Describing Places:

In Arabic, we do not say a place “has” something (like “my house has three doors”). We use the word في to say literally “in it”. There are two ways of phrasing this. Be sure to keep them straight and not produce some kind of hybrid which won’t be recognized or understood:

* البيت فيه ثلاثة بواب

*literally: the house, in it are three doors*

* في البيت ثلاثة بواب

*in the house are three doors*

The key point to remember is that in the first example, you need the word “it”. This will be either ه or ها depending on the gender of the place. If you left the ه off the first sentence, it would not make any sense.

Note also that في could be replaced by any other preposition, if the the thing is not “in” the place:

* أمام البيت حديقة جميلة

*in front of the house is a lovely garden*

Because this construction has no verb, it needs ليس كان or سيكون for the negative, past or future, respectively.

* أمام البيت كانت حديقة جميلة

*in front of the house was a lovely garden*