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## Grammar Reference

### > Questions without interrogative words

Questions without an **interrogative** word are constructed as follows:

- **Be + subject**

*Example:* **Are you** married?

**Is John** a policeman?

- **Do + subject + verb**

*Example:* **Do they have** a television?

**Did she understand** what I said?

- **Can/Could + subject + verb**

The **modals can** or **could** are generally used to ask questions in a polite manner.

*Example:* **Can/Could we have** breakfast, please?

**Can/Could you give** me my notebook, please?

**Note.** **Could** is slightly more polite than **can**.

**Could** is generally only used to **ask for something politely**, and **not** to **make a polite offer**.

*Example:* **Could you re-read** my presentation?  
(request)

**Can I get** you some tea or coffee?  
(offer)

- **Modal, future, or conditional auxiliary + subject + verb**

*Example:* **Should we buy** some bread?

**Will he buy** a ticket?

**Would we go** by bus?

### > Interrogative words

- **Interrogative** words introduce questions which cannot be answered with yes or no.
- The main **interrogatives** are:

<b>who</b>	<b>what</b>	<b>when</b>
<b>where</b>	<b>why</b>	<b>whose</b>
<b>how</b>	<b>which</b>	

- **Who** always refers to people.

*Example:* **Who** is the President?  
**Who** are you?

The structure of a **who** question varies depending on whether **who** refers to the **object** or the **subject** of the question.

*Example:* **Subject: Who** asked you?  
 (sb asked you)

**Object: Who** did you ask?  
 (you asked sb)

- **Which** refers to either people or things.

*Example:* **Which** teacher do you like?  
**Which** poem are they studying?

- **What** can also refer to people, but usually refers to things.

*Example:* **What** sport do you play?  
**What** is her job?

- **How** expresses the **manner** or **means** of an action.

*Example:* **How** do you spell your name? (**manner**)  
S-M-I-T-H.

**How** do you go to work? (**means**)  
By bus.

- **How**, as an **adjective** or **adverb**, is used to inquire about someone's well-being, enjoyment or progress.

*Example:* **How** are you?

**How** do they like their new apartment?

**How** is your new job going?

- **How** can come before an **adjective** or an **adverb** to express degree.

*Example:* **How** long is the movie? (**adjective**)

**How** often does he play tennis? (**adverb**)

- **Why** inquires about the reason behind an event or action.

*Example:* **Why** don't you like her?

**Why** are they taking the train?

- **Where** refers to a location.

*Example:* **Where** is the museum?

**Where** can I buy stamps?

- **When** refers to a time or date.

*Example:* **When** does it open?

**When** do we leave?

- **Whose** refers to possession.

*Example:* **Whose** shirt is this?

**Whose** is that?

- Questions using **interrogative** words are generally formed using the following structure:

**Interrogative word + Auxiliary/Modal + Subject + Verb**

*Example:* **What** are you eating?  
**Where** does the train go?  
**Who** can I visit?

If the question contains a **preposition**, it is placed at the end of the sentence.

*Example:* **What** were you listening **to**?  
**Who** is she talking **about**?

### > Past interrogatives

A question, whether closed or open (i.e., preceded by an interrogative pronoun), is formed by **placing the verb before the subject** as is illustrated by the following cases.

- **'Was / were' + subject (+ predicate)**

*Example:* **Were you insured?**  
You're back from Japan. How **was it**?

- **'Was / were' + subject + '-ing' verb**

*Example:* **Were you talking** to those girls?  
What **were you doing** in the yard?

- A **modal** or the **auxiliary 'would'** + **subject** + **'have'** + **past participle**

*Example:* What **could we have done**?  
**Would you have invited** her?

- **'Did' + subject + verb**

*Example:* **Did you drive back** in the snow?  
What **did your mother say**?

- **'Have' + subject + past participle**

*Example:* What **have you done**?  
How long **have we been** skiing?  
**Have you seen** this person before?

Note. When the **subject** is an **interrogative pronoun**, the **verb immediately follows the pronoun**.

*Example:* **Who came** to your party?  
**What went** wrong?