

## Grammar Reference

### If and whether - for when we have two choices

Often the words **if** and **whether** can be used interchangeably, but one difference is that we use **whether** when we have two clear choices. Compare these:

- 1) I don't know **if** Finn wants tea or coffee. (*It's possible Finn wants something else*)
- 2) I don't know **whether** Finn wants tea or coffee. (*These are the only two possibilities*)

### If and whether in indirect questions

#### Meaning and use

There are two ways to ask questions in English – directly and indirectly. Both have the same meaning, but we use indirect questions if we want to sound more formal or polite, especially when we are talking to people we don't know.

We can use **if** and **whether** like this - notice how the word order changes:

(Direct question) - *Is the coffee for everyone?*

(Indirect question) - *Could you tell me if the coffee is for everyone?*

#### Form

Indirect questions have the same word order as statements:

**introductory phrase + if or whether + subject + verb**

(Direct question) - *Is the meeting at two?*

(Indirect question) - *Do you know if the meeting is at two?*