

# ENGLISH

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## + Question Words in English

Lec. 19&20

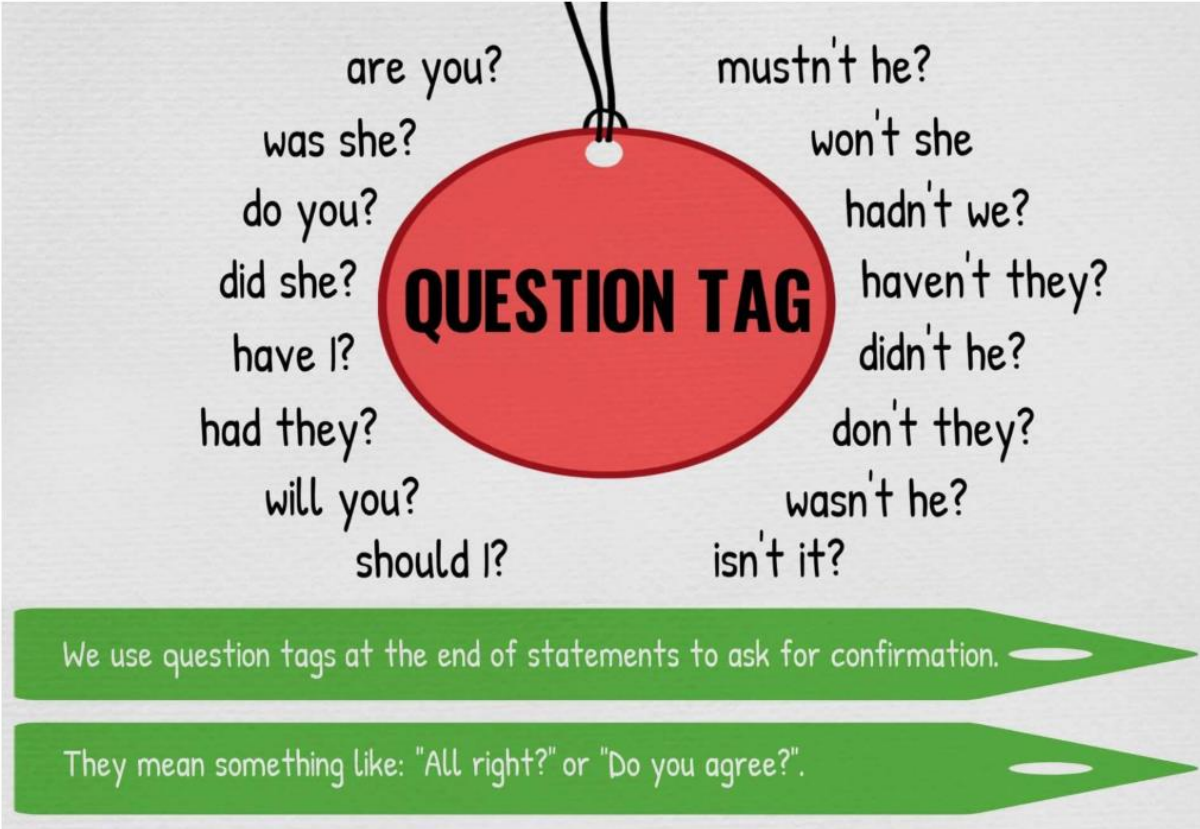
In the English language, there are a variety of question words which can go at the beginning of a sentence, for example who, when, what or why. These words are an integral part of the English language and as a student of the language, it is important that you have a good knowledge of them.

| Question Words |                                           |                                                  |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| QUESTION WORDS | USED FOR                                  | EXAMPLE                                          |
| Who            | Person (subject).                         | Who is that woman?                               |
| Whom           | Person (object).                          | Whom did you see?                                |
| Whose          | Ownership                                 | Whose keys are those?                            |
| Where          | Position, place.                          | Where do you live?                               |
| When           | Time, occasion, moment.                   | When did you last see him?                       |
| Why            | Reason, explanation.                      | Why were you late?                               |
| Why don't      | Suggestion.                               | Why don't you take a nap?                        |
| What           | Specific thing, object.                   | What's the matter?                               |
| What...for     | Reason.                                   | What did you do that for?                        |
| Which          | Choice, alternative.                      | Which is the best exercise - swimming or tennis? |
| How            | Way, manner, form.                        | How do you go to school?                         |
| How much       | A quantity or a price (uncountable noun). | How much are those earnings?                     |
| How many       | A quantity (countable noun).              | How many people are there?                       |
| How often      | Frequency                                 | How often do you go swimming?                    |
| How far        | Distance.                                 | How far is it from your house to your school?    |
| How old        | Age.                                      | How old are you?                                 |

## ✚ Question Tag: Definition, Rules and Examples of Tag Questions

Question Tags! A question tag is something which can turn a statement into a question. Sounds pretty simple, We use question tags at the end of statements to ask for confirmation. They mean something like: "Are you okay?" or "Do you think so?" They are very common in English.

### Tag question definition & examples



**QUESTION TAG**

are you?      mustn't he?  
was she?      won't she  
do you?      hadn't we?  
did she?      haven't they?  
have I?      didn't he?  
had they?      don't they?  
will you?      wasn't he?  
should I?      isn't it?

We use question tags at the end of statements to ask for confirmation.

They mean something like: "All right?" or "Do you agree?".

**Structure:**

- A positive statement + A negative question tag.  
Example: You are a technician, aren't you?
- A negative statement + A positive question tag.  
Example: You are not a technician, are you?

### ➤ Rules for Forming Tag Questions

To form the two-word tag questions, you must follow the rules below:

- The subject in the statement matches the subject in the tag.
- The auxiliary verb or verb to be in the statement matches the verb used in the tag.

- If the statement is positive, the tag is usually negative and [vice versa](#).

Examples:

- *He's read this book, **hasn't he?***
- *He read this book, **didn't he?***
- *He's reading this book, **isn't he?***
- *He reads a lot of books, **doesn't he?***
- *He'll read this book, **won't he?***
- *He should read this book, **shouldn't he?***
- *He can read this book, **can't he?***
- *He'd read this book, **wouldn't he?***



## Question Tags in English

### Verb Tense

**Present be**

**Present simple**

**Past simple**

**Past continuous**

**Present Perfect**

**Past Perfect**

**Will**

**+ sentence → - tag**

She is American, isn't she?

You study English, don't you?

You were at home, weren't you?

Tom was watching TV, wasn't he?

He has written 5 letters, hasn't he?

You had had lunch, hadn't you?

He'll read this book, won't he?

**- sentence → + tag**

She isn't American, is she?

You don't study English, do you?

You weren't at home, were you?

Tom wasn't watching TV, was he?

He hasn't written 5 letters, has he?

You hadn't had lunch, had you?

He won't read this book, will he?

## Modal Verbs

He can read this book, can't he?

He can't read this book, can he?

### ➤ Exceptions in Forming Question Tags

#### ✓ Statements with Negative Adverbs

The adverbs *never, seldom, hardly, rarely, ...* have a negative sense. We treat statements with these words like negative statements, so the question tag is normally positive.

Example:

- *We have **never** seen that, have we?*

#### ✓ Statements begin with I'm

We use the verb form **are/aren't I** when the subject is the first person singular.

Example:

- *I'm intelligent, **aren't I**?*

#### ✓ Statements begin with Let's

- We use **shall we** after sentences with **Let's**.

Example:

- *Let's take the next bus, shall we?*
- *Let's go home, shall we?*

#### ✓ With Imperatives

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

Example:

- *Open the window, will you? (order – less polite)*
- *Take a seat, won't you? (invitation – polite)*

#### ✓ With There... structure

When we use the **there...** structure, **there** is reflected in the tag.

Example:

- ***There's** nothing wrong, is **there**?*

- *There weren't any problems when you talked to Jack, were there?*

✓ **Statements with Nobody/No one, Somebody/Someone, Everybody/Everyone as the subject**

We use the pronoun **they** in question tags after statements with **nobody/no one, somebody/someone, everybody/everyone** as the subject.

Example:

- *Somebody wanted to borrow Jack's bike, didn't they?*

✓ **Statements with Nothing/Something/Everything as the subject**

When the subject is **nothing/something**, we use **it** in the tag question.

Example:

- *Something happened at Jack's house, didn't it?*

✓ **Statements with This**

When the subject is **this**, we use **it** in the tag question.

Example:

*This will work, won't it?*

**Note:**

We can use **affirmative** tag questions after affirmative sentences to express a reaction such as surprise or interest.

Example:

- *You're moving to London, are you?*

We use falling intonation on question tags when we are checking information and we expect the listener to agree.

Example:

- *It's a lovely day, isn't it?*

We use rising intonation to ask a real question, when we are unsure whether the statement is true or not, or when asking for information and making requests.

Example:

- *You couldn't do me a favor, could you?*