

02400 Grammar Notes for In the Train: A Reference Material

1. Basic Sentence Structure

The basic sentence structure of a Hindi sentence is:

subject – something about the subject or direct/indirect object – verb

Subject	Something about subject or Direct/ Indirect Object	Verb
मेरा नाम my name	केटी Katy	है is
मैं I	अमेरिका से from America	हूँ am
यह this	मेरा बेटा my son	है is
मैं I	आग्रा Agra	जा रही हूँ am going
हम भी we too	आग्रा Agra	जा रहे हैं are going
मैं भी I too	ताज महल Taj Mahal	देखूंगी will see
आप you	हमारे साथ with us	जाएंगे will go

2. Questions

In all languages there are two types of questions.

A. Yes/No Questions

The first type is called a “yes-no question” because it must be answered by either ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘maybe’. In English this type is marked by the question intonation pattern and by reversing the order of the subject and verb. The

statement “You will go with us” becomes a question “Will you go with us?” by changing the order of ‘you’ and ‘will’.

B. Questions for Information “Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? How Many? How Much?”

The second type of question asks for specific information and is marked, in English, by a “question word” at the beginning of the sentence. Question words include “when, why, where, why, what, how many, how much, how”. Examples of such questions are “Where are you going? What is your name? How old are you?” You cannot answer a question of this type with the words ‘yes, no’ or ‘maybe’.

Hindi yes-no questions

Yes-no questions in Hindi are quite a bit easier than in English. You change a statement into a yes-no question by simply putting the word **क्या** in front of the statement.

आप अमेरिका से हैं।	You are from America.
क्या आप अमेरिका से हैं?	Are you from America?
वह सेकन्ड ग्रेड में है।	He is in second grade.
क्या वह सेकन्ड ग्रेड में है?	Is he in second grade?
जेकब का भाई है।	Jacob has a brother.
क्या जेकब का भाई है?	Does Jacob have a brother?
आप के पास फ़ोटो हैं।	You have photos.
क्या आप के पास फ़ोटो हैं?	Do you have photos?

Often in conversational Hindi, the **क्या** is left off and the question is marked only by the intonation and context. Examples of that in our text include:

जेकब की बहिन भी है?	Is there a sister also for Jacob? Does Jacob have a sister, too?
छोटा भाई है?	Is it a little brother?
आप हमारे साथ जाएंगे?	Would you go with us?

Hindi Questions for Information

With most questions for information in Hindi the question word comes after the subject and before the verb. You may have noticed that the English question words almost all start with 'wh'. Similarly the Hindi question words all start with क.

कौन? Who?

क्या? What?

कब? When?

कहां? Where?

क्यों? Why?

कैसे? How?

कितने? How Many? How Much?

You may have noticed that the word for 'what' (क्या) is the same word that turns a statement into a yes/no question. If the क्या comes at the beginning of the sentence it will almost always turn the statement into a yes/no question. In other places it will translate as "what". Examples from the text of Questions for Information follow:

आप you	किस कन्ट्री से what country from	हैं are
	किस स्टेट से what state from	
वह he	किस क्लास में what class in	है is
वह he	कहां where	है is
आप you	कहां where	जा रहे हैं are going
उसका नाम that one's name; his name	क्या what	है is

3. The Verb होना “to be”

You've learned the present tense verb conjugation for होना “to be” as a song sung to the tune of *The Farmer in the Dell*. In English, if you read or say the word 'I' it's a good bet that the next word will be 'am'. The two words 'go together'. Similarly, if you see the word 'he' the next word is fairly likely to be 'is'. And you will simply never hear 'he am'. The counterpart to this in Hindi is मैं हूँ. If the sentence starts with मैं it will almost certainly end with हूँ. The full conjugation follows. These combinations should be memorized.

मैं हूँ	I am
तुम हो	you are (familiar)
यह है	he is; she is; it is (close)
वह है	he is; she is; it is (farther away)
हम हैं	we are (also used for 'I am')
आप हैं	you are (respectful)
ये हैं	they are (close)
वे हैं	they are (farther away)

Study the following sentences from the text to understand how this transfers to real sentences.

Subject	Object or something about the subject	Verb
मैं I	चार साल की a four year old	हूँ am
मैं I	अमेरिका से America from	हूँ am
तुम You	कितने साल की how many years old	हो are
वह He	सात साल का a seven year old	है is
वह He	किस क्लास में what class in	है is
वह He	कहाँ where	है is
यह This	मेरा बेटा my son	है is
इसका नाम His (this one's) name	रवि Ravi	है is
आप You	किस कन्ट्री से what country from	हो are

4. Post Positions

In English we have prepositions like 'in, at, of, for, behind, with' etc. This kind of word tells us the relationship between two things or between a person and a thing. Often the relationship is spatial and tells where something is relative to another thing e.g. 'The milk is in the glass'.

Sometimes it is a relationship of possession, 'The flag of that country'.

Sometimes it is a relationship of accompaniment, 'Will you go with us?'

In English the prepositions come before the noun, e.g. 'in the glass'. That's why they are called prepositions – pre position, the position before.

In Hindi there is a class of words called post positions. They too tell us about relationships between words in the sentence. They're called post positions because they come after the noun.

किस कन्ट्री what country	से from	from what country
सेकन्ड ग्रेड second grade	में in	in second grade
अपने पिताजी his father	के साथ with	with his father

5. Showing Possession or Ownership

In English we use the verb 'have' or 'has' to show ownership or possession. We say 'I have a son' or 'He has a car' or 'Do you have some photos?'

Hindi has no verb to show this relationship of possession. Instead it uses several other sentence types to express this idea. For family relationships it uses a 'There is/there are' structure.

	मेरा एक बेटा my one son	है there is	'I have a son' 'there is my one son'
क्या yes/no question marker	जेकब की बहिन भी Jakob's sister also	है there is	'Does Jacob have a sister too?' 'Is there Jacob's sister also?'
	जेकब की बहिन Jacob's sister	नहीं है there is not	'Jacob doesn't have a sister'. 'There isn't a sister for Jacob'.

For smaller personal possessions, like pencils, books and photos, Hindi uses the post position **के पास** which literally means 'near'.

क्या	आप के पास	फ़ोटो	हैं	'Do you have photos?' 'Are there photos near you?'
yes/no question marker	you near	photos	there are	

The post position **का** (and its feminine form **की**, and its plural form **के**) can often be translated with the possessive 's. Examples follow:

जेकब की बहिन भी	है?	'Does Jacob have a sister too?' 'Jacob's sister also there is?'
Jacob's sister also	there is	
जेकब का भाई	है	'Jacob has a brother.' 'Jacob's brother there is'.
Jacob's brother	there is	

Possessive Pronouns, 'My, His'

The word **मेरा** means 'my', so it is yet another way to show possession.

मेरा नाम केटी है।	'My name is Katy'.
मेरा नाम गीता है।	'My name is Gita'.

The word **इसका** means 'his' or 'her' or 'this one's' when talking about someone or something that is close to the speaker.

The word **उसका** means 'his' or 'her' or 'that one's' when talking about someone or something that is farther away from the speaker.

उसका नाम his name	क्या what	है? is	'What's his name?' 'What's that one's name?'
उसका नाम his name	जेकब Jacob	है is	'His name is Jacob.' 'That one's name is Jacob.'