

Questions and Negation

QUESTIONS / INTERROGATIVE CLAUSES

- **yes-no questions:** rising intonation; operator + subject; everything specified — only confirmation needed:
 - *Are you coming to my party?*
 - *Is he at home?*
 - *Does he like animals?*
 - *Will you give me your money woman?* (command)
- **negative yes-no questions** (surprise)
 - *Isn't he at home?*
 - *Isn't that terrible?* (exclamation)
 - *Won't you behave?* (command)

● **tag questions** (question tags)

= operator V + personal pronoun (added to declarative clause)

– tag and main clause opposite in polarity (negative / positive)

– purpose: invite confirmation / agreement

– if no operator then form of DO is acceptable

- *He's at home, **isn't** he?* rising (real question)
- *He's at home, **isn't** he?* falling (reassurance)
- *He isn't at home, **is** he?*
- *It's your ball, **is** it?* (same polarity also possible)
- *You (do) like coffee, **don't** you?* (do, did optional in positive clauses)
- *You (did go) went there, **didn't** you?*
- *So he's been beating his sister with mum's shoes, **has** he?*

ANSWERS TO Q-TAGS

<i>Snow is white, isn't it?</i>	<i>Yes (it is).</i>	Answer is the same in both cases - because snow is white!
<i>Snow isn't white, is it?</i>	<i>Yes it is!</i>	
<i>Snow is black, isn't it?</i>	<i>No it isn't!</i>	Answer is the same in both cases - because snow is not black!
<i>Snow isn't black, is it?</i>	<i>No (it isn't).</i>	

(notice change of stress when the answerer does not agree with the questioner.)

Task: complete with a suitable answer or question tag.

1. The moon goes round the earth, doesn't it?
2. The earth is bigger than the moon, isn't it?
3. The earth is bigger than the sun, isn't it?
4. Asian people don't like rice, do they?
5. Elephants live in Europe, don't they?
6. Men don't have babies, do they?
7. The English alphabet doesn't have 40 letters, does it?

Q-TAGS SPECIALS

*I am right, **aren't** I?*

*You have to go, **don't** you?*

(you (**do**) have to go...)

*Nothing came in the post, **did** it?*

*Let's go, **shall we**?*

(let's = let **us**)

*He'd better do it, **hadn't** he?*

*Take a seat, **won't** you?*

(polite invitation)

*Help me, **can** you?*

(cheerful invite)

*Help me, **can't** you?*

(show of irritation)

*Close the door, **would** you?*

(polite request-command)

*Do it now, **will** you?*

(... still polite, but direct)

*Don't forget, **will** you?*

(will used as imperative points to future)

*So you're having a baby, **are** you? That's wonderful!*

the same polarity (surprise)

*So you think that's funny, **do** you? Think again.*

(anger)

*So you don't like my looks, **don't** you?*

(hostility)

- **WH-questions:** falling intonation

- open with a wh-word which indicates an element to be specified (subject, object, complement, adverbial) or part of a phrase (specification of the verb phrase):

- ***What** do you mean?*

- ***Why** are you waiting here?*

- ***When** did he come?*

- ***Who** are you waiting for? but: You are waiting for **WHOM**?*
(Indirect questions: *Tell me **who** you are waiting for.*)

- ***What** happened?*

- ***What the** * happened?*

- ***Who the** * did that?*

- ***How** dare you speak to me like that? (not meant as a question)*

MINOR QUESTION TYPES

- **alternative questions:** addressee to choose between alternatives (instead of answering YES/NO)
 - *A: Do you want one **or** two?* *B: Two.*
 - *A: So do you like my haircut **or** not?* *B: It's alright.*
 - *Have you seen him **or** her?*
 - *Have you seen him **or** her? - **yes-no** question*
 - *So do you like my haircut **or not**?*
 - *Do you want a drink of water **or anything**?*
- **non-finite questions**
 - *To be **or** not to be?*
 - *Why study?*

- **verbless questions**

- *What about your trip?*

- **elided / elliptic questions** (questions with ellipsis)

- *Some more wine? You alright? Got what you want?*

- **declarative questions**

- *You will be there?*

- **exclamatory questions**

- *Isn't it a nice house?! Isn't that lovely?*

- **rhetorical questions**

- *Do you think I am going to repeat it hundred times?*
- *Who needs sitcoms? Who cares?*

Translate the following tag questions or short answers:

1. A: I am a teacher. B: Oh, **are you?**
2. A: He's got our books actually. B: **Has he?**
3. It seems a shame to break it up, **doesn't it**, when it's so good.
4. So you call this a car, **do you?**
5. A: I won't come again! B: Oh, you won't, **won't you?**
6. Come here, **will you?**
7. Let's go away, **shall we?**

Translate the following questions.

1. Kdo mi chce pomoci?
2. Copak ty nevíš, kde bydlí?
3. K čemu je to dobré?
4. Koho tady znáš?
5. A ona by tu práci nemohla dostat?
6. Na co se díváte?
7. Pro kolik jste jich poslal?
8. Co mu mám říct?
9. Komu jste to dali?
10. Kdo tu bydlí?

NEGATION

- **clause negation**

- *He didn't go there because of Mary.*

- with the exception of the subject, the **whole contents** of the clause is **negated** (inclusive of the verbal action)

- **partial negation** (clause member negation)

- *He went there not because of Mary.*

- only **one clause element** - the adverbial of cause / reason is **negated** (the verbal action is not negated)

AMBIGUITY

- **Ambiguities** may arise:
 - instead of employing partial negation
 - *He went there not because of Mary.*
- language users often shift the **negator** to a position **with the verb** even when they wish to use it as partial negation. Hence the sentence:
 - *He **didn't** go there because of Mary.*
- may have **both** the **meanings** mentioned above. In spoken discourse, the sentence is disambiguated by placing the **intonation centre** either on *Mary* (clause negation!), or on *didn't* (partial negation!!).

SEMANTICALLY NEGATIVE WORDS

- **one negation** in standard English
 - *I can see nobody. I can't see anybody.*
 - (in dialects : *I can't see nobody. I ain't goin nowhere!*)
- since there is only one negator in standard English, words with negative meaning may render the whole sentence negative.

The "**negative**" words are especially the following:

- *no, nobody, nothing, never*
- *hardly, scarcely, barely (= almost not)*
- *rarely, seldom (= not often)*
- *little, few (= not much, not many)*

>> *He can't do any work. He can hardly do any work.*

- **Neutral character of the English verb**
 - **Positive** versus **Negative**
 - The English **verb** is neither positive nor negative it is **neutral** in this respect, and the sentence (clause) becomes positive or negative after complex evaluation.

*She **didn't** see anything.*

*She saw **nothing**.*

*She **hardly** saw anything.*

Translate the following negative sentences.

1. Nikam nechod'.
2. Nemohli jsme nic neříct.
3. Nedovol jí s tebou takhle mluvit.
4. Myslím, že mě nemá rád.
5. Nikdo tam se mnou nikdy nemluvil.
6. Nebýval u nás dřív na návštěvě tak často.
7. Tuto knížku neprodávají nikde ve městě.
8. Nemůžeme vám nijak pomoci.
9. Tohle není neobvyklá žádost.
10. Nenechme se příliš unést.

Complete the sentences with QUESTION TAGS.

1. Cathy's never polite, _____
2. Open the door, _____
3. She has got a lot of free time, _____
4. You still want to meet him, _____
5. I'm quite tall, _____
6. The books haven't been sent yet, _____
7. Zoe always has lunch at 12, _____
8. Let's go out tonight, _____
9. He'd be very proud of you, _____
10. They had a little dog, _____
11. There's a fly in your soup, _____
12. He thinks he's so clever, _____