the possessive -de. When the relationship is close and intimate as with "husband" and "wife," the -de is usually dropped following nǐ, wǒ and tā, but it is not incorrect to add de. The same is true of the plural forms of these pronouns.

§14 Adding ma to the end of a negative statement makes a negative question.

Tā (He/She)	bú not	shì is	Déguó rén. German.)	
Tā (He/She)	bú not	shì is	Déguó rén German	ma? ?)

OR: (He/She is not German.)
(Isn't he/she German?)