

1.4 Short answers and auxiliary verbs

Short answers are very common in spoken English. If you just say Yes or No, it can sound rude. We use short answers after Yes/No questions. To make a short answer, repeat the auxiliary verb. In the Present and Past Simple, use do/does/did.

Short answer

Are you coming with us?
Have you had breakfast?
Kate likes walking.
Mary didn't phone.
Don't forget to write.

Yes, **I am**.
No, **I haven't**.
No, **she doesn't**. She hates it.
Yes, **she did**. You were out.
No, **I won't**.

Short answers

Short answers are often grammatically incomplete because we do not usually repeat the words that have just been said. A typical short answer pattern is **subject + auxiliary verb**. Short answers may also contain other words that are really necessary.

Study the following examples.

'Can you speak English?' 'Yes, I can.' (More natural than 'Yes, I can speak English.')

'Is he coming with us?' 'Yes, he is.'

'Is she interested in the offer?' 'No, she isn't.'

'Is it raining?' 'Yes, it is.'

'Has it stopped raining?' 'No, it hasn't.'

'Have you finished the job?' 'Yes, I have.'

'Do you want this?' 'No, I don't.'

'Will you come with me?' 'Yes, I will.'

‘Will she help us?’ ‘No, she won’t.’

‘Did you phone him yesterday?’ ‘Yes, I did.’

‘Are you married?’ ‘Yes, I am.’

‘Do you have children?’ ‘Yes, I have.’

‘Is she running a temperature?’ ‘Yes, she is.’

‘Do you like cricket?’ ‘No, I don’t.’

‘Do you have a hobby?’ ‘Yes, I have.’

‘Do you know how to use a computer?’ ‘Yes, I do.’

‘Do you want to talk to the manager?’ ‘Yes, I do.’

‘Are you tired?’ ‘No, I am not.’

‘May I come in, Sir?’ ‘Yes, you may.’

‘Can I go now?’ ‘No, you can’t.’

‘Am I supposed to wait?’ ‘No, you aren’t.’

‘Were you not listening?’ ‘No, I wasn’t.’

Notes

In affirmative short answers we use ‘yes’. In negative short answers we use ‘no’. Affirmative short answers have the structure: **subject + auxiliary verb**. Negative short answers have the structure: **subject + auxiliary verb + not**. The **not** is usually attached to the auxiliary verb.