I. PLACE SV NP

[locaive sentences]

A. PLACE V-著 NP
   "In/at/on PLACE was/were V-ed NP"
   "In/at/on PLACE was/were V-ing NP"

->a. 靠窗戶擺著兩張書桌，每張桌子的前邊有一把椅子。
    Against the window were placed two desks, and in front of each desk was a chair.

->b. 門旁邊放著兩個書架。
    At the side of the door were placed two bookcases.

->c. 櫃子里掛著一些衣服。
    In the closet were hanging a few clothes.

d. 牆上掛著一張/一幅畫兒。

CAUTION: "Posture" verbs don't work with an inanimate NP, unlike in the English counterpart.

*PLACE 站著 NP (=inanimate) e.g., In the corner stood an old bookcase.

*PLACE 坐著 NP (=inanimate) e.g., On the bookcase sat a stack of papers.

*PLACE 躺著 NP (=inanimate) e.g., On the table lay several books.

B. PLACE 有 NP
   "There was/were NP at/in/on PLACE"
   "In/at/on PLACE there was/were NP"

->a. 房間里有一些家俱。
    There was some furniture in the room.
    The room had some furniture.
    In the room was some furniture.

Caution: NP must be non-specific (e.g., 一些、一個 NP, rather than 那個、我的 NP).

->b. 靠窗戶擺著兩張書桌，每張桌子的前邊有一把椅子。
    Against the window were placed two desks, and in front of each was a chair.

->c. 書桌的旁邊是床，床上有被子和毯子。
    To the side of each desk was a bed, and on each bed was a comforter and a blanket.
- d. 床前有兩個衣櫃，....
   In front of the beds were two wardrobes/closets.
- e. 房間里沒有空調嗎？
   There's no air-conditioning in the room?
- f. 餐廳旁邊有一個小商店，賣日用品和文具。
   Next to the cafeteria there's a small shop that sells daily necessities and stationery supplies.
- g. 我們這層樓有三台洗衣機和三台烘乾機。
   There are three washers and three driers on our floor.
- h. 我聽說附近有很多飯館，...
   I hear there are a lot of restaurants in the area,
- i. ...還有一家中國餐館呢。
   ...and there's even a Chinese one.

C. PLACE 是 NP       "There's NP at/in/on PLACE"

- a. 書桌的旁邊是床，床上有被子和毯子。
   To the side of each desk was a bed, and on each bed was a comforter and a blanket.

b. 新生宿舍前面是一條大馬路，后面是一條河。
c. 我們家后面是一個非常大的公園。
d. 進了飯店的大門，前面是小商店，后面是餐廳。

Usage note: NP 在 PLACE vs PLACE V-著/是/有 NP

Note that the function of these three locative constructions is typically to introduce an NP which is new information. This contrasts with "NP 在 PLACE," in which "place" is the new information. In other words, when using PLACE V-著/是/有 NP, you are answering the question "What is there?"
By contrast, when using the NP 在 PLACE" pattern, you are answering the question "Where is NP?"

In summary:
Q: Where is NP?     Q: What is there?
A: NP 在 PLACE   A: PLACE V-著/是/有 NP
(NP= old information)       (NP= new information)

The following English constructions accomplish the same thing by putting old information first (information the listener is presumed to know about), followed by new information (i.e., information the listener is presumed not to know):

a. On the table were three books. VS. (The) three books were on the table.
b. There were three books on the tables VS. " " 
2. X 对 Y 熟悉
   "X is familiar with Y(= non-human)"

   X 对 Y 不熟悉
   "X is not familiar with Y(= non-human)"

   X 对 Y 一點都不熟悉
   "X is not the least bit familiar with Y(=non-human)'

->a. 約翰對學校已經比較熟悉。
   Yuen was already quite familiar with the school.

b. I'm not familiar with Chinese restaurants in this area.
c. I'm not familiar with Taipei roads.
d. I'm a graduate of that university, so I'm very familiar with it.
e. He's not the least bit familiar with Beijing.
f. I'm very familiar with the libraries at Grinnell College.
Caution: Don't use this construction to express familiarity with people.

   Don't say this,
   *我對她不熟悉。
   I'm not familiar with her.

   Instead, say this:
   我跟她不熟/很熟。
   I'm (not) familiar with her.

3. 恐怕
   "I'm afraid,..."
   "Seems to me that..."

->a. 那住這兒恐怕很不方便吧？
   Then it must be really inconvenient to live here, huh?

   COMMENT:
   b. 昨天的考試他一點兒都沒準備。
   c. 不知道他最近怎麼老沒有胃口。
   d. 我的房間熱得很，不知道為什麼。

   TRANSLATE PROMPTS and SOLICIT RESPONSE
   e. Downstairs there are a lot of people waiting to do laundry.
f. My dorm is so noisy I can't study!

4. 那（麼）....
   "Then, ..."
   "Well then, ...."
   "So..."

   (respond to prompts under 恐怕 above)
5. (X) 聽說
"X hears/heard that..."
"I hear that..."

->a. 我聽說附近有很多飯館，哪家中國餐館的菜很地道？
   I hear there are a lot of restaurants that have authentic Chinese food?

b. I hear all three driers downstairs are broken.
c. I hear all three washing machines downstairs are broken, too.
d. I hear the cafeteria in the dorm is not that great.
e. I hear good furniture is very, very expensive in the U.S.
f. I hear that store's comforters and blankets are all sold out.

6. 比較 SV
"relatively/fairly/rather SV"

->a. 約翰對學校已經比較熟悉。
   Yuehan was already relatively familiar with the school.

->b. 聽說這棟樓設備比較舊，...
   I hear the facilities in this building are relatively old.

->c. ...廁所、浴室也比較小。
   And the bathroom and showers are fairly small.

d. She's relatively familiar with Beijing.
e. I rather like living off-campus.
f. The on-campus stationery store is rather expensive.

CAUTION: "比較 SV" is not interchangeable with "X 比 Y SV." I.e., it is not used to compare X and Y, but rather to qualify the SV.

Don't say this
?I'm tall, I'm older brother is fairly tall.

To mean this:
I'm tall, and my older brother is even taller.

Instead, say this:
I'm tall, and my older brother is even taller than me.
I'm tall, and my older brother is even taller.
I'm tall, and my older brother is even taller.

So, how would you say these?
j. 你們的宿舍比我們的安靜得多。
k. His Chinese is good, but his little brother's is even better.
l. This T-shirt is fairly cheap.
m. She's more familiar with Beijing than I am.
n. Living on-campus is cheaper than living off-campus.

7. 一般 SV/VP "generally speaking SV/VP"

->a. 聽說學校餐廳的飯一般都不太好。
    I hear the food at the school cafeteria is generally not too good.

QUESTION/COMMENT: RESPONSE:
b. 你上次到紐約覺得那兒的人客氣嗎？
c. 中國的大學畢業生都會一點英文嗎？
d. 校外的房子安靜嗎？