

QUESTION TAGS

We often use question tags when we expect the listener to agree with our statement. In this case, when the statement is positive, we use a negative question tag. If the statement is negative, we use a positive question tag.

Form

Auxiliary verb+ sub pronoun

If there is an **auxiliary verb** in the statement, we use it to form the question tag.

1) Verb to be (am-is -are- was -were)

If the main verb or auxiliary verb in the statement is **am**, the positive question tag is **am I?** but the negative question tag is usually **aren't I?**:

Positive sentence+ negative tag

- I am a doctor, am I not?
- I'm going to get an email with the details, aren't I?
- It's a nice day, isn't it?
- James is working on that, isn't he?
- The bus stop's over there, isn't it?
- They are British ,aren't they?
- There was a lot of traffic, wasn't there?
- Yesterday was so much fun, wasn't it?

Negative sentence+ positive tag

- I am not a teacher, am I ?
- I'm never on time, am I ?
- She isn't a nurse, is she?
- He isn't here, is he?
- We aren't happy, are we?
- The trains are never on time, are they?
- It was raining that day, wasn't it?
- They weren't in London, were they?
- None of those customers were happy, were they?

2) Present simple (Do/does) Past simple (did)

When the verb in the statement is **present simple** or **past simple** and is positive. Here we use **don't**, **doesn't** or **didn't**:

Positive sentence+ negative tag

- Ali likes English, doesn't he?
- Jenni eats cheese, doesn't she?
- You have a car, don't you?
- She has long hair, doesn't she?
- You like fish, don't you?
- She looked for the book, didn't she?
- I said that already, didn't I?

Negative sentence+ positive tag

- He doesn't have a car, does he?
- They don't play tennis, do they?
- I don't need to finish this today, do I ?
- You don't have a car, do you?
- She doesn't have blue eyes, does she?
- He didn't do the homework, did he?
- The phone didn't ring, did it?

3) Modal Verb (can/will/would should/could/ must)etc

... the verb in the statement is a modal verb. Here we use the modal verb to make the question tag:

Positive sentence+ negative tag

- *Ali **will** be here soon, **won't** he?
- *She **should** pass the exam, **shouldn't** She?
- *We **can** climb the tree, **can't** we?
- * He **could** answer, **couldn't** he?
- *We **must** study hard, **mustn't** we?
- *They **could** hear me, **couldn't** they?

Negative sentence+ positive tag

- *They **can't** jump, **can** they?
- *You **shouldn't** stay up late, **should** you?
- *It **won't** rain, **will** it?
- *Soha **couldn't** answer, **could** she?
- *We **mustn't** swim in canals, **must** we?
- *You **won't** tell anyone, **will** you?

4) Have/ has/ had

Positive sentence+ negative tag

- *He has got a car, **hasn't** he?
- *I have done the homework, **haven't** I?
- *He had met her before, **hadn't** he?
- *Your parents have retired, **haven't** they?

Negative sentence+ positive tag

- *Nobody has called for me, **have** they?
- *She **hasn't** seen the film, **has** she?
- *We **haven't** got a car, **have** we?
- *I **had** never seen him before, **had** I ?
- *Your mum **hadn't** met him before, **had** she?

Note:

- ***Let's go** to the cinema, **shall we**?
- ***Don't open** the door, **will you**?
- ***Open** the window, **won't you**?

1) Read the conversation below, and use question tags to complete the gaps. Then listen and check your ideas.

Voice 1: Your mother's looking older these days, (1) _____?

Voice 2: I don't think so, but you're being very rude today, (2) _____?

Voice 1: I see your team won the game on Thursday, (3) _____?

Voice 2: Yes, it was a good match.

Voice 1: They must be top of the league now, (4) _____?

Voice 1: You will remember to book a table, (5) _____? It's very important.

Voice 2: I couldn't forget, (6) _____?.

Voice 1: You didn't forget the exam this morning, (7) _____? You got up very late.

Voice 2: You are joking, (8), _____?

Student 1: These question tags are difficult, (9) _____?

Student 2: We use them a lot in English, though, (10) _____?