

## 1.1 direct and indirect questions

### direct questions

The word order for most questions is: (question word) + auxiliary verb + subject + main verb.

*What does 'strategy' mean? Have you finished yet?*

**Subject questions:** When the question word is the subject of the sentence, use the affirmative form of the verb.

*What happened next? NOT What did happen next?*

**Prepositions in questions** usually come at the end.

*What are you working on? What was Thailand like?*

(Here *like* is a preposition and the question is asking for a description.)

In very formal English, prepositions can come at the beginning.

*In which newspaper did you read it?*

**Short questions**, often ending in prepositions, are common in conversation:

A: *I'm going out tonight.* B: *Where to?/Who with?*

A: *I didn't go to the party.* B: *How come?/Why not?*

A: *I hate spicy food.* B: *Why's that?/Such as?*

A: *Can you lend me a paintbrush?* B: *Which one?/What for?*

### indirect questions

Use indirect questions to ask questions in a more polite way or for very personal questions. After the opening phrase, use the affirmative form.

*Could you tell me what time the lesson starts?*

NOT *Could you tell me what time does the lesson start?*

*Do you mind me asking why you left your last job?*

NOT *Do you mind me asking why did you leave your last job?*

In yes/no questions, use *if* or *whether* + the affirmative form.

*Do you know if Mike's married?*

Other opening phrases include: *Can I ask (you) ...?*

*Do you have any idea ...?*, *Would you mind telling me ...?*

*What/Why/Where/Who do you think?*, *I was wondering ...*

*I wonder ...*, *I'd be interested to know ...*, *I'd like to know ...*

*I want to know ...*


Only use a question mark if the introductory phrase contains a question.

*I wonder where Derek is. How do you think he did that?*

When a question is very personal, start with *Can I ask a personal question?*

## 5 A Make sentences with the opening phrases.

- 1 Why are you studying English?  
Can you tell me *why you are studying English*?
- 2 How long do you plan to study?  
Do you have any idea ... ?
- 3 What do you do in the evenings?  
Can I ask ... ?
- 4 Do you have a full-time job?  
Do you mind me asking ... ?
- 5 Which countries have you visited?  
I'd be interested to know ... .
- 6 Where did you get that watch?  
Could you tell me ... ?
- 7 Is there a good café anywhere near here?  
Do you know ... ?
- 8 Would you like to come for a coffee?  
I was wondering ... .

**B**  **1.2** Listen and check your answers. Which opening phrase is best for asking a very personal question?