

108 Question tags



1 Form

There are two main types of question tag.

- Negative statement + positive tag:

Mr Connors doesn't work here anymore, does he? Cats don't eat chocolate, do they?

- Positive statement + negative tag:

Mr Connors still works here, doesn't he? Cats only eat meat, don't they?

VERB FORM	STATEMENT	QUESTION TAG
<i>to be</i>	<i>Sorry, I'm really late, Trevor's going to be late,</i>	<i>aren't I? isn't he?</i>
<i>there is</i>	<i>There isn't a bus after 11.00,</i>	<i>is there?</i>
<i>present simple</i>	<i>You prefer tea to coffee,</i>	<i>don't you?</i>
<i>past simple</i>	<i>He didn't phone,</i>	<i>did he?</i>
<i>present continuous</i>	<i>They're building a new sports centre,</i>	<i>aren't they?</i>
<i>past continuous</i>	<i>It wasn't raining last night,</i>	<i>was it?</i>
<i>present perfect</i>	<i>There hasn't been another accident,</i>	<i>has there?</i>
<i>will</i>	<i>I'll be on time if I leave now,</i>	<i>won't I?</i>
<i>can</i>	<i>We can finish this work tomorrow,</i>	<i>can't we?</i>

Question tags always use short forms: ... *isn't he?* ... *don't you?*



We always match the tag with the statement:

✗ He's English, no? ✗ He's English, isn't it? ✓ He's English, isn't he?



We can't make a question tag with *am*, so we use *are*:

✗ amn't I ✓ aren't I

2 Use

We add a question tag to change a statement into a question

We can use question tags:

- to ask for information. We say these tags with a rising intonation (↗):

I can get a bus from here, can't I? (I don't know the answer – I haven't taken a bus from here.)
You aren't coming to the wedding in those jeans, are you? (I don't know, but I hope not.)

- to ask for agreement, when we think we know the answer. We say these tags with a falling intonation (↘):

It's really hot today, isn't it? (I think it's hot and I want you to agree.)
You haven't seen that film yet, have you? (I think you haven't.)

We answer question tags with *yes/no*, a short answer and other information if necessary:

'I can get a bus from here, can't I?' 'Yes, you can. The next one is in ten minutes.'

'The bus leaves at six o'clock, doesn't it?' 'Yes, that's right.'

Practice

1 Match the sentences with the question tags.

- 0 You take sugar in coffee,
- 1 Steve's going to sell his car,
- 2 Juliet can't run faster than you,
- 3 The cat's had its food,
- 4 You don't work at Smith's,
- 5 Emma can give us a lift to the airport,
- 6 You will remember to talk to Adam,
- 7 It hasn't rained here today,
- 8 Clive isn't back from Australia yet,

- A do you?
- B won't you?
- C has it?
- D is he?
- E don't you?
- F can she?
- G hasn't it?
- H can't she?
- I isn't he?

2 GRAMMAR IN USE Complete the conversation with question tags.

MIKE It was your cousin's wedding last weekend, (0) *wasn't it* ?

CARA That's right, in a five-star hotel with fantastic gardens.

MIKE But it rained on Saturday, (1) ?

CARA Yes, a bit. But it was sunny when they took the photos.

MIKE That's good. Were there many guests?

CARA More than a hundred, and Annabel and her husband paid for everything.

MIKE Oh! But they're very young, (2) ? How could they afford it?

CARA Annabel was my grandfather's favourite grandchild. He left her all his money.

MIKE That's a bit strange, (3) ? So no one else in the family got any money?

CARA No, but we don't mind. Anyway, how was your weekend? You went to see the tennis at Wimbledon, (4) ?

MIKE Yes, we did. You haven't been, (5) ?

CARA No, I'm not interested in tennis. Anyway, you can't get tickets very easily, (6) ?

MIKE No, you can't – we were lucky ... Oh, nearly two o'clock! It's late, (7) ? We should get some lunch.

CARA Good idea. That new sandwich shop in the High Street has opened now, (8) ?



3 Change the questions into statements and question tags.

- 0 Did Paul tell you about the party?
- 1 Were you at the same school as Paul?
- 2 Is there going to be food at the party?
- 3 Am I included in the invitation?
- 4 Will you come home by twelve o'clock?
- 5 Did you tell Fran about the party?

Paul didn't *tell you about the party*, did he. ?

You weren't ?

There isn't ?

I am ?

You will ?

You didn't ?