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Grammar Reference

Question tags

Question tags are very common in spoken English, and they are usually used to keep a conversation going by getting other people to talk with. The meaning of a question tag depends on how the speaker says it. A question tag with a rising intonation is like a real question. It is asking for confirmation. It means “I’m not sure, so I’m checking”.

Example: You are the new staff, **aren’t you?**
 You work in marketing department, **don’t you?**

A question tag with falling intonation isn’t really a question. It is just a way of making conversation. The speaker is inviting other people to agree with him/her.

Example:
 PUC is a great university, **isn’t it?**
 You haven’t been to Angkor Wat, **have you?**

Note: We can use question tags with negative sentences to make a polite request for information or help.

- You won’t lend me any money, will you?

To form a question tag, we use the following at the end of a sentence:

- auxiliary verbs: **do/does, be** for the present, **did** for the past, **will/won’t** for the future, etc.
- a pronoun: **he, it, we,**

Positive verb, negative tag	Negative verb, positive tag
You are new here, aren’t you?	Dara isn’t very smart, is he?
You live in Phnom Penh, don’t you?	You don’t study abroad, do you?
She is from Japan, isn’t she?	We aren’t living in Phnom Penh, are we?
You worked for a dairy factory, didn’t you?	We didn’t study at the college, did we?
You were an accountant there, weren’t you?	She wasn’t at home, was she?
You have ever visited Korea, haven’t you?	They haven’t lived in Cambodia for years, have they?
You will start work tomorrow, won’t you?	Linda won’t study abroad, will she?
They are going to study in Australia, aren’t they?	The new staff isn’t going to stop soon, is she?

Note: It’s important to understand the meaning of “yes” and “no” in answer to a negative sentence:

You’re not going out tonight, **are you?**

Yes (= Yes, I am going out)

No (= No, I am not going out)

After “Let’s”..., the question tag is “shall we”: Let’s go for a walk, **shall we?** (the voice goes up)

After “Don’t”..., the question tag is “will you”: Don’t be late, **will you?** (the voice goes down)

After “I’m...”, the negative question tag is “aren’t I”: I’m right, **aren’t I?** Yes, you are.