

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #12

Responding to Questions in Spanish, Part 1

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FORMAL SPANISH

1. A: ¿De dónde viene?
2. B: Vengo de Seattle.
3. A: ¿De dónde es usted?
4. B: Soy de San Francisco.

ENGLISH

1. A: Where are you coming from?
2. B: I'm coming from Seattle.
3. A: Where are you from?
4. B: I'm from San Francisco.

VOCABULARY

Spanish	English	Class	Gender
soy	I am	verb	n/a
usted	you (formal)	pronoun	
venir	to come	verb	
de dónde	from where	interrogative adverbial phrase	
ser	to be (permanent characteristics)	verb	

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Soy de los Estados Unidos. "I am from the United States."	¿Usted es Mexicano? "Are you Mexican?"
Ustedes hablan bien. "You all speak well."	Gracias por su ayuda. "Thank you for your help."
¿De dónde es usted? "Where are you from?"	Soy de los Estados Unidos. "I am from the United States."

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

¿De dónde?

We use *¿De dónde?* to ask the origin of something, as in "from where." A similar expression is *desde dónde*, which stresses the question of where exactly someone is coming from. For example, you may say I come from Seattle, and someone may ask in surprise *¿Desde Seattle?* as suggesting that it's a great distance from Seattle to Mexico.

Vengo de...

Vengo de... means "I come from." It could mean "I am originally from...," but it is actually more common to express places that we are just coming from now. *Vengo* is the first-person form of the verb *venir* ("to come").

Soy de...

Soy de... means "I am from." Use it to talk about your origin, as in *soy de Seattle* ("I am from Seattle."). You may also say *vengo de...* ("I come from..."). *Ser* ("to be") differs from the verb *estar* ("to be") in that it refers to permanent, as opposed to temporary, conditions, such as being Mexican, being a man, etc.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This lesson Is to Teach You the Use of the Interrogative Phrase *De Dónde* ("Where From").

¿*De dónde viene? Vengo de Seattle.*

"Where are you coming from? I'm coming from Seattle."

De dónde is composed of the preposition *de* and the adverb *dónde*. *De dónde* must always be followed by a verb and by a direct object (article + noun). Sometimes the direct object is implied by the conjugation of the verb itself, so it is not necessary to add it, as in ¿*de dónde es?* and ¿*de dónde viene?* which refer to the formal second person *usted*. The former of these two questions refers to the place one lives, whereas the latter refers to the place one is coming from.

For Example:

Pronoun + Adverb	Verb	Direct Object
¿ <i>De dónde</i>	soy ("am I")	<i>yo?</i> (*"I")
¿ <i>De dónde</i>	eres ("are you")	<i>tú?</i> (*"you")
¿ <i>De dónde</i>	es ("is")	<i>él/ella?</i> ("him"/"her")
¿ <i>De dónde</i>	es ("are")	<i>usted?</i> (*"you," formal)

Pronoun + Adverb	Verb	Direct Object
¿ <i>De dónde</i>	<i>vengo</i> ("come")	<i>yo?</i> (*"I")
¿ <i>De dónde</i>	<i>vienes</i> ("come")	<i>tú?</i> (*"you")
¿ <i>De dónde</i>	<i>viene</i> ("comes")	<i>él/ella?</i> ("him"/"her")
¿ <i>De dónde</i>	<i>viene</i> ("come")	<i>usted?</i> (*"you," formal)

When you answer the question *de dónde* ("from where"), you must start with the same verb as the question, but you must conjugate it according to the personal pronoun. See the following examples.

For Example:

Personal Pronoun	Verb	Preposition + Answer
Yo* ("I")	soy ("am")	de México ("from Mexico")
Tú* ("You")	eres ("are")	de Estados Unidos ("from USA")
Él* ("He")	es ("is")	de la ciudad ("from the city")
Usted* ("You, formal")	es ("are")	de Japón ("from Japan")

Personal Pronoun	Verb	Preposition + Answer
Yo* ("I")	vengo ("come")	de México ("from Mexico")
Tú* ("You")	vienes ("come")	de Estados Unidos ("from USA")
Él* ("He")	viene ("comes")	de la ciudad ("from the city")
Usted* ("You, formal")	viene ("come")	de Japón ("from Japan")

* In these cases, the personal pronoun is not necessary, since it is already implied by the conjugation of the verb. Use the pronoun only for adding extra emphasis on the subject.

For Example:

1. *Yo vengo de México.*
"I come from Mexico."
2. *Ella es de Estados Unidos.*
"She is from the USA."

Examples From This Dialogue

1. *¿De dónde es usted? Soy de San Francisco.*
"Where are you from? I'm from San Francisco."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

How to Avoid Jail in Mexico

It is important to act very polite when talking to official authorities in Mexico to avoid being spotted as suspicious. Police and migration officers are often under pressure, as they are obliged to enforce strict rules, so make sure to speak properly and clearly when dealing with them.