Can you tell me what this is / does / is for?



Language focus

Use **Can you tell me what this is / does / is for?** to ask someone to explain the function of something.

Can you tell me what this *button* ***is for?***

Questions beginning with **Can you tell me ... ?** are a less direct and more polite way of asking someone something.

1 **Choose the correct words to complete the dialogues.**

1 Can you tell me what a screwdriver *do* / *is for*?
It's for turning screws.

2 Can you tell me what *is for* / *this is*?
It's a spanner. It's for holding and turning nuts.

3 Can you tell me what a drill is *for* / *this is*?
It's for making holes.

4 Can you tell me what this machine *does* / *do*?
It makes yoghurt.

5 Can you tell me what a lever *this is* / *does*?
It operates a machine.

6 Can you tell me what a saw *for* / *is for*?
It's for cutting wood.

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2 **Complete the questions with the words from the box.**

tell me for ~~you~~ does is



1 Can ___you___ tell me what this is?
2 Can you tell me what this tool _____ for?
3 Can you tell me what this lever is _____?
4 Can you tell me what this machine _____?
5 Can you tell _____ what this switch is for?
6 Can you _____ me what this button is for?

3 **Match questions 1–6 in Activity 2 with answers a–f.**

a It's just a light switch. It's for turning the light on and off. Nothing special. ____
b This lever is for starting that machine. ____
c It translates things perfectly. It's a language machine. ____
d This? No, I can't tell you anything about it. It's top secret. 1
e This tool is very special. It's for, um … Do you know, I can't remember. ____
f Oh, this button is for increasing the temperature in the building. ____

4 **Complete the questions with *do*, *does* or *for*.**

1 Can you tell me what this is ___for___? It's for making bread.
2 Can you tell me what this machine is _____? It's for heating liquids.
3 Can you tell me what this machine _____? It cleans tools.
4 Can you tell me what these machines _____? They regulate the temperature.
5 Can you tell me what this _____? It cuts cheese into blocks.
6 Can you tell me what this is _____? It's for keeping things clean.
7 Can you tell me what these _____? They hold everything in place.
8 Can you tell me what this is _____? It's for mixing chemicals.

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