



Reading material from apporportion of the content's

5.2 WH- & Indirect questions

A) WH-questions

Wh- questions normally begin with an interrogative word (e.g., *who, whom, which, what, whose, where, how*). We often refer to these words as *WH words* because they include the letters *WH*. We use them to ask for information. The answer cannot be *yes* or *no*. Examples:

A: *When do you finish college?*

B: *Next year.*

A: *Who is your favorite actor?*

B: *George Clooney for sure!*

WH words , their function examples are given below. Read them carefully.

question word	function	example sentence
What	asking for information about something	What is your name?
	asking for repetition or confirmation	What? I can't hear you. You did what?
what...for	asking for a reason, asking why	What did you do that for?
When	asking about time	When did he leave?
Where	asking in or at what place or position	Where do they live?
Which	asking about choice	Which colour do you want?
Who	asking what or which person or people (subject)	Who opened the door?
Whom	asking what or which person or people (object)	Whom did you see?
Whose	asking about ownership	Whose are these keys?

Why	asking for reason, asking what...for	Whose turn is it? Why do you say that?
why don't	making a suggestion	Why don't I help you?
How	asking about manner	How does this work?
	asking about condition or quality	How was your exam?
how + adj/adv	asking about extent or degree	see examples below
how far	distance	How far is Pattaya from Bangkok?
how long	length (time or space)	How long will it take?
how many	quantity (countable)	How many cars are there?
how much	quantity (uncountable)	How much money do you have?
how old	age	How old are you?
how come (informal)	asking for reason, asking why	How come I can't see her?
Activity		

The words in each of the following questions are ordered wrongly. Rearrange them to make meaningful questions.

1. Have to/sit/next to/you/er/do/why?
2. From/are/coming/we/from?
3. Come/a text/with/has/who?
4. She/did/why/late/come?
5. Did/you/when/for the first time/ the nudism/visit
6. Tell/when/did/I/that/you?
7. Put/where/my duster/I/did?
8. Do/what/I/want/you/to ask?

B) Indirect Questions

Me: Excuse me. Could you tell me where the nearest station is?
 Person in the street: Certainly. It's along that road on the right.
 Me: Thank you. And do you know if there's a supermarket near here?
 Person in the street: Yes, there's one next to the station.
 Me: Thank you very much for your help.

I use indirect questions when I'm asking for help in the street, because they are very polite. Indirect questions start with a phrase like 'could you tell me...' or 'do you know...'. For example:

Direct question: Where is the bank?
 Indirect question: Could you tell me where the bank is?

Notice that in the indirect question I put the verb ('is') after the subject ('the bank'), in the same way as I do with a normal positive sentence ('the bank is over there'), but in the direct question I put the verb 'is' before the subject 'the bank'. This is called inversion, and it is used to make direct questions in many verb tenses in English, but we don't use inversion in indirect questions. This is very similar to the grammar of reported questions. However, we use indirect questions in a different way from reported questions. Indirect questions are a way of being polite. They are very, very common in English, especially when you're talking to someone you don't know.

'Yes / No' Questions

To make an indirect 'yes / no' question, we use 'if' and the word order of a normal positive sentence. This is the same as for reported 'yes / no' questions. On the other hand, we don't usually need to 'backshift' (change the tense of the verb) as we do with reported questions.

Of course, most tenses make questions by using 'inversion' (changing the word order). To change from a direct 'yes / no' question with inversion to an indirect question, you add 'if' and change the word order back to a normal positive sentence. You don't need to use inversion.

'Yes / no' questions for tenses with inversion:

Verb Tense	Direct Question	Indirect Question
Present simple with 'be'	Is he Spanish?	Can you tell me if he is Spanish?
Present continuous	Is the restaurant closing now?	Can you tell me if the restaurant is closing now?
Past simple with 'be'	Was he late for the meeting?	Can you tell me if he was late for the

		meeting?
Past continuous	Were you watching TV at 3pm?	Can you tell me if you were watching TV at 3pm?
Present perfect	Has Lucy been to Mexico?	Can you tell me if Lucy has been to Mexico?
Present perfect continuous	Has she been living here long?	Can you tell me if she has been living here long?
Past perfect	Had she found this job when she moved here?	Can you tell me if she had found this job when she moved here?
Past perfect continuous	Had she been living here long when she met you?	Can you tell me if she had been living here long when she met you?
Future simple with 'will'	Will she start her new job next week?	Can you tell me if she will start her new job next week?
Future simple with 'going to'	Is it going to rain later?	Can you tell me if it is going to rain later?
Future continuous	Will Lisa be meeting the boss later?	Can you tell me if Lisa will be meeting the boss later?
Future perfect	Will he have finished the report by tonight?	Can you tell me if he will have finished the report by tonight?
Future perfect continuous	Will he have been studying French for twenty years when he retires?	Can you tell me if he will have been studying French for twenty years when he retires?
Modal verbs	Should we start now?	Can you tell me if we should start now?

'Yes / no' questions with tenses that use 'do / does / did':

Sometimes you want to make an indirect question using the present simple of any verb except 'be' or the past simple of any verb except 'be'. These tense make direct questions by using 'do / does / did'. When we want to make indirect 'yes / no' questions using these tenses, we need 'if' and we don't need 'do / does / did'.

Verb Tense	Direct Question	Indirect Question
Present simple with any verb except 'be'	Does David live in London?	Can you tell me if David lives in London?
Past simple with any verb except 'be'	Did Amanda call John yesterday?	Can you tell me if Amanda called John yesterday?