

Unit 1: QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

There are two main kinds of questions:

- *yes / no* questions
- information questions (also known as *wh* questions)

YES / NO QUESTIONS

Yes / no questions can be answered with *yes* or *no*, i.e. *Do you like chocolate?* or *Is he from India?*

They are often answered with short answers, which are made up from *yes / no* and the auxiliary verb.

Example:

Are you hungry?	Yes, I am.
Do you like chocolate?	Yes, I do.
Are you coming to the party?	Yes, I am.
Were you at home yesterday?	Yes, I was.

INFORMATION QUESTIONS

Information or *wh* questions are designed to be answered with more information. They usually start with a question word, like *who*, *where*, *why*, *how*, etc.

Example:

Who are you?
Where do you live?

HOW ARE QUESTIONS MADE?

They are made in three different ways, depending on the verb tense.

1. Invert the verb and subject:
This is used for questions with the verb *be* in the *Simple Tense* and questions with modal verbs
2. Add an extra verb:
In *Simple* tenses, you add *do*, *does* or *did* to the sentence to make a question.
3. Invert the auxiliary verb and subject:
This is used for all the other tenses.

For *yes / no* questions, one of the steps above is enough, while for information questions you need to add a question word in the beginning.

Example:

Is he at home? / Where is he?

QUESTION TAGS

Question tags turn a statement into a question. They are often used to check information that we think or know is true. They are made using using an auxiliary verb and a subject pronoun. Negative question tags are usually contracted. Usually, if the main clause is positive, the tag is negative (and the other way around). If the main clause has an auxiliary verb, the same auxiliary verb is used in the tag. The one exception is the tag after *I am*, which is *aren't I*.

Example:

I'm in charge of the food, aren't I?
He can help, can't he?

OBJECT QUESTIONS

Usually, when we ask a question, we want to know about the object of the answer:

What did you lose? I lost my purse.

My purse is the object of the answer and *what* is the object of the question. (The subject of the question is *you*.)

Here's another example:

Who did John meet? John met Lucy.

Lucy is the object of the answer and *who* is the object of the question.

When we usually learn about how to make a question, we learn about object questions, because they are the most common type of question. The normal rules that you learn about making questions, such as inverting the question word and the auxiliary verb, or adding *do*, *does* or *did*, are all used in object questions.

SUBJECT QUESTIONS

However, sometimes we want to ask a question where the thing we want to know is actually the subject of the answer.

In the example *Lucy kissed John* we can ask about John, in a normal object question:

Who did Lucy kiss?

But we can also ask about Lucy:

Who kissed John?

Who kissed John? is a subject question. We don't need to use inversion, or add *did*. Instead, we just take out *Lucy* from the answer (which is a normal sentence) and add *who* (the question word). We generally make subject questions using *who* or *what*.

Here are some more examples:

James dropped the glass.

Object question: What did James drop?

Subject question: Who dropped the glass?

We will read the book.

Object question: What will you read?

Subject question: Who will read the book?

Amanda washed the car.

Object question: What did Amanda wash?

Subject question: Who washed the car?

The students like their new professor.

Object question: Who do the students like?

Subject question: Who likes the new professor?

EXERCISES

- [Subject and object questions](#)
- [Question tags](#)