

# 78 Wh- questions



## 1 Form and Use

Wh- questions always start with a *wh-* word  
(*who, what, when, where, how, which, why, whose*):

*Which way do you want to go?*

*Who are you going to invite?*

statement	<i>The paper is here.</i>	<i>It starts at 8.00.</i>	<i>They ate a pizza.</i>	<i>They can see her.</i>
question	<i>Where is the paper?</i>	<i>When does it start?</i>	<i>What did they eat?</i>	<i>Who can they see?</i>



We form simple *wh-* questions with *be*, an auxiliary verb or a modal verb **BEFORE** the subject:

- ✗ *Where you live?*
- ✓ *Where do you live?*
- ✗ *Where you are going?*
- ✓ *Where are you going?*
- ✗ *When they will arrive?*
- ✓ *When will they arrive?*
- ✗ *How old he is?*
- ✓ *How old is he?*

*Wh-* questions ask for information:

*'Where does the bus stop?' 'Outside the post office.'*

*'Which book are you reading?' 'It's the new John le Carré book.'*

We can also use negative questions with *wh-* question words:

*'I don't understand this question.' 'What don't you understand?'*

*'Rowan didn't come to my party.' 'Why didn't he come?'*



We usually say *wh-* questions with a falling intonation (↘): *What's the time?*

## Practice

- 1 **GRAMMAR IN USE** Read the information about a new DVD recorder. Then complete the questions with the phrases from the box.

How can How many What can Where can Why is Why should

### Generation X

0 *Why should* I buy the **Generation X** DVD recorder?

– That's simple – because it's the most modern and best new DVD recorder!

1 ..... the **Generation X** recorder more expensive than most of the others?

– Well, it's only a little more expensive ... and it is better than most others, for example, it can store more films.

2 ..... films can the **Generation X** recorder store?

– About 100. It depends on how long the films are.

3 ..... I use my old videos with this machine?

– If you have a video recorder, you can connect it to the DVD recorder and record your videos.

4 ..... I do if something goes wrong?

– You can send it to us or take it back to the shop where you bought it.

5 ..... I buy the **Generation X** recorder?

– In all good department stores and electrical shops.

- 2 **Make questions from the statements.**

- 0 I'm not sure where the nearest bank is. *Where is the nearest bank?*  
 1 I'm not sure where we're staying. ....  
 2 I'm not sure how we get to the station. ....  
 3 I'm not sure what time the plane arrived. ....  
 4 I'm not sure what kind of computer she wants. ....  
 5 You didn't phone me. I don't know why. ....  
 6 I'm not sure which class I'm in. ....

- 3 **GRAMMAR IN USE** Complete the job interview with questions. Use the words in brackets ().

A Right. Do you have any questions about the job?

B Yes, I do, actually. (0) *What time do you start* ..... (what time / you / start) in the morning?

A We open at 9.30 and the assistants have to be here at 9.00 or 8.30 on Thursdays.

B Oh, (1) ..... (why / they / not start at 9.00) on Thursdays?

A Well, it's because we have staff training from 8.30 to 9.00.

B Oh, OK, thanks. And (2) ..... (when / the shop / close)?

A It closes at 5.30 most evenings, but it's 6.00 on Friday and Saturday.

B (3) ..... (how long / be / the lunch break)?

A It's an hour, with a 15-minute coffee break in the morning and afternoon.

B (4) ..... (how much / be / the staff discount)?

A We give our staff a discount of 20% on all our clothes and shoes.

B That's good. If I get this job, (5) ..... (who / be / my manager)?

A One of the senior staff will be your manager, and will train you.

B OK. (6) ..... (when / you / tell me) if I've got the job?

A We'll try to contact everyone by the end of next week.