

88 Indirect questions



1 Use

We use indirect questions to ask for information in a polite way, eg:
Can/could you tell me ...? Do you know ...? I'd like to know ... :
Excuse me, could you tell me where the nearest bank is?

2 Wh- questions

In indirect questions the subject of the verb comes after the *wh-* word and before the verb.

DIRECT QUESTION	INDIRECT QUESTION
<i>What time is it?</i>	<i>Do you know what time it is?</i>
<i>Where is the English exam?</i>	<i>Can you tell me where the English exam is?</i>
<i>How much are these jeans?</i>	<i>I'd like to know how much these jeans are.</i>
<i>Who is that man?</i>	<i>Do you know who that man is?</i>
<i>When are they coming back?</i>	<i>I'd like to know when they are coming back.</i>
<i>Where has Neil gone?</i>	<i>Do you know where Neil has gone?</i>

! ✗ *Can you tell me where is the station?* ✓ *Can you tell me where the station is?*

3 Wh- questions with *do*, *does* and *did*

In indirect questions, we do not use *do*, *does* or *did* after the *wh-* word.
 We use the normal verb form for positive sentences:

DIRECT QUESTION	INDIRECT QUESTION
<i>Where does he live?</i>	<i>Do you know where he lives?</i>
<i>How often do you go shopping?</i>	<i>Could you tell me how often you go shopping?</i>
<i>Where did they go for their holiday?</i>	<i>I'd like to know where they went for their holiday.</i>

! ✗ *I'd like to know what did he say.* ✓ *I'd like to know what he said.*

4 Yes/No questions (*Is ...? Do ...? Have ...? Will ...? etc.*)

In indirect questions, we use *if* or *whether* + subject and the normal verb form for positive sentences:

DIRECT QUESTION	INDIRECT QUESTION
<i>Is there a petrol station near here?</i>	<i>Could you tell me if there is a petrol station near here?</i>
<i>Will he be at the party?</i>	<i>I'd like to know if he will be at the party.</i>
<i>Has she seen that film?</i>	<i>Do you know whether she has seen that film?</i>

Practice

1 Choose the correct words in *italics*.

- 0 Can you tell me what *the time is* / *is the time*?
- 1 Could you tell me how *do I get* / *I get* to the bus station?
- 2 Could you tell me where *is the ticket office* / *the ticket office is*?
- 3 I'd like to know how often *runs the airport bus* / *the airport bus runs*.
- 4 Can you tell me how much *the journey costs* / *does the journey cost*?
- 5 Do you know if the airport bus *leaves* / *does leave* from here?
- 6 Do you know where *I get on* / *do I get on* the bus?
- 7 Can you tell me if *the bus has gone* / *has the bus gone*?
- 8 Could you tell me what time *the last bus is* / *is the last bus*?

2 Rosemary often forgets things. Complete the questions she is asking her friend. Use the verbs in brackets () .



- 0 'Do you know where *I put* my glasses?' (put)
- 1 'Can you remember if *my handbag*?' (pick up)
- 2 'Can you remember where *the car*?' (park)
- 3 'Oh dear. Do you know if *the front door*?' (lock)
- 4 'Can you tell me who to dinner this evening?' (come)

3 GRAMMAR IN USE Read the questions in the questionnaire and make them more polite.

INFOSYSTEMS

Our shopping habits

- 0 How often do you use the town centre shops?
- 1 Which shops do you like most?
- 2 How much do you usually spend in the town centre?
- 3 Do you use cash or credit cards?
- 4 Do you ever go out of town to shop?
- 5 Have you ever used the Internet for shopping?
- 6 Did you come by car or bus today?
- 7 Where did you park?
- 8 Will you continue to use the town centre for shopping?

- 0 Could you tell me how *often you use the town centre shops* ?
- 1 I'd like to know which
- 2 Can you say how ?
- 3 I'd like to know if
- 4 Could you tell me ?
- 5 I'd like to know
- 6 Can you tell me ?
- 7 Could you tell me ?
- 8 Finally, I'd like to know