

# Lesson 9

## “Wh” Questions

### Vocabulary

-á	Suffix (any): one who does or makes; doer of; maker of
bebáa	interrogative pronoun
bo	mountain
dan	language
dim	container
e-	Prefix (any): science of
hothul	grandparent [ho- (one generation removed) + thul (parent)]
lawida	to be pregnant
om	to teach
shon	peace

We are introducing two new affixes. “Affix” is a generic term for prefixes (added to the beginning of words) and suffixes (added to the end of words). The term “affix” also includes infixes (added into the middle of words), which English doesn’t use but Láadan does somewhat.

The prefix “e-” means “science of” and is similar in meaning to the English suffix “-ology.” The suffix “-á” means “doer” or “one who...” and is rather like the English suffixes “-er” and “-ist.” You can form many useful words with the suffix “-á” and the prefix “e-”. For example, you can begin with “shon,” the word meaning “peace;” “shoná” means “peacemaker,” “eshon” means “peace science,” and “eshoná” would then be “peace scientist.” Similarly, from “om,” “to teach,” we have “omá,” “teacher” and “ehom,” “education” and “ehomá;” this last refers to a specialist in education who is not herself necessarily a teacher.

### “Wh”-Questions

[Verb (Neg) CP–S]

The subject of the lesson is Wh-questions (a very English term that owes its form to the fact that most English question words start with “wh”), questions that cannot be answered with “yes” or “no.” They are very simply formed in Láadan, but look so different from their English counterparts that they are likely to be awkward for English speakers at first.

Formally, all questions begin with “Báa.” Less formally, since we have a form of the word “báa” embedded in the interrogative pronoun, “bebáa,” there can be no confusion that it’s a question being posed; therefore, in casual speech and writing we can omit the initial “Báa.”

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In the interrogative pronoun, the interrogative “báa” is attached to the pronoun “be.” Since “bebáa” (who/what) is a pronoun, it also has plural forms “bebáazh” (who/what, few/several) and “bebáan” (who/what, many). These plural forms will be used less often than the singular—only when the questioner has reason to expect that more than one thing will satisfy her query. Plurality in an interrogative pronoun may seem foreign to English speakers, but it does provide additional opportunities to mark the plural—such opportunities being relatively rare in Láadan.

Additionally, if the speaker wishes to limit her query to persons or animals of only one gender, it is perfectly feasible to incorporate one of the gender suffixes: bebáahizh (who/what, single, female); bebáahid (who/what, single, male); bebáazhizh (who/what, few/several, all female); bebáazhid (who/what, few/several, all male); bebáanizh (who/what, many, all female); bebáanid (who/what, many, all male). Of course, the plural gendered forms are limiting the entire group that would answer the question to the gender specified; if the speaker wished to include both genders, she would not use a gender suffix to limit her question.

## Examples

Bíi thal shon wa.	Peace is good.
Báa thal shon?	Is peace good?
Báa thal bebáa?	Who/what is good?
Thal bebáa?	Who's/what's good?
Bíi om with wáa.	The person teaches.
Báa om with?	Does the person teach?
Báa om bebáa?	Who/what teaches?
Om bebáa?	Who/what teaches?
Bíi meháya withizh wa.	The women are beautiful.
Báa meháya withizh?	Are the women beautiful?
Báa meháya bebáazh?	Who/what (few/several) are beautiful?
Báa meháya bebáan?	Who/what (many) are beautiful?
Meháya bebáazh?	Who're/what're (few/several) beautiful?
Meháya bebáan?	Who're/what're (many) beautiful?
Bíi laya ra dim wi.	The container clearly is not red.
Báa laya ra dim?	Isn't the container red?
Báa laya ra bebáa?	What/who isn't red?
Laya ra bebáa?	Who/what isn't red?

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# Exercises

Translate the following into English.

- 1 Baa laya bebáa?
- 2 Baa medi bebáazh?
- 3 Baa míi bebáa?
- 4 Baa om bebáa?
- 5 Baa mehal bebáan?
- 6 Baa lawida bebáa?

1 En:

2 En:

3 En:

4 En:

5 En:

6 En:

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**Transform the following into “Wh”-questions. Translate into English before and after the transformation.**

- 7 Bii balin with wa.
- 8 Bii thal shon wi.
- 9 Bii mehóoha hothul wa.
- 10 Bii medibáa len wa.
- 11 Bii héeya omá wáa.
- 12 Bii áya bo wa.

7 En:

La:

En:

8 En:

La:

En:

9 En:

La:

En:

10 En:

La:

En:

11 En:

La:

En:

12 En:

La:

En:

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**Translate the following questions into Láadan. Then answer each question in Láadan with the supplied word and translate your answer into English.**

- |    |                            |           |
|----|----------------------------|-----------|
| 13 | What (few/several) thrive? | plant     |
| 14 | What is alien?             | language  |
| 15 | What is furry?             | clothing  |
| 16 | Who follows?               | Teresa    |
| 17 | Who (many) needlework?     | sibling   |
| 18 | What is open?              | container |

13 La: \_\_\_\_\_  
 La: \_\_\_\_\_  
 En: \_\_\_\_\_

14 La: \_\_\_\_\_  
 La: \_\_\_\_\_  
 En: \_\_\_\_\_

15 La: \_\_\_\_\_  
 La: \_\_\_\_\_  
 En: \_\_\_\_\_

16 La: \_\_\_\_\_  
 La: \_\_\_\_\_  
 En: \_\_\_\_\_

17 La: \_\_\_\_\_  
 La: \_\_\_\_\_  
 En: \_\_\_\_\_

18 La: \_\_\_\_\_  
 La: \_\_\_\_\_  
 En: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes

1 What is red? 2 Who (several) speak? 3 Who is amazed? 4 Who teaches? 5 Who (many) work? 6 Who is pregnant?  
 7 The woman is old. Baa balin bebbá? Who is old? 8 Peace is good (obviously). Baa thal bebbá? What/who is  
 good? 9 The grandparents are weary. Baa mehooha bebbá? Who/what are weary? 10 We (many) question. Baa  
 medibá bebbá? Who (many) are questioning? 11 The teacher is afraid. Baa héeya bebbá? Who is afraid? 12 The  
 mountain is beautiful. Baa áya bebbá? What/who is beautiful?  
 13 Baa methá bebbá? Bii methá dala wa. The plants thrive. 14 Baa né bebbá? Bii né dan wi. The  
 language is alien. 15 Baa shane bebbá? Bii shane bud wi. The clothes are furry. 16 Baa doth bebbá? Bii doth  
 Theresa wa. Teresa follows. 17 Baa medathim bebbá? Bii medathim hena wa. The sisters needlework. 18 Baa  
 u bebbá? Bii u dim wa. The container is open.