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| TOPIC 4 | TYPES OF QUESTIONS |

#### This topic intends to help course participants to study the basic question types, analyse their structure in order to formulate questions and to use them appropriately in different situations.

Learning Outcomes

* Analyse the structure of basic question types
* Identify the types of questions in different texts and conversations
* Formulate questions appropriately for various situations.
* Use questions for academic purposes and social interactions

**ASKING**

**QUESTIONS**

**QUESTION TYPES**

TYPES OF QUESTIONS

**FORMULATING**

**QUESTIONS**

**QUESTION STRUCTURE SsTRUCTURE**

#### What is a question?

A question is a request for information or action.

When writing a question you should always end the sentence with a question mark (?).

***Basic Question Types***

There are 4 **basic types** of question:

1. **Yes/No Questions** (the answer to the question is "Yes" or "No")
2. **Question Word Questions** (the answer to the question is "Information")
3. **Choice Questions** (the answer to the question is "in the question")
4. Tag Questions

**1. Yes/No Questions**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **auxiliary verb** | **subject** | **main verb** |  | **Answer** Yes or No |
| **Do** | you | **want** | a drink ? | Yes, I do. |
| **Can** | you | **sing**? |  | No, I can't. |
| **Has** | she | **completed** | her work? | Yes, she has. |
| **Did** | they | **go** | to school? | No, they didn't. |
| **Exception!** verb **be** simple present and simple past | | | |  |
|  | **Is** | Amin | handsome? | Yes, he is. |
|  | **Was** | Razif | at home? | No, he wasn't. |

**2. Question Word Questions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **question word** | **auxiliary verb** | **subject** | **main verb** |  | **Answer** Information |
| Where | **do** | you | **live**? |  | In Gemas. |
| When | **will** | we | **have** | lunch? | At 1pm. |
| Who | **did** | she | **meet**? |  | She met Jaafar. |
| Why | **hasn't** | Sara | **done** | it? | Because she can't. |
| **Exception!** verb **be** simple present and simple past | | | | |  |
| Where | | **is** | Bombay? | | In India. |
| How | | **was** | she? | | Very well. |

**3. Choice Questions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **auxiliary verb** | **subject** | **main verb** |  | **OR** |  | **Answer** In the question |
| **Do** | you | **want** | tea | or | coffee? | Coffee, please. |
| **Will** | we | **meet** | Johan | or | Roslan? | Johan. |
| **Did** | she | **go** | to Ipoh | or | Taiping? | She went to Taiping. |
| **Exception!** verb **be** simple present and simple past | | | | | |  |
|  | **Is** | your car | Green | or | silver? | It's silver. |
|  | **Were** | they | cheap | or | expensive? | cheap. |

**Basic Question Structure**

The **basic structure** of a question in English is very simple:

auxiliary verb + subject + main verb

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **auxiliary verb** | **subject** | **main verb** |  |
| Do | you | like | fried meehoon ? |
| Are | they | playing | football? |
| Will | Gopal | go | to Johor ? |
| Have | you | seen | Kung Fu Panda 2 ? |

Yes/no questions with the verb **be** are created by moving the verb **be** to the beginning of the sentence. In other words the subject and the verb change their positions in statements and questions.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Statement: | | I am from Seremban. | | Question: | Am I from Seremban? | |
| **Questions - common mistakes** | | | | | | |
| Common mistakes | | Correct version | | | Why? | |
| What meant you by saying that? | | What did you mean by saying that? | | | If there is no auxiliary (helping) verb, we put *do, does*or *did* **before the subject.** | |
| You like this film? | | Do you like this film? | | |
| Where you are going this afternoon? | | Where are you going this afternoon? | | | We put an auxiliary verb before the subject. | |
| You did read the letter? | | Did you read the letter? | | |
| What you did last night? | | What did you do last night? | | |
| Who did give you the information? | | Who gave you the information? | | | We don't use *do, does* or *did* when we use *what, which, who* or *whose*as the subject. | |
| Does he knows your sister? | | Does he know your sister? | | | When there is an auxiliary verb, the main verb is the root word or base form. | |
| Where will she studies? | | Where will she study? | | |
| When did he went to Penang? | | When did he go to Penang | | |
| Can you tell me where can I buy a good camera? | | Can you tell me where I can buy a good camera? | | | Word order in indirect question is the same as in a normal sentence: SUBJECT + VERB + ... | |

# Tag Questions

|  |
| --- |
| **You speak English, *don't you*?** |

A tag question is a special construction in English. It is a statement followed by a mini-question. The whole sentence is a "tag question", and the mini-question at the end is called a "question tag".

A "tag" is something small that we add to something larger. For example, the little piece of cloth added to a shirt showing size or washing instructions is a tag.

We use tag questions at the end of statements to ask for confirmation. They mean something like: "Am I right?" or "Do you agree?" They are very common in English.

The basic structure is:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| + Positive statement, | - negative tag? |
| Snow is white, | isn't it? |
| - Negative statement, | + positive tag? |
| You don't like me, | do you? |

Look at these examples with positive statements:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **positive statement [+]** | | | | **negative tag [-]** | | | *notes:* |
| subject | auxiliary | main verb |  | auxiliary | not | personal pronoun (same as subject) |  |
| You | are | coming, |  | are | n't | you? |  |
| We | have | finished, |  | have | n't | we? |  |
| You | do | like | coffee, | do | n't | you? |  |
| You |  | like | coffee, | do | n't | you? | You (do) like... |
| They | will | help, |  | wo | n't | they? | won't = will not |
| I | can | come, |  | can | 't | I? |  |
| We | must | go, |  | must | n't | we? |  |
| He | should | try | harder, | should | n't | he? |  |
| You |  | are | English, | are | n't | you? | no auxiliary for main verb **be** present & past |
| John |  | was | there, | was | n't | he? |

Look at these examples with negative statements:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **negative statement [-]** | | | | | | **positive tag [+]** | |
| subject | auxiliary |  | main verb |  |  | auxiliary | personal pronoun (same as subject) |
| It | is | n't | raining, |  |  | is | it? |
| We | have | never | seen |  | that, | have | we? |
| You | do | n't | like |  | coffee, | do | you? |
| They | will | not | help, |  |  | will | they? |
| They | wo | n't | report |  | us, | will | they? |
| I | can | never | do |  | it right, | can | I? |
| We | must | n't | tell |  | her, | must | we? |
| He | should | n't | drive |  | so fast, | should | he? |
| You |  |  | are | n't | English, | are | you? |
| John |  |  | was | not | there, | was | he? |

Some special cases:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I **am** right, **are**n't I? | aren't I (*not* amn't I) |
| You **have** to go, **do**n't you? | you (do) have to go... |
| I **have been** answering, **have**n't I? | use first auxiliary |
| **Nothing** came in the post, **did** it? | treat statements with nothing, nobody etc like negative statements |
| **Let's** go, shall we? | let's = let us |
| He**'d** better do it, **had**n't he? | he had better (no auxiliary) |

Here are some mixed examples:

* But you don't really love her, do you?
* This will work, won't it?
* Well, I couldn't help it, could I?
* But you'll tell me if she calls, won't you?
* We'd never have known, would we?
* The weather's bad, isn't it?
* You won't be late, will you?
* Nobody knows, do they?

Notice that we often use tag questions to ask for information or help, starting with a negative statement. This is quite a friendly/polite way of making a request. For example, instead of saying "Where is the police station?" (not very polite), or "Do you know where the police station is?" (slightly more polite), we could say: "You wouldn't know where the police station is, would you?" Here are some more examples:

* You don't know of any good jobs, do you?
* You couldn't help me with my homework, could you?
* You haven't got $10 to lend me, have you?

### Intonation

We can change the meaning of a tag question with the musical pitch of our voice. With rising intonation, it sounds like a real question. But if our intonation falls, it sounds more like a statement that doesn't require a real answer:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | intonation | |  |
| You don't know where my wallet is, | do you? | / rising | real question |
| It's a beautiful view, | isn't it? | \ falling | not a real question |

### Answers to tag questions

A **question tag** is the "mini-question" at the end. A **tag question** is the whole sentence.

How do we answer a tag question? Often, we just say Yes or No. Sometimes we may repeat the tag and reverse it (..., do they? Yes, they do). Be very careful about answering tag questions. In some languages, an oposite system of answering is used, and non-native English speakers sometimes answer in the wrong way. This can lead to a lot of confusion!

Answer a tag question according to the **truth** of the situation. Your answer reflects the real facts, not (necessarily) the question.

For example, everyone knows that snow is white. Look at these questions, and the correct answers:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| tag question | correct answer |  |  |
| Snow is white, isn't it? | Yes (it is). | the answer is the same in both cases - because snow IS WHITE! | but notice the change of stress when the answerer does not agree with the questioner |
| Snow isn't white, is it? | **Yes** it **is**! |
| Snow is black, isn't it? | **No** it **isn't**! | the answer is the same in both cases - because snow IS NOT BLACK! |
| Snow isn't black, is it? | No (it isn't). |

In some languages, people answer a question like "Snow isn't black, is it?" with "Yes" (meaning "Yes, I agree with you"). This is the **wrong answer** in English!

Here are some more examples, with correct answers:

* The moon goes round the earth, doesn't it? Yes, it does.
* The earth is bigger than the moon, isn't it? Yes.
* The earth is bigger than the sun, isn't it? **No**, it **isn't**!
* Asian people don't like rice, do they? **Yes**, they **do**!
* Elephants live in Europe, don't they? **No**, they **don't**!
* Men don't have babies, do they? No.
* The English alphabet doesn't have 40 letters, does it? **No**, it **doesn't**.

### Question tags with imperatives

Sometimes we use question tags with imperatives (invitations, orders), but the sentence remains an imperative and does not require a direct answer. We use *won't* for invitations. We use *can, can't, will, would* for orders.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | imperative + question tag | *notes:* |
| invitation | Take a seat, won't you? | polite |
| order | Help me, can you? | quite friendly |
| Help me, can't you? | quite friendly (some irritation?) |
| Close the door, would you? | quite polite |
| Do it now, will you? | less polite |
| Don't forget, will you? | with negative imperatives only *will* is possible |

### Same-way question tags

Although the basic structure of tag questions is positive-negative or negative-positive, it is sometime possible to use a positive-positive or negative-negative structure. We use same-way question tags to express interest, surprise, anger etc, and not to make real questions.

* So you're having a baby, are you? That's wonderful!
* She wants to marry him, does she? Some chance!
* So you think that's amusing, do you? Think again.

Negative-negative tag questions usually sound rather hostile:

So you don't like my looks, don't you?

**Exercise 1.**

Put in **What, Where, Why, When, How** into the gaps and form meaningful questions.  
  
Example: \_\_\_\_ often do you play netball?  
  
Answer: ***How*** often do you play netball?

1\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_do you like best?

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_do they go to every week?

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_does Amy sleep at night?

4.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_don't you go by bus, Osman?

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_hobbies does Angela have?

6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_are my text books?

7.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is Auntie May’s birthday?

8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_are you going tomorrow, Sally?

9.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ old is En Yusof ?

10.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are you from?

**Exercise 2**. **Error Correction**

Write the correct question into the gap.  
  
Example: Speak English? - \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
Answer: Do you speak English?

1.What I can do for you ? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Played you football? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Where live you? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. From where do you come? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. Understand you the question? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. Does Shiva works in Kuala Lumpur? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

7. What did you last Sunday? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

8. Where did Amin went? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

9. Do like you Traditional Music? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

10. When you graduate ? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise** **3.**

Asking “ Interview “ questions.

**Instructions**: In the following, pretend that you are interviewing a member of your class named Aina. Write your name in line (1), and then complete the dialogue with appropriate QUESTION

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1.**  **2.**  **3.**  **4.**  **5.**  **6.**  **7.**  **8.**  **9**  **10.**  **11.**  **12.**  **13.** | **ME:**  **AINA**  **ME:**  **AINA**  **AINA**  **ME:**  **AINA**  **ME:**  **AINA**  **ME:**  **AINA**  **AINA**  **ME:**  **AINA**  **ME:**  **AINA**  **ME:**  **AINA**  **ME:**  **ANNABEL**  **ME:**  **AINA**  **ME:**  **AINA**  **ME:**  **AINA**  **ME:** | Hi, my name is ………………………… Our lecturer has asked me to interview you so that I can practice asking questions. Could I ask you a few questions about yourself?  Sure.  Well, first of all, ………………………………………..  Aina.  ……………………………………………………..  Negeri Sembilan.  ……………………………………………………..  Seremban.  ………………………………………………………  Two weeks ago.  ……………………………………………………..  Biotechnology.  ……………………………………………………..  I’m going to stay here for four years until I graduate.  …………………………………………………………  I’m living at my aunt and uncle’s house.  ………………………………………………………………….  It’s quite far. It usually takes me an hour to get here.  …………………………………………………….…………….  Sometimes I take the LRT, but usually I take the bus.  …………………………………………………………………..  Very much. The facilities are good and the lecturers are great!  …………………………………………………………………  I want to study hard and be the best student in my class.  Good luck! Anyway, thanks for the interview. I think I have enough information for the assignment. Nice to meet you.  Nice to meet you, too. |

**Exercise 4.**

**Yes / No questions with short answers**.

**Instructions:** Complete speaker A’s QUESTIONS with DO,DOES, IS , ARE OR DID. Complete Speaker B’s SHORT ANSWERS. The first one is done for you.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1.  2.  3.  4.  5.  6.  7.  8.  9.  10.  11. | A:  B:  A:  B: A:  B: A:  B: A:  B: A:  B:  A:  B: A:  B: A:  B: A:  B:  A:  B: | I need a flashlight. …..**DO**… you have one?  No, …**I don’t**….  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Semenyih in Selangor?  Yes, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ snakes have legs?  No, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ going to be in class tomorrow?  Yes, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_all snakebites poisonous?  No, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Panadol relieve pain?  Yes, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Columbus discover New Zealand?  No, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Africa the largest continent.  No, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Asia is.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you doing a grammar exercise?  Yes, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Ants eat other insects?  Yes, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Mercury is a liquid metal used in thermometers. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ mercury have a boiling point?  Yes, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It boils at 356.58˚ C. |

**Exercise 5.**

**Put in the correct question tags.**

1.      He sometimes reads novels,……………………………………………..?

2.      You are from Kedah, ……………………………………………..?

3.      Nazmi didn't use the pencil, ……………………………………………..?

4.      Malathy has answered the teacher's question, …………………………………?

5.      The boy is from Penang, ……………………………………………..?

6.      Suriah wasn't listening, ……………………………………………..?

7.      Andrew isn't sleeping,   ……………………………………………..?

8.      Razak will arrive at KLIA, …………………………………………?

9.      He's been to Jelebu,………………………………………………..?

10.  Cats like fish, ………………………………………………..?

11.  There are some durians left, ………………………………………………..?

12.  I'm late, ………………………………………………..?

13.  Let's go,  ………………………………………………..?

14.  Don't smoke,  ………………………………………………..?

15.  He does sing in the bathroom, ………………………………………………..?

16.  He'll never know,  ………………………………………………..?

17.  I think, he's from German, ………………………………………………..?

18.  Lovely day today, ………………………………………………..?

19.  She is collecting stickers, ………………………………………………..?

20.  We often watch TV in the afternoon, ………………………………………………..?

21.  You have cleaned your car, ………………………………………………..?

22.  Johan and Danial don't like Maths, ………………………………………………..?

23. Roslan played handball yesterday, ………………………………………………..?

24.  They are going home from school, ………………………………………………..?

25.  Mary didn't do her assignment last semester, …………………………………………?

26.  He could have bought a new car, ………………………………………………..?

27.  Kamarudin will come tonight, ………………………………………………..?

28.  I'm clever, ………………………………………………..?

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**Notes and exercises adapted from:**

# 1.English Club.com: <http://www.englishclub.com/grammar/verbs-questions.htm>

### 2. Learn English: Simple Guide to Asking Questions in English:

[**http://www.learnenglish.de/grammar/questiontext.htm**](http://www.learnenglish.de/grammar/questiontext.htm)

**3. English exercises.org:** <http://www.englishexercises.org/makeagame/viewgame.asp?id=61>

**Online exercises to practise Interrogatives or question forms.**

* <http://www.englishexercises.org/buscador/buscar.asp?nivel=any&age=0&tipo=any&contents=interrogatives>
* <http://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar/simple-present/form/exercises?04ks>:
* <http://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar/word-order/questions>
* <http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/exercises_list/fragen.htm>
* <http://www.perfect-english-grammar.com/present-simple-exercise-6.html>
* <http://www.perfect-english-grammar.com/present-simple-exercise-5.html>
* <http://www.perfect-english-grammar.com/present-continuous-exercise-3.html>
* <http://www.perfect-english-grammar.com/past-simple-exercise-5.html>
* <http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/exercises/questions/question_tags3.htm>
* <http://www.englishexercises.org/makeagame/viewgame.asp?id=5573>