

## 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?