

# UNIT SIX

## Existence sentences

**A** Sentences expressing existence normally begin with a time or location word (or expression). The most common involve the verb 有 **yǒu** (see *Basic Chinese*, Unit 11), which follows the time/location word (or expression) and is then itself followed by the relevant noun:

昨天有一场足球赛。 **zuótiān yǒu yī chǎng zúqiúsài**  
There was a football match yesterday./Yesterday, there was a football match.

大学对面有一家书店。 **dàxué duìmiàn yǒu yī jiā shūdiàn**  
There is a bookshop opposite the university./Opposite the university there is a bookshop.

这儿没有人。 **zhèr méi yǒu rén**  
There is no one here. (*lit.* Here there are no people.)

**B** Existence is also conveyed: (1) by verbs marked with 着 **zhe** to express an observable or describable situation or (2) by verbs (usually followed by direction indicators) marked by 了 **le** to indicate a completed action which has brought about the appearance (i.e. coming into existence) or disappearance (i.e. going out of existence) of something or somebody. These sentences follow the pattern of time or location word (or expression) + verb + noun (see **A** above), though location rather than time is the more common reference with verbs marked by 着 **zhe**.

(1) Verbs with 着 **zhe**:

花园里开着玫瑰花。 **huāyuán li kāi zhe méiguìhuā**  
There are roses blooming/flowering in the garden.  
(*lit.* In the garden are blooming/flowering roses.)

墙上挂着一张地图。 **qiáng shang guà zhe yī zhāng dìtú**  
There is a map hanging on the wall.  
(*lit.* On the wall is hanging a map.)

床下放着一双拖鞋。 **chuáng xià fàng zhe yī shuāng tuōxié**

There is a pair of slippers under the bed.

(lit. Under the bed is placed a pair of slippers.)

老太太面前搁着一篮鸡蛋。 **lǎotàitai miànqián gē zhe yī lán jīdàn**

There is a basket of eggs in front of the old lady.

(lit. In front of the old lady is placed a basket of eggs.)

屋顶上停着一只鸟。 **wūdǐng shàng tíng zhe yī zhī niǎo**

There is a bird on the roof. (lit. On the roof is resting a bird.)

(2) Verbs indicating direction or incorporating direction markers followed by 了 **le**:

昨天来了两个朋友。 **zuótiān lái le liǎng gè péngyou**

Two friends came yesterday. (lit. Yesterday came two friends.)

家里走了三个客人。 **jiā li zǒu le sān gè kèrén**

Three visitors/guests left my house. (lit. House left three visitors/guests.)

空中飞来了一群鸟。 **kōngzhōng fēi lái le yī qún niǎo**

A flock of birds came flying over. (lit. In the sky flew over a flock of birds.)

水面上游来了一只天鹅。 **shuǐmiàn shàng yóu lái le yī zhī tiān'ér**

A swan came gliding over the water. (lit. On water came swimming a swan.)

上个星期搬走了两家人。 **shàng gè xīngqī bān zǒu le liǎng jiā rén**

Two families moved away last week. (lit. Last week moved away two families.)

图书馆借走了一万册书。 **túshūguǎn jiè zǒu le yī wàn cè shū**

Ten thousand volumes have been borrowed from the library.

(lit. Library have been borrowed ten thousand volumes.)

树篱下钻出了一只松鼠来。 **shùlí xià zuān chū le yī zhī sōngshǔ lái**

A squirrel emerged from under the hedge. (lit. (From) under the hedge came/burrowed out a squirrel.)

广场上聚集了数千人。 **guǎngchǎng shàng jùjí le shù qiān rén**

A few thousand people gathered at the square.

突然开来了- 辆大坦克车。 **túrán kāi lái le yī liàng dà tǎnkèchē**

Suddenly there came a big tank.

- (3) A common complement for verbs marked by 了 **le** is 满 **mǎn** 'full of', 'filled with', 'packed with':

箱子里塞满了衣服。 **xiāngzi li sāi mǎn le yīfu**  
The box was (packed) full of clothes.

桌子上堆满了书。 **zhuōzi shang duī mǎn le shū**  
The table was piled high with books.

礼堂里挤满了人。 **lǐtáng li jǐ mǎn le rén**  
The hall was packed with people.

圣诞树下放满了礼物。 **shèngdànshù xià fàng mǎn le lǐwù**  
There were lots of presents under the Christmas tree.

- (4) Verbs such as 生 **shēng** 'to be born', 死 **sǐ** 'to die', 增加 **zēngjiā** 'to increase', 减少 **jiǎnshǎo** 'to decrease', etc. which have the inherent meaning of coming into or going out of existence also follow this pattern:

他们家生了个胖娃娃。 **tāmen jiā shēng le gè pàng wáwa**  
Their family has a new baby. (*lit.* In their family has been born a chubby baby.)

动物园里死了一头大象。 **dòngwùyuán li sǐ le yī tóu dàxiàng**  
An elephant died in the zoo. (*lit.* In the zoo died an elephant.)

董事会增加了两个成员。 **dǒngshìhuì zēngjiā le liǎng gè chéngyuán**  
There were two new directors on the board (of directors).  
(*lit.* On the board of directors were added two members.)

上海减少了交通事故。 **shànghǎi jiǎnshǎo le jiāotōng shìgù**  
There has been a reduction of traffic accidents in Shanghai.  
(*lit.* Shanghai reduced traffic accidents.)

我们办公室(里)裁减了人员。 **wǒmen bàngōngshì (li) cáijiǎn le rényuán**  
There has been a reduction of staff in our office. (*lit.* (In) our office reduced staff.)

- (5) Similarly the adjectives 多 **duō** 'many' and 少 **shǎo** 'few' can be used as verbs in this construction:

果盘里少了一只苹果。 **guǒpán li shǎo le yī zhī píngguǒ**  
An apple was missing from the fruit bowl.

家里多了一条狗。 **jiā li duō le yī tiáo gǒu**  
The family got a new dog. (*lit.* (In) the family was increased (by) a dog.)

**C** Existence may also be expressed with the verb 是 **shì**. While 有 **yǒu** indicates that something exists among other things, 是 **shì** indicates that something(s) is/are the sole occupant(s) of the place indicated. 是 **shì** is often accompanied by 都 **dōu**:

地上都是水。 **dì shang dōu shì shuǐ**

The ground is covered with water. (*lit.* On the ground all is water.)

商店里都是人。 **shāngdiàn lǐ dōu shì rén**

The shop is/was crowded with people. (*lit.* In the shop all is people.)

她身上都是泥。 **tā shēn shang dōu shì ní**

She was covered in mud. (*lit.* She on body all was mud.)

是 **shì** also implies that something is permanently associated with a location, with the emphasis being on the location rather than the fact of existence:

足球场对面是饭馆。 **zúqiúchǎng duìmiàn shì fànguǎn**

There is a restaurant opposite the football ground. (*lit.* Opposite the football ground is a restaurant.)

饭店下面是酒吧间。 **fàndiàn xiàmiàn shì jiǔbājiān**

There is a bar below the restaurant. (*lit.* Below the restaurant is a bar.)

This in some contexts may therefore mean that the thing that exists has definite reference:

宿舍后边是图书馆。 **sùshè hòubian shì túshūguǎn**

Behind the dormitory is the library.

卧室旁边是洗澡间。 **wòshì pángbiān shì xǐzǎojiān**

Next to the bedroom is the bathroom.

## Exercise 6.1

Complete the following Chinese sentences with 是 **shì**, 都是 **dōu shì** or 有 **yǒu**:

- 今天上午 \_\_\_\_\_ 汉语考试。 **jīntiān shàngwǔ** \_\_\_\_\_ **hànyǔ kǎoshì**  
There is a Chinese examination this morning.
- 明天 \_\_\_\_\_ 一个音乐会。 **míngtiān** \_\_\_\_\_ **yī gè yīnyuèhuì**  
There will be a concert tomorrow.
- 箱子里 \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ 衣服。 **xiāngzi li** \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ **yīfu**  
The box was full of clothes.
- 八点半 \_\_\_\_\_ 一班火车。 **bā diǎn bàn** \_\_\_\_\_ **yī bān huǒchē**  
There's a train at half past eight.
- 广场上 \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ 鸽子。 **guǎngchǎng shang** \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ **gézǐ**  
The square is full of pigeons.

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- 6 银行前面 \_\_\_\_\_ 汽车站。 **yínháng qiánmian** \_\_\_\_\_ **qìchēzhàn**  
There's a bus stop in front of the bank.
- 7 门前 \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ 玫瑰花。 **mén qián** \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ **méiguīhua**  
There are roses everywhere in front of the door.
- 8 我家对面 \_\_\_\_\_ 小李的家。 **wǒ jia duìmiàn** \_\_\_\_\_ **xiǎo lǐ de jia**  
Xiao Li's house is opposite my house.

Exercise 6.2

Replace 有 **yǒu** in the Chinese sentences below with the appropriate verb + 着 **zhe** phrase chosen from the list below:

- 游着 **yóu zhe**    放着 **fàng zhe**    亮着 **liàng zhe**    拿着 **ná zhe**  
站着 **zhàn zhe**    挂着 **guà zhe**    长着 **zhǎng zhe**    藏着 **cáng zhe**

- 1 湖面上有一只天鹅。 **húmiàn shang yǒu yī zhī tiān'ér**  
There is a swan on the lake.
- 2 山下有一个小伙子。 **shān xià yǒu yī gè xiǎohuǒzi**  
There is a young man at the foot of the hill.
- 3 柜子里有一盒非常贵重的首饰。 **guìzi li yǒu yī hé féicháng guìzhòng de shǒushi**  
There is a box of extremely valuable jewellery in the cabinet.
- 4 教室墙上有一块黑板。 **jiàoshì qiáng shang yǒu yī kuài hēibǎn**  
There is a blackboard on the classroom wall.
- 5 果盘里有很多水果。 **guǒpán li yǒu hěn duō shuǐguǒ**  
There (is/are) a lot of fruit(s) in the fruit bowl.
- 6 学校东面有一棵大树。 **xuéxiào dōngmiàn yǒu yī kē dà shù**  
There is a large tree on the east side of the school.
- 7 屋子里有灯光。 **wūzi li yǒu dēngguāng**  
There is a light on in the room.
- 8 他手里有一封信。 **tā shǒu li yǒu yī fēng xìn**  
He has a letter (in his hand).

Exercise 6.3

Complete the following Chinese sentences with the appropriate verb + 满 **mǎn** phrase chosen from the list below:

- 装满 **zhuāng mǎn**    坐满 **zuò mǎn**    塞满 **sāi mǎn**  
长满 **zhǎng mǎn**    挤满 **jǐ mǎn**    充满 **chōng mǎn**

- 1 The bus is packed with passengers.  
公共汽车上 \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ 了乘客。  
**gōnggòng qìchē shang** \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ **le chéngkè**
- 2 The hall is full of people.  
礼堂里 \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ 了人。 **lǐtáng li** \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ **le rén**

- 3 The bottle is full of wine.  
瓶子里 \_\_\_\_\_ 了酒。 **píngzi li \_\_\_\_\_ le jiǔ**
- 4 The garden is full of flowers.  
花园里 \_\_\_\_\_ 了花。 **huāyuán li \_\_\_\_\_ le huā**
- 5 The air is full of smoke.  
空气里 \_\_\_\_\_ 了烟雾。 **kōngqì li \_\_\_\_\_ le yānwù**
- 6 The fridge is full of food.  
冰箱里 \_\_\_\_\_ 了食物。 **bīngxiāng li \_\_\_\_\_ le shíwù**

## Exercise 6.4

Complete the Chinese sentences below with a verb + 来 lái/走 zǒu complement phrase to match the English translation:

- 1 The museum has bought a lot of cultural relics.  
博物馆 \_\_\_\_\_ 了很多文物。  
**bówùguǎn \_\_\_\_\_ le hěn duō wénwù**
- 2 Dark clouds filled the sky.  
空中 \_\_\_\_\_ 了一大片乌云。  
**kōngzhōng \_\_\_\_\_ le yī dà piàn wúyún**
- 3 Two parcels were sent off this morning.  
今天早上 \_\_\_\_\_ 了两个包裹。  
**jīntiān zǎoshang \_\_\_\_\_ le liǎng gè bāoguǒ**
- 4 A criminal escaped (逃 táo) from the prison.  
监狱里 \_\_\_\_\_ 了一个犯人。 **jiānyù li \_\_\_\_\_ le yī gè fànrén**
- 5 The shop sold over a hundred computers this month.  
这个月店里 \_\_\_\_\_ 了一百多台电脑。  
**zhè/zhèi gè yuè diàn li \_\_\_\_\_ le yī bǎi duō tái diànnǎo**
- 6 Two families moved into the village.  
村子里 \_\_\_\_\_ 了两户人家。  
**cūnzi li \_\_\_\_\_ le liǎng hù rénjiā**

## Exercise 6.5

Translate the following sentences into Chinese, using an existence construction:

- The tree is laden with pears.
- A flock of seagulls flew over the surface of the sea.
- There are green fields (田野 **tiányě**) all along the road.
- A lot of fresh vegetables have been delivered to the market.
- There is dirt all over his trousers.
- The station is crowded with passengers.
- A great deal of furniture was taken away last week.
- There isn't a drop of wine in the bottle.