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, _____?

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