

TAG QUESTIONS

(a) Jack *can* come, *can't* he?
(b) Fred *can't* come, *can* he?

A tag question is a question added at the end of a sentence. Speakers use tag questions chiefly to make sure their information is correct or to seek agreement.*

AFFIRMATIVE SENTENCE + NEGATIVE TAG → AFFIRMATIVE ANSWER EXPECTED

Mary *is* here, *isn't* she? Yes, she is.
You *like* tea, *don't* you? Yes, I do.
They *have* left, *haven't* they? Yes, they have.

NEGATIVE SENTENCE + AFFIRMATIVE TAG → NEGATIVE ANSWER EXPECTED

Mary *isn't* here, *is* she? No, she isn't.
You *don't* like tea, *do* you? No, I don't.
They *haven't* left, *have* they? No, they haven't.

(c) *This/That* is your book, isn't *it*?
These/Those are yours, aren't *they*?

The tag pronoun for *this/that* = *it*.
The tag pronoun for *these/those* = *they*.

(d) *There* is a meeting tonight, *isn't* *there*?

In sentences with *there* + *be*, *there* is used in the tag.

(e) *Everything* is okay, isn't *it*?

Personal pronouns are used to refer to indefinite pronouns. *They* is usually used in a tag to refer to *everyone*, *everybody*, *someone*, *somebody*, *no one*, *nobody*.

(f) *Everyone* took the test, didn't *they*?

(g) *Nothing* is wrong, *is* *it*?
(h) *Nobody* *called* on the phone, *did* *they*?
(i) You've *never* *been* there, *have* *you*?

Sentences with negative words take affirmative tags.

(j) *I am* supposed to be here, *am* *I* *not*?
(k) *I am* supposed to be here, *aren't* *I*?

In (j): *am* *I* *not*? is formal English.
In (k): *aren't* *I*? is common in spoken English.

A. Type the best tag ending in each item.

1. Mathew is a good student, _____?
2. She can speak Italian well, _____?
3. I'm too fat, _____?
4. This is your car, _____?
5. There are a lot of people in your company, _____?
6. They are your good friends, _____?
7. You always buy your clothes at Central, _____?
8. Isabel speaks Chinese well, _____?
9. They would listen to us, _____?
10. John won't be back before noon, _____?
11. I am invited, _____?
12. There is something wrong with Jane today, _____?
13. Everyone can learn how to swim, _____?
14. Nobody cheated on the exam, _____?
15. Nothing went wrong while I was gone, _____?
16. Those aren't Tony's books, _____?
17. Peggy would like to come with us to the party, _____?
18. This grammar is easy, _____?
19. There aren't any problems, _____?
20. That's your umbrella, _____?