

LESSON NOTES

# Learn Cantonese in Three Minutes #22 Asking "Where" in Cantonese

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# GRAMMAR

The focus of this lesson is Asking "Where" in Cantonese

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## Topic 1: How to use "where"

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Sentence from the lesson:

你喺邊?

*nei5 hai2 bin1?*

"Where are you?"

1. Here we learned how to ask "Where are you?" Do you still remember how to say it?  
It's: *nei5 hai2 bin1?* literally "you are where?"
2. So let's break down this question: *nei5* is "You" *hai2* means "are" And *bin1* is "where?" All together it is *nei5 hai2 bin1?*
3. So in Cantonese, "Where" is mainly translated as *bin*
4. So for example, if you want to ask "Where do you live?" You will say *nei5 zyu6 bin1?* literally "You live where?" And if you want to ask "Where are you going?," it is *nei5 heoi3 bin1?* literally "You go where?"

## Topic 2: Variations of "where" in Cantonese

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Sentence from the lesson:

*nei5 hai6 bin1 dou6 lei4 gaa3 ?*

"Where do you come from?"

1. Be careful, in some questions it's more natural to say *bin1 dou6* instead of just *bin1*. For example, if you want to ask "Where do you come from?" you will use *nei5 hai6 bin1 dou6 lei4 gaa3 ?* instead of just *nei5 hai6 bin1 lei4 gaa3 ?*  
*nei5* → "you"  
*hai6* → "are"  
*bin1 dou6* → "where"  
*lei4* → "come"  
*gaa3* → ending particle that emphasizes interrogative words

### Language Tip

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There is no solid rule on when you need to use *bin1 dou6* instead of *bin1*, but usually for longer questions, using *bin1 dou6* would be safer. And of course, you can always substitute *bin1* with *bin1 dou6*, and it would not be wrong. It's just a habit that Cantonese speakers have—they tend to shorten their speech!

For example:

*nei5 hai2 bin1?* can become *nei5 hai2 bin1 dou6?*

*nei5 zyu6 bin1?* can become *nei5 zyu6 bin1 dou6?*

*nei5 heoi3 bin1?* can become *nei5 heoi3 bin1 dou6?*