

# 12

## question formation

### inversion

We make questions with *be* by putting the verb in front of the noun or pronoun. This movement of the verb is called *inversion*. When *be* is part of the verb tense we also put it in front of the noun or pronoun.

**Statement** (noun + verb)

*Everest is the highest mountain.*

*The Romans were expecting an attack.*

**Question** (verb + noun)

*Is Everest the highest mountain?*

*Were the Romans expecting an attack?*

Do the same when *will*, *have* and *had* are part of the verb tense.

*Will we arrive on time?*

*Have you read War and Peace?*

*Had Napoleon intended to fight the battle?*

Present simple tenses form questions with *do* / *does*, and past simple with *did*, using the verb stem.

*Do ants show any kind of intelligence?*

*Did Columbus discover America?*

*Does a cat know how to swim?*

### modal auxiliaries, *have to* (see Units 22–25)

Modals form questions by moving the auxiliary in front of the pronoun.

*Can bats hear well?*

*Should we stop eating white sugar?*

*Have to* forms questions with *do* / *does* and *did*. *Have to* is generally used as a question form of *must*.

*Do I have to turn on the computer first?*

*Did Roman slaves have to work hard?*

### yes / no questions, short answers

Questions without a question word have the answer *yes* or *no*. When we answer this kind of question, we often give a short answer which repeats part of the question.

*Is Everest the highest mountain?*

Yes, it **is**. / No, it **isn't**.

*Was Columbus the first European to reach America?*

No, he **wasn't**. / Yes, he **was**.

*Do ants show any kind of intelligence?*

Yes, they **do**. / No, they **don't**.

*Had Napoleon intended to fight the battle?*

No, he **hadn't**. / Yes, he **had**.

*Can bats hear well?*

Yes, they **can**. / No, they **can't**.

*Did Roman slaves have to work hard?*

Yes, they **did**. / No, they **didn't**.

### wh- questions

We put a question word in front of question forms.

*Which is the highest mountain?*

*How do ants show intelligence?*

*Who was the first European to reach America?*

*Why is the climate changing everywhere?*

*When will the ice at the Poles melt completely?*

*How well can bats hear?*

### embedded questions

Statements or questions with verbs like *know* and *wonder*, or polite requests like *Can you tell me ...* can introduce a second question. The second question is in statement form.

**direct question**

*How hot is it on Mars?*

*Where does the blue wire go?*

*Who is Romeo?*

*What is the answer?*

*What was the time?*

**embedded question**

*I wonder how hot it is on Mars.*

*Can you tell me where the blue wire goes?*

*Do you know who Romeo is?*

*I know what the answer is.*

*I didn't know what the time was.*

### question phrases

Many questions are formed from a question word and other words.

*What is the difference between X and Y?*

*How strong / large is this?*

*What is the relationship between X and Y?*

*What kind of plant is this?*

*What effect does heat have on water?*

*How does this work?*



# 1 Rewrite the sentence as a yes / no question.

- a The Nile is the longest river.  
Is the Nile the longest river? ?
- b Earthquakes have occurred in this country.  
? ?
- c The volcano had erupted before.  
? ?
- d 200 million years ago there was only one continent.  
? ?
- e People were expecting a tsunami in 2004.  
? ?

- f Our climate will be different in 50 years' time.  
? ?
- g The capital city has continued to grow.  
? ?
- h The Arabian Desert and the Gobi Desert are similar in size.  
? ?
- i The ice at the Poles has started to melt.  
? ?
- j Many people were injured in the earthquake.  
? ?

# 2 Complete a short answer for each question.

- a Do all birds spend winter in a different part of the world?
- b Is the peregrine falcon the fastest bird?
- c Can a racehorse run faster than a lion?
- d Does the giant scolopender centipede really eat mice?
- e Have termites really built nests seven metres tall?
- f Do millipedes really have a thousand legs?
- g Are we really discovering more species of insect all the time?
- h Is it true that wasps make paper to build their nests?
- i Can some fish really climb trees?
- j Did unicorns really exist once?

No, *they don't*

Yes, \_\_\_\_\_

No, \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, \_\_\_\_\_

No, \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, \_\_\_\_\_

No, \_\_\_\_\_

# 3 Match questions a to j with their answers 1 to 10. Then complete the questions.

## Questions

- a Where *does the name volcano* come from? 5
- b How many \_\_\_\_\_ on Earth?
- c Where \_\_\_\_\_ come from?
- d Why \_\_\_\_\_ of the volcano?
- e What \_\_\_\_\_ mean?
- f How long \_\_\_\_\_ remain active?
- g How \_\_\_\_\_ that a volcano will erupt?
- h What \_\_\_\_\_ with?
- i What \_\_\_\_\_ volcanoes are going to erupt?
- j What \_\_\_\_\_ caused volcanic eruptions?

## Answers

- Scientists predict when a volcano will erupt by measuring movements in the Earth.
- The hot lava comes from deep in the Earth's crust.
- They often release sulphur dioxide gas (SO<sub>2</sub>) as a sign that they are going to erupt.
- Dormant* means that the volcano is not active at the moment – but it could erupt again.
- The name volcano comes from the Roman god of fire, Vulcan.
- Most volcanoes remain active for thousands or even millions of years.
- People once thought that coal and sulphur (S) burning below ground caused volcanic eruptions.
- It's hard to give an exact number, but there are more than 30 well-known ones.
- They measure the movements with an instrument called a seismometer.
- The lava comes out because of pressure from below.

4 Use the prompts to make a question. Then choose answer A, B or C. Check the factual answers on page 208.

- a you know / what / be / the capital of Argentina? *Do you know what the capital of Argentina is*
- b you know / how long / be / the River Nile?
- c you know / where / be Lake Titicaca?
- d you know / what colour / be / the flag of Mali?
- e you know / how many states / there be / in Australia?
- f you know / how high / be / Mount Everest?
- g you know / what / be / the capital of the Republic of Gambia?
- h you know how many / has got / official languages / Switzerland?
- i you know / what / be / the Finnish name for Finland?
- j you know / what / be / the population of the Republic of San Marino?

- |                                 |                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a A Montevideo                  | B Buenos Aires                  | C Valparaiso               |
| b A 6,695 km                    | B 8,695 km                      | C 10,695 km                |
| c A between Bolivia and Peru    | B in central Asia               | C on an island near Hawaii |
| d A red, white and blue stripes | B green, yellow and red stripes | C blue and white stripes   |
| e A 12                          | B 9                             | C 8                        |
| f A 6,848 metres                | B 7,848 metres                  | C 8,848 metres             |
| g A Conakry                     | B Thimphu                       | C Banjul                   |
| h A 4                           | B 3                             | C 2                        |
| i A Republika e Shqipërisë      | B Suomen tasavalta              | C Eesti Vabariik           |
| j A about 270,000               | B about 27,000                  | C about 2.7 million        |

5 Rewrite each question beginning as shown. Check the factual answers on page 208.

- a Where is Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch?  
Do you know *where Llanfair (etc) is* ?
- b Is it the name of a real place?  
Do you have any idea ?
- c Was it an invented name?  
Can you tell me ?
- d Why did they decide to make up a name?  
I wonder ?
- e What do the local people say?  
Could you tell me ?
- f Where does the name Taumatawhakatangihangakoauauotamateaturipukakapiki-  
maungahoronukupokaiwhenuakitanatahu come from?  
Do you have any idea ?
- g How do you pronounce it?  
Do you know ?
- h What does it mean?  
Do you understand ?
- i Which language is this word from?  
Can you tell me ?
- j What's the longest place name in your country?  
Could you tell me ?