

- Can I ask you a question?
- Have the police been to your home?
- Do they want to interview your wife?
- What have they been looking for?



- Who telephoned the newspapers?
- Which secretary spoke to journalists?
- How long has the Prime Minister known?

Presentation

Yes/No questions

To ask questions requiring the answer 'yes' or 'no', you use an auxiliary verb (e.g. *be, do, have, can*) followed by the subject:

Can I ask you a question? Are you going to resign?

Have the police been to your home?

Do they want to interview your wife?

Subject and object questions

You can ask questions about the subject or the object of a verb using *what, who, which, whose, how much* and *how many*.

subject
object

The journalists asked a lot of difficult questions.

A subject question asks about the subject of the verb:

Who asked the questions? The journalists.

An object question asks about the object of the verb:

What did the journalists ask? A lot of difficult questions.

Subject questions

In subject questions, the question word (*who, what, how many journalists*) is the subject of the verb. The verb follows the question word and there is no other pronoun.

How many journalists came to interview the minister?
(don't say *How many journalists they came to interview the minister?*)

You do not normally use the auxiliary verbs *do, does* or *did* in subject questions. (don't say *How many journalists did come to interview the minister?*)

Object questions

In an object question you need a question word, an auxiliary verb and a subject. The auxiliary verb comes before the subject. Use the auxiliary verbs *do, does, did* with the present simple and the past simple:

What did the journalists ask?

How much did the Prime Minister know?

Question expressions

As well as single question words such as *what, when, who, where, which, how*, you can also use multi-word expressions such as *what time, what sort, what type, what kind, how much, how many, how well, how big*:

What time are you giving the press conference?

What sort/type/kind of career do you want?

How much does the Prime Minister know?

Questions with like

Use questions with *What ... like?* to ask for a description:

What's he like? (kind and friendly)

What does she look like? (short and blonde with glasses)

Questions with prepositions

In everyday speech, you put prepositions at the end of the question:

What were they looking for?

With questions about time, you don't need the preposition *at*.

What time are you giving a press conference at?

Exercises

1 Write the missing auxiliary verbs in these yes/no questions.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Am I late for the press conference? | 4 he think no one cares? |
| 2 the Prime Minister going to make a statement? | 5 you get a photograph of his wife yesterday? |
| 3 that journalist telephoned yet? | 6 he already left the house by the time you arrived? |

2 Complete the subject and object questions about this news report.

Politician resigns

■ THE MINISTER for Education, Gordon Fortescue, met the Prime Minister this morning at ten o'clock. Mr Fortescue spent 30 minutes with his ex-boss and then walked from 10 Downing Street. He told the waiting newspaper reporters that he had resigned and immediately returned to his home to be with his family. Fortescue is

married and has three children.

Later in the day, the Prime Minister's Press Secretary made an official statement, saying that the Prime Minister understood the reason Mr Fortescue gave for leaving, which was that he couldn't continue as a politician while the police were investigating his private life.

- Which minister the Prime Minister this morning? The Minister for Education.
- What time the Prime Minister? At ten o'clock.
- How long with his ex-boss? Thirty minutes.
- What the waiting newspaper reporters? That he had resigned.
- Where immediately? To his home.
- How many ? Three.
- Who an official statement? The Prime Minister's Press Secretary.
- What reason for leaving? That he couldn't continue as a politician while the police were investigating his private life.

3 Complete the telephone conversation. Write one word in each gap. Then listen and check.

Customer: Hello. I'm calling about your camping equipment.

Supplier: Sure. What exactly ¹ you looking for?

Customer: I need a tent.

Supplier: ² kind of tent?

Customer: I've seen one called 'The Bonnington Mountain Tent'. What ³ it like?

How ⁴ people can sleep in it?

Supplier: It's for two people.

Customer: I see. And ⁵ I use it in any season?

Supplier: It depends on the weather. What time of year ⁶ you planning to use it?