

LESSON NOTES

Absolute Beginner S3 #24

Talking about family in Spanish

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INFORMAL SPANISH

1. ASHLEY: ¿Tienes hermanos?
2. JORGE: Sí, tengo un hermano.
3. ASHLEY: ¿Y cuántos años tiene?
4. JORGE: Mi hermano tiene veinte años.

ENGLISH

1. ASHLEY: Do you have any brothers or sisters?
2. JORGE: Yes, I have a brother.
3. ASHLEY: And how old is he?
4. JORGE: My brother is twenty years old.

VOCABULARY

Spanish	English	Class	Gender
y	and	coordinating conjunction	
cuánto, cuánta	how much, how many	adverb	masculine
hermano	brother	noun	masculine
hermanos	siblings, brothers or sisters	noun	masculine
tener	to have	verb	

veinte	twenty	numeral	
un	a, one	article	masculine
años	years	noun	masculine

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>Tú y yo somos amigos. "You and I are friends."</p>	<p>¿Cuánto es veinte menos siete? "How much is twenty minus seven?"</p>
<p>Tengo un hermano mayor. "I have an older brother."</p>	<p>Elena tiene tres hermanos. "Elena has three siblings."</p>
<p>Ellos tienen demasiada basura en su jardín. "They have too much garbage in their garden."</p>	<p>Tengo dos hermanos y una hermana. "I have two brothers and one sister."</p>
<p>Ella tiene amigas. "She has girlfriends."</p>	<p>Llegué al paradero con las justas. Veinte segundos después pasó el micro. "I arrived at the bus stop by the skin of my teeth. Twenty seconds later, the bus came."</p>
<p>Tengo un amigo. "I have a friend."</p>	<p>Tengo 18 años. "I'm 18 years old."</p>

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

hermanos ("siblings" (both genders)) or "brothers" (excluding sisters)

We use *hermanos* both in a literal way and figuratively to refer to other humans as part of a community (brotherhood). In Mexico, you'll often hear *¿cómo estás hermano?* ("How are you, brother?"), which denotes comradeship. We say *es como un hermano/hermana* ("he/she is like a brother/sister") to say we have a close connection to someone.

¿Cuántos años? ("How many years?"/"How old?")

We use *¿Cuántos años?* to ask people their age. Alternatively, we can ask *¿Qué edad tienes?* ("What is your age?")

veinte ("twenty")

Veinte is an adjective that in this case modifies the noun *años* ("years"). In Mexico, children are considered teenagers from age thirteen until they become twenty.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is to Teach You the Verb *Tener* ("to Have") and Its Conjugations.

Sí, tengo un hermano.

"Yes, I have a brother."

Let's review all the present tense conjugations for the verb *tener* in the first, second, and third person singular:

Subject	Verb	"English"
Yo	<i>tengo</i>	"I have"
Tú	<i>tienes</i>	"you have"
Él/ella	<i>tiene</i>	"he/she has"
Usted	<i>tiene</i>	"you (formal) have"

Tener is a useful verb that we can use for both declaring possession, as in *tener algo* ("to have something"), and declaring a condition, as in *tener hambre* ("to be hungry"), *tener sed* ("to be thirsty"), and *tener sueño* ("to be sleepy"). Study the following table:

Possession

Subject	Verb	Direct Object	"English"
<i>Yo</i>	<i>tengo</i>	<i>una casa</i>	"I have a house."
<i>Tú</i>	<i> tienes</i>	<i>una casa</i>	"You have a house."
<i>Él/ella</i>	<i>tiene</i>	<i>una casa</i>	"He/she has a house."
<i>Usted</i>	<i>tiene</i>	<i>una casa</i>	"You (formal) have a house."

Condition

Subject	Verb	Direct Object	"English"
<i>Yo</i>	<i>tengo</i>	<i>hambre</i>	"I am hungry."
<i>Tú</i>	<i> tienes</i>	<i>sed</i>	"You are thirsty."
<i>Él/ella</i>	<i>tiene</i>	<i>veinte años</i>	"He/she is twenty years old."
<i>Usted</i>	<i>tiene</i>	<i>razón</i>	"You (formal) are right."

For Example:

1. *Yo tengo hambre.*
"I am hungry."
2. *Yo tengo interés.*
"I am interested."

Examples From This Dialogue

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1. *Mi hermano tiene veinte años.*
"My brother is twenty years old."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Safe Questions to Ask in Mexico

It is okay to ask family members about their age, but don't ask strangers and especially not women. There are other questions you can ask safely, such as those about profession, siblings, place of origin, ancestry, etc. Make sure your first interactions with others are always on safe topics, and try to avoid questions that may reveal the socioeconomic background of your conversation partner (especially "Where do you live?"), since it can make people feel uncomfortable, given that Mexico remains pretty much a socially segregated country.