



TAG QUESTIONS

You speak English, don't you?

A tag question is a special construction in English. It is a statement followed by a mini-question. We use tag questions to ask for confirmation. They mean something like: "Is that right?" or "Do you agree?" They are very common in English. The basic structure of a tag question is:

positive statement	negative tag	negative statement	positive tag
Snow is white,	isn't it?	You don't like me,	do you?

Notice that the tag repeats the auxiliary verb (or main verb when be) from the statement and changes it to negative or positive.

Answering Tag Questions

How do we answer a tag question? Often, we just say Yes or No. Sometimes we may repeat the tag and reverse it (They don't live here, do they? Yes, they do). Be very careful about answering tag questions. In some languages, an opposite system of answering is used, and non-native English speakers sometimes answer in the wrong way. This can lead to a lot of confusion!

TIP

Answer a tag question according to the **truth** of the situation. Your answer reflects the real facts, not (necessarily) the question.

For example, everyone knows that snow is white. Look at these questions, and the correct answers:

tag question	correct answer	notes	
Snow is white, isn't it?	Yes (it is).	Answer is same in both cases - because snow <i>is</i> white!	But notice change of stress when answerer does not agree with questioner.
Snow isn't white, is it?	Yes it is!		

Snow is black, isn't it?	No it isn't!	Answer is same in both cases - because snow <i>is not black!</i>	
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In some languages, people answer a question like "Snow isn't black, is it?" with "Yes" (meaning "Yes, I agree with you"). This is the wrong answer in English!

Here are some more examples, with correct answers:

- The moon goes round the earth, doesn't it? Yes, it does.
- The earth is bigger than the moon, isn't it? Yes.
- The earth is bigger than the sun, isn't it? **No, it isn't!**
- Asian people don't like rice, do they? **Yes, they do!**
- Elephants live in Europe, don't they? **No, they don't!**
- Men don't have babies, do they? No.
- The English alphabet doesn't have 40 letters, does it? **No, it doesn't.**

Tag Questions Quiz

- He's still sleeping, _____
 a. is not he?
 b. isn't he?
 c. wasn't he?
- You do go to school, _____
 a. do you?
 b. aren't you?
 c. don't you?
- Let's go for a walk, _____
 a. shall we?
 b. shan't we?
 c. will we?
- We won't be late, _____
 a. won't we?
 b. will we?
 c. are we?
- Nobody called, _____
 a. do they?
 b. didn't they?
 c. did they?
- They will wash the car, _____
 a. will it?
 b. won't they?
 c. wouldn't they?
- We must lock the doors, _____
 a. mustn't they?
 b. shouldn't we?
 c. mustn't we?
- I'm right, _____
 a. amn't I?
 b. am not I?
 c. aren't I?
- So you bought a car, _____
 a. did you?
 b. haven't you?

c. weren't you?

10. You wouldn't like to invite my Dad, _____

a. did you?

b. would you?

c. won't you?