

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?