Question tags (**do you**? **isn't it**? etc.)

Study these examples:

You haven't seen Lisa today, **have you?**

No, I haven't.

It was a good film, **wasn't it?**

Yes, it was great.

Have you? and **wasn't it**? are *question tags*. These are mini-questions that you can put on the end of a sentence.

In question tags, we use an auxiliary verb (**have**/**was**/**will** etc.).

We use **do**/**does**/**did** for the present and past simple (see Unit 51):

- ◯ 'Karen plays the piano, **does**n't she?'   'Well, yes, but not very well.'
- ◯ 'You didn't lock the door, **did** you?'   'No, I forgot.'

Normally we use a *negative* question tag after a *positive* sentence:

positive sentence	+ *negative tag*
Kate **will** be here soon,	**won't she**?
There **was** a lot of traffic,	**wasn't there**?
Joe **should** pass the exam,	**shouldn't he**?

… and a *positive* question tag after a *negative* sentence:

negative sentence	+ *positive tag*
Kate **won't** be late,	**will she**?
They **don't** like us,	**do they**?
You **haven't** eaten yet,	**have you**?

Notice the meaning of **yes** and **no** in answer to a negative sentence:

- ◯ 'You're **not** going out this morning, **are you**?'   { '**Yes.**' (= Yes, I am going out)
  '**No.**'   (= No, I am not going out) }

The meaning of a question tag depends on how you say it. If your voice goes *down*, you are not really asking a question. You expect the listener to agree with you:

- ◯ 'It's a nice day, **isn't it**?'   'Yes, beautiful.'
- ◯ 'Paul doesn't look well today, **does he**?'   'No, he looks very tired.'
- ◯ 'Lisa's very funny. She's got a great sense of humour, **hasn't she**?'   'Yes, she has.'

But if the voice goes *up*, it is a real question:

- ◯ 'You haven't seen Kate today, **have you**?'   'No, I haven't.'
  (= Have you seen Kate today?)

You can use a *negative sentence* + *positive tag* to ask for things or information, or to ask somebody to do something. The voice goes *up* at the end of the tag:

- ◯ 'You couldn't do me a favour, **could you**?'   'It depends what it is.'
- ◯ 'You don't know where Karen is, **do you**?'   'Sorry, I have no idea.'

After **Let's** … (= **Let us**) the question tag is **shall we**:

- ◯ **Let's** go for a walk, **shall we**? (the voice goes *up*)

After **Don't** …, the question tag is **will you**:

- ◯ **Don't** be late, **will you**? (the voice goes *down*)

After **I'm** …, the negative question tag is **aren't I**? (= am I not?):

- ◯ 'I'm right, **aren't I**?'   'Yes, you are.'

Exercises

52.1 Complete these sentences with a question tag.

1	Kate won't be late,	_will she_ ?	No, she's never late.
2	You're tired,	_aren't you_ ?	Yes, a little.
3	You travel a lot,	?	Yes, I love travelling.
4	You weren't listening,	?	Yes, I was!
5	Sarah doesn't know Ann,	?	No, they've never met.
6	Jack's on holiday,	?	Yes, he's in Australia.
7	It didn't take long to get here,	?	No, just ten minutes.
8	You can speak German,	?	Yes, but not fluently.
9	They won't mind if I take a picture,	?	No, of course they won't.
10	There are a lot of people here,	?	Yes, more than I expected.
11	Let's go and have coffee,	?	Yes, let's do that.
12	This isn't very interesting	?	No, not really.
13	I'm too impatient	?	Yes, you are sometimes.
14	You wouldn't tell anyone,	?	No, of course not.
15	Helen has lived here a long time,	?	Yes, 20 years.
16	I shouldn't have lost my temper,	?	No, but that's all right.
17	He'd never met her before,	?	No, that was the first time.
18	Don't forget to call me,	?	No, I won't forget.

52.2 In these situations you expect your friend to agree with you. Use a question tag in your sentences.

1 You look out of the window. The sky is blue and the sun is shining. You say to your friend:
(beautiful day) _It's a beautiful day, isn't it?_ .

2 You're with a friend outside a restaurant. You're looking at the prices, which are very high.
You say: (expensive) It ....

3 You and a colleague have just finished a training course. You really enjoyed it. You say to your
colleague: (great) The course ....

4 Your friend's hair is much shorter than when you last met. You say to her/him:
(have / your hair / cut) You ....

5 You're listening to a woman singing. You like her voice very much. You say to your friend:
(a good voice) She ....

6 You're trying on a jacket in a shop. You look in the mirror and you don't like what you see.
You say to your friend:
(not / look / right) It ....

7 You and a friend are walking over a small wooden bridge. The bridge is old and some parts are
broken. You say:
(not / very safe) This bridge ....

52.3 In these situations you are asking for information, asking people to do things etc.

1 You need a pen. Perhaps Jane has one. Ask her.
Jane, you don't have a pen I could borrow, do you? .

2 You have to move a heavy table. You want Joe to help you with it. Ask him.
Joe, you ....

3 You're looking for Sarah. Perhaps Lisa knows where she is. Ask her.
Lisa, you ....

4 You want to borrow a tennis racket. Perhaps Helen has one. Ask her.
Helen, ...

5 Anna has a car and you need a lift to the station. Perhaps she'll take you. Ask her.
Anna, ...

6 You're looking for your keys. Perhaps Robert has seen them. Ask him.
Robert, ...