

LESSON NOTES

Learn Cantonese in Three Minutes #24 Asking "Who" in Cantonese

CONTENTS

2 Grammar

24

GRAMMAR

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

Topic 1: How to use "who"

Sentence from the lesson:

你後面個靚女係邊個？

nei5 hau6 min6 go3 leng3 neoi5 hai6 bin1 go3?

"Who is the woman behind you?"

1. Imagine you want to ask your friend who is the attractive girl behind him. You can ask: *nei5 hau6 min6 go3 leng3 neoi5 hai6 bin1 go3?*

2. So let's break it down:

nei5 hau6 min6 means "behind you"

go3 leng3 neoi5 means "the pretty girl"

hai6 means "is"

And last, *bin1 go3* which is the basic translation of "Who?" in Cantonese.

Notice that the sentence structure is totally opposite to English.

3. So in Cantonese, "Who" is mainly translated as *bin1 go3* to ask about someone's identity.

For example:

keoi5 dei6 hai6 bin1 go3?

"Who are these people?"

Opposite to English, the interrogative word "Who" is placed in the last position, while the subject "they," *keoi5 dei6*, is placed in first position, followed by the verb.

zi1 bat1 bin1 go3 gaa3?

"Whose pen is it?"

If we break down this question, it is:

zi1 bat1 meaning "this pen"

hai6 meaning "is"

bin1 go3 meaning "who" or in this case "whom"

gaa3 is the final particle for making an assertion.

4. The word *bin1 go3* is also the translation for "whom." You don't need to make any changes. For example:

nei5 tung4 bin1 go3 lei4?

"Whom are you coming with?"

Here *tung4* means "be with." And *bin1 go3* stays the same.

Language Tip!

If someone that you didn't expect is knocking at your door, the common question you can ask is *bin1 go3 aa3 ?* before opening the door. This means "Who is it?" in a very common way.