

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

There are three basic types of questions:

1 Wh-Questions

or Question word questions The answer to the question is 'Information'

STRUCTURE

Question word + helping verb (auxiliary verb) + subject + main verb

Question Word	Auxiliary Verb	Subject	Main Verb		Answer Information
Where	do	you	live?		In Paris.
When	will	we	have	lunch?	At 1pm.
Exception! verb <i>to be</i> simple present and simple past					
Where			is	Bombay?	In India.
How			was	She?	Very well.

USAGE:

what is used to ask about general information:

What is your name? My name is Tony.
What age are you? I am 21 years old
What do you do? I am a student.
What time is it? It is quarter past three
What is your address? 123, King Street ...

It also used to ask about actions:

What are you doing? I am watching TV.
What happened after I left? We continued the game.

what kind of is used to ask about specific information:

What kind of car did you buy? I bought a Ford.

what... for is used to ask about purpose:

What are you here for? I'm here to tell you the whole truth.

what... like is used to request for description (things and people):

What's the weather like? It is sunny.
What does he look like? He is tall with short black hair and moustache.

What and **how** used to ask about measurements:

(age/depth/height/length/width)
What height is he? How tall is he? He is two meters in height.
What is the weight of the package? How heavy is it? It is about 5 kilos in weight.
What size does she take in shoes? She takes a size 39 in shoes.

In conversation it would be more usual to say:
how old/deep/high/tall/long/wide?

why is used to ask the reason for or purpose of something:
Why were you late? Because my car broke down.
Why did you do that? To take revenge.

where is used to ask about place:
Where does he live? He lives in Newtown.

which is used to ask about choice from a limited number:
Which doctor did you see? I saw Dr. Jones.
Which button do I press? The red one.

who is used to ask about the name, identity or function of one or more people:
Who is that woman? She is Mrs Keaton, the new headmistress.
Who are you phoning? To my brother.

whom (formal) is used instead of 'who' as the object of a verb or preposition:
Whom did they invite? They invited both of us.
To whom should I write? To the editor.

when is used to ask about time:
When are you going home? I am going home now.
When did you arrive? I arrived at 5 pm.

whose is used in questions to ask who something belongs to (possessions):
Whose house is that? It's the mayor's.

how is used to ask about the way or the manner
How do you get to the town from here? I get to the town by bus.
How does this machine work? It works by pressing this button.

-to ask about somebody's health /feeling:
How are you? I am fine.
How is she feeling? She is feeling better.

-to ask for description:
How was your trip? It was very exciting.
How did they play? Very bad.

how can be used with:
-adjectives:
How strong is he? He is very strong.

How important is the meeting? It is not so important.
How far is the next garage? It is about half a mile.

-Much and many
How much money have you spent? We have spent \$1000.
How many children does he have? He has two children.

-Adverbs
How often do you go swimming? Twice a week.
How soon can he come? In five minutes.

2 Auxiliary Questions (Yes/No Questions)

The answer to the question is 'Yes' or 'No'

STRUCTURE

auxiliary verb + subject + main verb

AUXILIARY VERB	SUBJECT	MAIN VERB		ANSWER
Do	you	like	chocolate?	Yes, I do.
Have	you	seen	Tom?	No, I have not.
Exception! For the verb to be in simple present and simple past tenses we do not use an auxiliary verb. We simply reverse the positions of to be and the <i>subject</i> :				
Statement:	He	is	German.	
Question:	Is	he	German?	Yes, he is.

USAGE

can is used to ask about ability:

Can you swim? Yes, I can.

could (past of can)

Could he play the piano when he was younger? Yes, she could.

will is used to ask about the future:

Will you go to the beach tomorrow? No, I won't (will not)

would past of will:

Would he come if I invited him? Yes, he would.

shall future (I/we):

Shall we meet this afternoon? No, we shan't (shall not).

should used for asking for advice:

Should I call him and apologize? Yes, you should.

must is used to ask if something is necessary or very important (sometimes involving a rule or a law):

Must we finish this today? Yes, we must.

is / are / was / were

Is he English? No, he is not.

Were they playing? Yes, they were.

do / does / did

Do you smoke? Yes, I do.

Did he see you? No, he did not.

have / has / had

Have you found a flat? No, I haven't.

Has she phoned? No, she hasn't.

3 Choice Questions

The answer to the question is 'in the question'.

STRUCTURE

AUXILIARY VERB	SUBJECT	MAIN VERB		OR		ANSWER
Do	you	want	tea	or	coffee?	Coffee, please.
Will	we	meet	John	or	James?	John.
Did	she	go	to Rome	or	Madrid?	She went to Rome.
Exception! verb to be simple present and simple past						
	Is	his car	white	or	black?	It's black.
	Were	they	\$15	or	\$50?	\$15.

4 Question Tags / Tag Questions

The tag question in English is a phrase added to the main part of the sentence, inviting the listener to confirm or give an opinion about the comment. It is composed of two parts: the auxiliary verb, determined by the principal verb, in negative form (or affirmative if the principal verb is negative), followed by the pronoun, determined by the subject.

A. After positive statements we use the negative particle *not*:

{statement} + {auxiliary/modal} + [not] + {subject}

- *You are happy now, aren't you?*
- *That is Tom, isn't he?*

B. After negative statements we use the ordinary interrogative:

- *You did not see him, did you?*
- *Ann can't swim, can she?*

Examples:

- The continuous tenses use "be":
You were fishing yesterday, weren't you?
I'm doing this correctly, aren't I? (irregular)

- The simple tenses use "do":
 - *You went to the cinema yesterday, didn't you?*
 - *She likes me, doesn't she?*
- The perfect tenses use "have":
 - *He's never been out of the country, has he?*
 - *I've been accepted, haven't I?*
- The modals stay the same:
 - *They shouldn't make that strange noise, should they?*
 - *You can't come out tonight, can you?*
 - *We'll see you tomorrow, won't we?*

C. Statements containing words such as *neither*, *no (adjective)*, *none*, *no one*, *nobody*, *nothing*, *scarcely*, *barely*, *hardly*, *hardly ever*, *seldom* are treated as negative statements and followed by an ordinary interrogative tag:

- *No money is required, is it?*
- *Nothing happened, did it?*
- *Tom hardly ever goes to parties, does he?*

D. When the subject of the sentence is *anyone*, *anybody*, *no one*, *nobody*, *none* or *neither*, we use the pronoun they as subject of the tag:

- *I don't think anyone will come, will they?*
- *No one would object, would they?*
- *Neither of them complained, did they?*

E. We use Question Tags in three ways:

1. To verify information; when we are fairly certain of a fact and want merely to check it, we can use a question tag:

- *You're a Sagittarius, aren't you?*
- *She isn't French, is she?*

2. To ask someone to do something; often this is used when we want someone to agree with what we say:

- *He's ugly, isn't he?*
- *You're clever, aren't you? Can you help me with my homework?*

3. To show surprise in a negative way when we cannot really believe something is true - we use this only in negative sentences:

- *You're not marrying her, are you?*
- *She isn't still talking, is she?*

● After *let's...*, offers and suggestions we use *shall*:

- *Let's go, shall we?*

● After imperatives we use *will/would/can/could*:

- *Leave us for a moment, would you?*

5 Negative Questions

USAGE

- A. to ask for information:
- *Who doesn't want some?*
 - *Who hasn't got a ticket?*
- B. to make suggestions:
- *Why don't we have a party?*
 - *Why not leave now?*
- C. to express surprise:
- *Haven't you finished yet?*
 - *Isn't she coming?*
- D. to ask for confirmation:
- *Didn't we stay here once before?*
 - *Isn't he the famous actor?*
- E. with a falling intonation, for exclamations
- *Didn't she do well!*

6 Subject Questions

When we ask about the subject, we replace the subject with a question word:

- *John is playing the guitar.*
- *Who is playing the guitar?*

statement: {subject} + {verb} ...
question: {question word} + {verb} ...
statement: *Jane prepared lunch.*
question: *Who prepared lunch?*
answer: *Jane did.*

statement: *Winter is coming.*
question: *What is coming?*
answer: *Winter is.*

Statement: *John's father has joined the army.*
Question: *Whose father has joined the army?*
answer: *John's father.*

7 Direct & Indirect Questions

1- We can ask a direct question:

- *What time is it?*

or, to be more formal or polite, we can ask an indirect question:

- *Do you know what time it is?*

2- We make an indirect question by using a phrase and then a statement. Note that even though this is a question, we do not invert the subject and verb or use an auxiliary verb:

{indirect phrase} + {statement}

- *Can you remember where you put the keys?*
- *Do you know how long the flight will be?*

3- When the question can be answered with yes or no, we use *if*:

{indirect phrase} + {if} + {statement}

- *Would you ask him if the train has arrived yet?*
- *Could you tell me if this is Athens station?*

4- We can also use question words to make indirect statements:

{indirect phrase} + {question word} + {statement}

- *I don't know what you saw in her!*
- *She can't decide where to go on holiday.*

8 Rhetorical Questions

1- Questions that do not expect an answer

Questions do not always ask for information. In many languages, including English, a question with an obvious answer can be used simply as a way of drawing attention to something. Questions of this kind are called 'rhetorical questions'

- *Do you know what time it is? (= You are late.)*
- *What's the use of asking her? (= It's no use asking her.)*
- *How do you expect me to find milk now? (= There aren't any shops open.)*
- *Where's my money? (= You haven't paid me.)*

2- Negative yes/no questions

Negative yes/no questions often suggest a positive situation.

- *Haven't I done enough for you? (= I have done enough for you.)*
- *Didn't I tell you it would rain? (= I told you ...)*
- *Don't you care what I do? (= You should ...)*