

## questions tags (*endaspurningar*)

Examples:

- You're not hungry, are you?
- They've already done the washing up, haven't they?
- Be quiet, will you?

USE: Questions like the underlined ones above are used either to invite agreement (with falling intonation), or to ask for confirmation of facts (falling intonation).

Examples: It's lovely today, isn't it? **(Don't you agree?)**

You didn't tell her our secret, did you? **(Can you confirm/verify?)**

Form: Question tags consist of an auxiliary verb (do, does, is, are, have, has, must, can, etc.) and a personal pronoun (he, she, it, we, they, you, etc.) There are a few basic rules:

- If there's an auxiliary (do/does, be, have) or modal auxiliary verb (can, must, need, etc.) in the main clause, this is repeated in the question tag.

Examples: Katla **isn't** coming, **is she?** Jóhann **will** be furious, **won't he?**

- If there is an ordinary verb in the main clause, do is used in the question tag.

Examples: Sam **likes** (= *does like*) bananas, **doesn't she?**

They **went** (= *did go*) to Russia last year, **didn't they?**

He **had** (= *did have*) an accident a week ago, **didn't he?**

- Normally an affirmative statement has a negative question, and vice versa:

| Statement          | Question tag   |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>affirmative</b> | <b>negative</b> <i>You're coming, <b>aren't you</b></i>                      |
| <b>negative</b>    | <b>affirmative</b> <i>He doesn't like heavy metal music, <b>does he?</b></i> |

Exercise 1. Match the two halves of the sentences below. An example is given.

|    |  |          |                  |
|----|--|----------|------------------|
| a) | You usually catch the 9 o'clock train, |          | 1. aren't you?   |
| b) | You can't speak Spanish,               |          | 2. couldn't you? |
| c) | You haven't got a car,                 |          | 3. had you?      |
| d) | You'd better answer the telephone,     |          | 4. will you?     |
| e) | You could always borrow the money,     |          | 5. can you?      |
| f) | You won't tell anyone,                 | <b>4</b> | 6. don't you?    |
| g) | You didn't wear that to the party,     |          | 7. hadn't you?   |
| h) | You're going to see him tomorrow,      |          | 8. haven't you?  |
| i) | You hadn't been to an opera before,    |          | 9. have you?     |
| j) | You've got some time to spare,         |          | 10. did you?     |

Special points

- **I am** is followed by the question tag **aren't I?** (I'm lucky, aren't I?)
- After an imperative (boðháttur), **will you?** Or **would you?** Are the most common forms. Use **will you?** After a negative imperative:  
Example: Pay attention, will you? Shut the door, would you?  
But Don't be late, will you? (not ~~would you?~~)
- Negative expressions like no, nothing, nowhere, and nobody in the main clause are followed by an affirmative question tag.

Example : She takes no interest in her studies, does she?

- *Somebody/someone, everybody/everyone and nobody/no-one* are followed by **they** in a question tag. For example:  
*Nobody called for me, did they?*  
*Everyone was very pleased, weren't they?*
- *Sentences beginning with the directive **let's**, we use **shall we?***
- *Nothing/anything* in the main clause is followed by **it** in a question tag. For example:  
*Nothing could be better, could it?*  
*Anything could happen now, couldn't it?*

Exercise 2. Add the correct question tags to the following statements.

1. We left at dawn, \_\_\_\_\_?
2. You've no idea at all what I'm talking about, \_\_\_\_\_?
3. You'd rather be staying at home, \_\_\_\_\_?
4. Don't tell anyone, \_\_\_\_\_?
5. There are some fantastic bargains, \_\_\_\_\_?
6. No-one managed to escape, \_\_\_\_\_?
7. Take care, \_\_\_\_\_?
8. You shouldn't have made such a fuss, \_\_\_\_\_?
9. They could've told the police, \_\_\_\_\_?
10. We had really some bad luck, \_\_\_\_\_?
11. Nobody heard what you said, \_\_\_\_\_?
12. Switch on the light, \_\_\_\_\_?
13. I'm managing quite well, \_\_\_\_\_?
14. Everyone has to pay taxes, \_\_\_\_\_?
15. You'd be scared if you met a bear in the street, \_\_\_\_\_?
16. Somebody could see you, \_\_\_\_\_?
17. There was nothing wrong with the car, \_\_\_\_\_?
18. Do listen, \_\_\_\_\_?
19. I'm not late, \_\_\_\_\_?
20. This is really boring, \_\_\_\_\_?
21. Listen, \_\_\_\_\_?
22. Your mother's just had an operation, \_\_\_\_\_?
23. You must keep this to yourself, \_\_\_\_\_?
24. No-one knew what to do, \_\_\_\_\_?
25. You couldn't lend me a fiver, \_\_\_\_\_?
26. It was marked yellow on the map, \_\_\_\_\_?
27. The road had been very bad, \_\_\_\_\_?
28. Nothing could save them now, \_\_\_\_\_?
29. You'd better see you dentist about that tooth, \_\_\_\_\_?
30. Let's get some grub, \_\_\_\_\_?