Life

Upper Intermediate Unit 6b(2)

Question forms 2: tag questions



Jim: It's Lisa, isn't it?
Lisa: Yes, Lisa Rogers. Have we met before?
Jim: Once, but it was a long time ago. I'm Jim Smythe. I work for KMC.
Lisa: You don't work with León Alvarez, do you?
Jim: That's right.
Lisa: Oh, I remember now. You were at that meeting with León in Barcelona, weren't you?
Jim: Yes, about two years ago. There was that wonderful reception, wasn't there?
Lisa: Yes! Well it's nice to meet you again. Anyway, what do you think of the conference? It's been interesting, hasn't it?

Presentation

Use question tags for asking for information, or for checking and confirming information. They are used in informal speech at the end of affirmative or negative sentences:

It's Lisa, ***isn't it?***

There was a meeting, ***wasn't there?***

Do not use them after questions:

Is it Lisa~~, isn't it~~?

Was there a meeting~~, wasn't there~~?

Always use contracted forms in the tag.

Don't say: *It's Lisa~~, is not~~ it?*

When the main verb is affirmative, the tag question is negative:

\+ −

It's been *an interesting conference,* ***hasn't it?***

When the main verb is negative, the tag question is affirmative:

− +

You don't *work with León Alvarez,* ***do you?***

When the subject is a pronoun, repeat the pronoun: ***It's*** *Lisa, isn't* ***it?***

When the subject is a noun, use an appropriate pronoun:

The conference *has been interesting, hasn't* ***it?***

Punctuation

When you write question tags, put a comma between the main sentence and the tag: *It's Lisa, isn't it?*

For the following verbs or verb forms, use the auxiliary (given in brackets) in the question tag.

Verb or verb form + (auxiliary)	Examples
to be (is, are, was, were)	*It's Lisa,* ***isn't*** *it?* *I'm late,* ***aren't*** *I?** (*With *I am ...*, don't say *I'm late, ~~am not~~ I?*) *You were at that meeting with León in Barcelona,* ***weren't*** *you?* *There was that wonderful reception,* ***wasn't*** *there?*
Present simple (do/does)	*You work for KMC,* ***don't*** *you?* *You don't know my colleague,* ***do*** *you?*
Past simple (did)	*He went to the conference,* ***didn't*** *he?* *They didn't enjoy the presentation,* ***did*** *they?*
Perfect and continuous (the same auxiliary verb)	*The conference has been interesting,* ***hasn't*** *it?* *You aren't listening to me,* ***are*** *you?*
Modal verbs (the same modal auxiliary verb)	*I should leave now,* ***shouldn't*** *I?* *I couldn't buy you a drink,* ***could*** *I?*
Imperative (will/won't)	*Send me your contact details,* ***won't*** *you?* *Don't forget to call me,* ***will*** *you?*
Let's (shall)	*Let's go out for dinner again sometime,* ***shall*** *we?* *Let's not spend too long discussing this,* ***shall*** *we?*

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Exercises

1 **Write the question tags in the conversation. Then listen and check.**

are you	didn't you	do you	haven't we	isn't it	shall we	shouldn't I
	wasn't it	weren't you	will you	won't you		

A: We've met before, [1] ..... ?
B: Sorry, you'll have to remind me.
A: You were on a training course with me in Bristol, [2] ..... ?
B: Yes! That was a long time ago, [3] ..... ? I remember now. You aren't Malcolm, [4] ..... ?
A: That's right. Malcolm Savage.
B: Peter Franks. Nice to meet you again. It's funny how you meet people again at these events, [5] ..... ?
A: Well, it's a small world. You worked for Haversham Plastics then, [6] ..... ?
B: Yes. I still do. You don't do any business with us, [7] ..... ?
A: No, I'm afraid not. But I have a colleague here who works in your industry. In fact he's looking for a supplier.
B: I should meet him, [8] ..... ?
A: Yes, but I can't see him at the moment. Never mind. You'll be here later, [9] ..... ?
B: Actually I have to go in a minute.
A: OK. Well, let's keep in touch about this, [10] ..... ? Here's my card with my phone number. Don't forget to call me, [11] ..... ?
B: No, I won't. Thanks. It was nice meeting you again.

2 **Write the missing question tags.**

1 You're Marie, ... ?
2 It's my turn to pay, ... ?
3 They don't work here, ... ?
4 She likes sugar in her tea, ... ?
5 When I lived here, there was a tree here, ... ?
6 They've closed the post office, ... ?
7 I'm in your group, ... ?
8 I couldn't borrow a pen, ... ?
9 He'd already asked her to marry him before, ... ?
10 Sheila's going to be angry about the mess, ... ?
11 Don't forget to give this package to your mother, ... ?
12 All you children must work harder, ... ?
13 Let's take a taxi home, ... ?
14 It's been a lovely day, ... ?

3 **Think of someone you know who you haven't seen for a long time. Imagine you meet again. Write questions using these tags.**

1 ....., aren't you?
2 ....., don't you?
3 ....., haven't you?
4 ....., didn't you?

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