

GRAMMAR REFERENCE

Direct and indirect questions

- 1 In a direct question, the normal word order is verb-subject. In an indirect question, the word order is subject-verb, and the question begins with a phrase like *Do you know ...*:
When is Mr Patel leaving?
→ *Do you know when Mr Patel is leaving?*
- 2 An indirect question does not use the auxiliary *do*:
Where does Mr Elmore work?
→ *Could you tell me where Mr Elmore works?*
- 3 For *Wh-/How* questions, we retain the question word:
How much does it cost?
→ *Can you tell me how much it costs?*
- 4 When *who* or *what* is the subject of the question, there is no difference in word order:
Who left this message?
→ *Do you have any idea who left this message?*
- 5 For *Yes/No* questions, we use *if* or *whether* (or *not*):
Is it going to rain tomorrow?
→ *Do you know whether it's going to rain tomorrow?*

Negative questions

- 1 Negative questions usually begin with the contracted negative form of an auxiliary or modal verb.
Aren't you based in Milan?
Didn't they sell hardware as well as software?
Can't you work a bit later tonight?
- 2 We often use negative questions to:
 - complain: *Haven't you finished yet?*
 - make a suggestion: *Why don't you join us?*
 - check information: *Isn't this yours?*
 - make a request: *Can't we join you at the meeting?*

Question tags

Question tags follow a statement and use the subject and an auxiliary or modal verb in question form.

- 1 If the statement is positive, the question tag is negative:
It's hot, isn't it?
- 2 If the statement is negative, the question tag is positive:
You haven't seen my keys, have you?
- 3 Statements with auxiliary or modal verbs repeat the auxiliary or modal in the question tag:
She won't go to China, will she?
You can swim, can't you?
- 4 Statements with no auxiliary or modal verb use *do* in the question tag:
You work for Siemens, don't you?
- 5 Question tags retain the same tense as the statement:
He left early yesterday, didn't he?
- 6 If the subject is *someone, somebody, everyone, everybody, anyone, anybody*, use *they* in the tag:
Anyone can use the meeting room, can't they?
If the subject is *nobody* or *no one*, the tag is positive:
Nobody knew about that, did they?

Language at work

1 Rewrite the direct questions as indirect questions using the words given.

- 1 Will he take the job?
Do you know _____?
- 2 When did Amanda send them the catalogue?
Could you find out _____?
- 3 Is this the train for Munich?
Do you have any idea _____?
- 4 Where does the bus for Place de la Concorde go from?
I'd like to know _____.
- 5 Have you had anything from the minibar?
Could you tell me _____?
- 6 Who left this package here?
I was wondering _____.
- 7 What time will you be arriving?
I'd be grateful if you could tell me _____.
- 8 What day is best for you?
Please let us know _____.

2 Change 1–5 into negative questions.

- 1 Are you in charge of training?

- 2 Have you completed that report yet?

- 3 Should they be here by now?

- 4 Can I have my own team working on this?

- 5 Did you want to say something?

3 Add a suitable question tag to 1–8.

- 1 You're from London, _____?
- 2 You couldn't give me a lift to the station, _____?
- 3 The bank shuts at 5.00, _____?
- 4 You didn't see Anna, _____?
- 5 You haven't seen Joe, _____?
- 6 You won't tell anyone, _____?
- 7 Nobody's called, _____?
- 8 That wasn't easy, _____?