

# Grammar Reference

## Question forms

### Meaning and Use

In English, there are two basic types of question.

1. **Yes/no questions** often begin with the verb **to be**, but can also begin with other **auxiliary verbs**, such as **do**. We ask these when we want a **yes** or **no** answer.

Dave: **Are** you hungry?

Mike: **Yes**, I'm starving.

Sarah: **Did** you get here on time?

Emily: **No**, I missed the bus!

2. **Wh-questions** start with a question word, such as **who**, **what**, **where**, **when**, **why** or **how**. We ask this type of question when we want **different kinds of information**. These questions cannot be answered with a yes or no.

Dave: **Why** are you so hungry?

Mike: **I didn't eat breakfast**.

Sarah: **When** did you get here?

Emily: **About half an hour ago**.

### Form

**Yes/no questions** that begin with the verb **to be** are made with **to be + subject**.

**Are you** playing football tomorrow?

**Was the weather** nice yesterday?

If we start with an **auxiliary verb**, the order is **auxiliary + subject + main verb**.

**Can Jenny speak** Chinese?

**Did you go** to the cinema on Saturday?

**Wh-questions** can be used to ask about the **subject** or **object** of the verb. Compare these questions:

**Who loves Lucy?**

**Who does Lucy love?**

For **subject** questions, the order is **question word + verb + object**.

**Who wants ice cream** for dessert?

**Who broke the mirror** in the dining room?

**Who answered the phone?**

The **object** question form is **question word + auxiliary + subject + verb**.

**What did you do** at the weekend?

**Where does your brother work?**

**Who will you ask** for help?

### Take Note

#### Asking questions with 'how'

The question word **how** is usually combined with other words when asking for information, such as size, someone's age, or the price of something.

**How big** is your apartment?

**How old** are your children now?

**How much** is the black dress in the window?

### Spoken English

In formal situations, it is common to respond to a yes/no question by **repeating the auxiliary** in a complete sentence.

Max: **Can** you use a computer?

Jill: Yes, **I can**.

In casual spoken English, we **do not** need to repeat the auxiliary. Answers **do not** always contain 'yes' or 'no'.

*Peter: Do you know the way to the train station?*

*William: **Not really**.*

*Lucy: Shall we order sushi?*

*Sally: **Absolutely!***

## Practice

**rearrange the words to make 'yes/no' and wh-questions.**

1. anywhere did you weekend interesting last go?
2. grow up did you where?
3. did for your car new much how pay you?
4. into your when you did move new house?
5. listening to what you are?
6. the game basketball who won?
7. I borrow can your phone?
8. you do watch want movie a tonight to?

## Answers

1. Did you go anywhere interesting last weekend?

[The order of yes/no questions is: auxiliary + subject + main verb.]

2. Where did you grow up?

[The order of object Wh-questions is: question word + auxiliary + subject + verb.]

3. How much did you pay for your new car?

[The order of object Wh-questions: question word + auxiliary + subject + verb.]

4. When did you move into your new house?

[The order of object Wh-questions is: question word + auxiliary + subject + verb.]

5. What are you listening to?

[The order of object Wh-questions is: question word + auxiliary + subject + verb.]

6. Who won the basketball game?

[The order of subject Wh-questions is: question word + verb + object.]

7. Can I borrow your phone?

[The order of yes/no questions is: auxiliary + subject + main verb.]

8. Do you want to watch a movie tonight?

[The order of yes/no questions is: auxiliary + subject + main verb.]

