

Q and A of the Week 你问我答

Saying yes and no

怎么说是和不是



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Rob: *(Talking to someone on the phone)* "yes, yes No, no, of course, yes..."

Li: Mmm, Rob, the programme's started. We're waiting for you.

Rob: "...yes...no! OK, thanks very much, bye." Sorry about that Li, I was just getting this week's question. We can start now!

Li: OK, 大家好, 我是杨莉。 欢迎收听《你问我答》节目。

Rob: And I'm Rob and this is where we hope to answer your questions about the English language. And this week's question is about saying yes and no that's what the phone call was about!

Li: I see. 今天的问题是关于点头 yes 和摇头 no. 这太简单了。That's easy.

Rob: Not necessarily. Samantha from Beijing has told us "I've heard that 'yes' and 'no' have different intonation. And with different intonations come different meanings. Could you please help me? I want to learn how to pronounce each intonation and their meanings. Thanks."

Li: Thanks Samantha. Well, yes, we can help, can't we?

Rob: We can. They are two small words but they can imply many things depending on how you say them – your intonation.

Li: 啊, 你说不同的语调可以代表不同的意思? But Rob, yes means yes and no means no, right?

Rob: No! Let's start with yes. We can say it to respond positively to a question. Like this:

Examples:

Man: *Do you like my new shoes; I got them in the sales?*

Woman: *Yes – they're very nice.*

Man: *Will you marry me?*

Woman: Yes!

Li: She said yes!!! 刚才我们听到的 yes 都是肯定的 yes 对吧?

Rob: Yes. And you can say yes to agree with a positive statement too.

Examples:

Man: *I've worked so hard this year, I think I deserve a holiday.*

Woman: *Yes, you do.*

Li: 如果同意一个人的观点，那么说 yes 就行了。So Rob, do I deserve a holiday too? I have worked hard.

Rob: Hmm. This is how someone may answer that question using yes with different intonation...

Examples:

Woman: *I've worked really hard; don't you think I deserve a long holiday?*

Man: *Yes – but, you haven't worked as hard as Jane. She's been working long hours recently.*

Woman: *Yes –but*

Rob: So that's saying yes with some hesitation or doubt.

Li: 如果你回答 yes - but 这就暗示，事情没这么简单或者并不是很肯定。Rob, I guess you have more examples, yes?

Rob: That's a good example Li of using yes at the end of a question. This makes the question sound like a statement. Like this:

Example:

Man: *So you'll have that report finished by Friday, yes?*

Li: 我们刚才听到的是以 yes 做为问句的结尾，但其实这句话听起来更像已经下了结论。说了怎么多的 yes, Shouldn't we discuss the word no?

Rob: Yes! We say no to answer a question negatively. For example, to refuse something. Like this...

Examples:

Woman: *Would you like to come to the cinema with me tonight?*

Man: *No thanks, I'm busy.*

Li: 如果我们同意其他人的反对观点，那么我们可以用 no, 这和汉语的语法不一样。汉语里我们用 yes 是，英语里就用 no. Like this...

Examples:

Man: *I don't find learning Chinese very easy.*

Woman: *No, I don't either.*

- Rob:** That's using *no* to agree with a negative statement.
- Li:** 用 **no** 表示赞同他人的否定句。举个例子说吧，如果某个人对你说，不要忘了给我打电话啊？那你怎么回答？你就说 **No I won't forget** 意思是说，不会的，我不会忘记的。
Phew, you have got to be careful how you say yes and no.
- Rob:** Yes. And finally saying *no* can mean something completely different...
- Example:**
Man: *Sorry madam, there are no seats left on the next flight.*
- Rob:** A *no* before a noun, means, not any. Got it?
- Li:** I think so. 在名词前用**no**, 意思是完全的，全部的没有。比如，一个位子都没有了
no seats, not any seats. Any more examples Rob?
- Rob:** Sorry Li, we've got no more time. Hopefully we've made things a bit clearer for Samantha.
- Li:** I'm sure she'll say **yes!** 如果你有英语语法难题，请和我们联系，我们的邮箱是 questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk
- Li:** There goes the phone again.
- Rob:** I'll get it. "Hello. Yes...no, nothing...yes...oh yes, yes please. See you there. Bye."
- Li:** Sounds interesting.
- Rob:** It was. I've been asked out for dinner tonight at a posh restaurant.
- Li:** Oh, can I come too?
- Rob:** No. Sorry!
- Li & Rob:** Bye bye.