

## GRAMMAR REFERENCE

## Direct and indirect questions

1 In a direct question, the normal word order is verb–subject. In an indirect question, the word order is subject–verb, and the question begins with a phrase like *Do you know ...?*

*When is Mr Patel leaving?*  
→ *Do you know when Mr Patel is leaving?*

2 An indirect question does not use the auxiliary *do*:

*Where does Mr Elmore work?*  
→ *Could you tell me where Mr Elmore works?*

3 For *Wh-/How* questions, we retain the question word:

*How much does it cost?*  
→ *Can you tell me how much it costs?*

4 When *who* or *what* is the subject of the question, there is no difference in word order:

*Who left this message?*  
→ *Do you have any idea who left this message?*

5 For *Yes/No* questions, we use *if* or *whether (or not)*:

*Is it going to rain tomorrow?*  
→ *Do you know whether it's going to rain tomorrow?*

## Negative questions

1 Negative questions usually begin with the contracted negative form of an auxiliary or modal verb.

*Aren't you based in Milan?*  
*Didn't they sell hardware as well as software?*  
*Can't you work a bit later tonight?*

2 We often use negative questions to:

- complain: *Haven't you finished yet?*
- make a suggestion: *Why don't you join us?*
- check information: *Isn't this yours?*
- make a request: *Can't we join you at the meeting?*

## Question tags

Question tags follow a statement and use the subject and an auxiliary or modal verb in question form.

1 If the statement is positive, the question tag is negative:  
*It's hot, isn't it?*

2 If the statement is negative, the question tag is positive:  
*You haven't seen my keys, have you?*

3 Statements with auxiliary or modal verbs repeat the auxiliary or modal in the question tag:  
*She won't go to China, will she?*  
*You can swim, can't you?*

4 Statements with no auxiliary or modal verb use *do* in the question tag:  
*You work for Siemens, don't you?*

5 Question tags retain the same tense as the statement:  
*He left early yesterday, didn't he?*

6 If the subject is *someone, somebody, everyone, everybody, anyone, anybody*, use *they* in the tag:  
*Anyone can use the meeting room, can't they?*  
If the subject is *nobody* or *no one*, the tag is positive:  
*Nobody knew about that, did they?*

## Language at work

1 Rewrite the direct questions as indirect questions using the words given.

1 Will he take the job?  
Do you know \_\_\_\_\_?

2 When did Amanda send them the catalogue?  
Could you find out \_\_\_\_\_?

3 Is this the train for Munich?  
Do you have any idea \_\_\_\_\_?

4 Where does the bus for Place de la Concorde go from?  
I'd like to know \_\_\_\_\_.

5 Have you had anything from the minibar?  
Could you tell me \_\_\_\_\_?

6 Who left this package here?  
I was wondering \_\_\_\_\_.

7 What time will you be arriving?  
I'd be grateful if you could tell me \_\_\_\_\_.

8 What day is best for you?  
Please let us know \_\_\_\_\_.

2 Change 1–5 into negative questions.

1 Are you in charge of training?  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 Have you completed that report yet?  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 Should they be here by now?  
\_\_\_\_\_

4 Can I have my own team working on this?  
\_\_\_\_\_

5 Did you want to say something?  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 Add a suitable question tag to 1–8.

1 You're from London, \_\_\_\_\_?

2 You couldn't give me a lift to the station, \_\_\_\_\_?

3 The bank shuts at 5.00, \_\_\_\_\_?

4 You didn't see Anna, \_\_\_\_\_?

5 You haven't seen Joe, \_\_\_\_\_?

6 You won't tell anyone, \_\_\_\_\_?

7 Nobody's called, \_\_\_\_\_?

8 That wasn't easy, \_\_\_\_\_?