

# Questions

## I. Direct questions

## II. Reported questions

### I. Direct questions

#### 1. yes/no questions

With **auxiliaries** (be, have) and **modal verbs** (can, may, will ...) yes/no questions are formed by **inversion**.

Statement	Question
It is easy.	Is it easy?
He has passed the exam.	Has he passed the exam?
She will take the exam soon.	Will she take the exam soon?

With **all other verbs** yes/no questions are formed with **do/does/did**.

Statement	Question
They know him.	Do they know him?
He works hard.	Does he work hard?
She passed the exam.	Did she pass the exam?

#### 2. wh-questions

With wh-questions **inversion** with the auxiliary or modal verbs occurs **after the question words** (subject questions are an exception to the rule – see below).

Question words:

**who(m)      what      when      which      whose      how      where      why**

Statement	Question
She met Peter at the conference in January.	Who(m) did she meet at the conference?
	Where did she meet Peter?
	When did she meet Peter?
He has been studying English for two years.	What has he been studying?
	How long has he been studying English?

#### 3. Subject questions

Subject questions are constructed in the same way as statements.

Question words: **who      what      which      whose      how many**

Statement	Question
She speaks English well.	Who speaks English well?
John wrote that paper.	Who wrote that paper?
This word fits best in this gap.	Which word fits best in this gap?

## Notes:

- **“Whom”**, the object form of “who”, is used in formal speech and writing. “Who” is common in everyday spoken or written English.
- **“What”** means both „co“ and „jaký“:  
*What do you study?* (co)  
*What books did you buy?* (jaké)
- With **“what”** (jaký) **the choice is from an unlimited set**; it often means “what kind”.  
*What courses are you taking this semester?*  
(what kind, what are they about)  
With **“which”** (který) **the choice is from a limited, specified set**.  
*Which course do you like best?*  
(of those you are taking)
- With **wh-questions** using **a verb + preposition**, the **preposition** is normally placed at the **end**. In very formal English it can precede the question word.  
*What did he speak **about**?*  
*What was the method applied **to**?*  
*To whom it may concern*
- A special question pattern is **“why” + bare infinitive**.  
*Why use this method? Because it is fast, efficient ....*

## II. Reported questions

Reported questions are constructed in the same way as statements.

Statement	Direct yes/no question	Reported yes/no question
He speaks English.	Does he speak English?	She asked if/whether he speaks English.
Statement	Direct wh-question	Reported wh-question
She lives in London.	Where do you live?	He asked where she lives/lived.

**“If/whether” clauses and clauses beginning with wh-words** have the same construction as reported questions.

*I don't know if/whether he will come.*  
*I don't know when he will come.*

## Notes:

- After some verbs **an infinitive construction** is possible.  
*He didn't know where **he** should go.*      *He didn't know **where to go**.*  
*He told **us** what **we** should do next.*      *He told us **what to do** next.*
- **“Whether”** is more **formal** than “if”.
- **“If”** in **reported questions** and in **if/whether clauses** can be followed by **“will”** contrary to

conditional clauses.

*I don't know if they will come. (zda, jestli)*

*If they come, they will help us. (jestliže)*

### Common mistakes:

- Leaving out "do/did" in direct questions.

Wrong: *What it means?*

Right: *What does it mean?*

- Using **inversion in clauses beginning with wh-words.**

Wrong: *I don't know what it is.*

Right: *I don't know what it is.*

*I don't know what do you mean.*

*I don't know what you mean.*

- Using **two subjects.**

Wrong: *What is it "infinity"?*

Right: *What is "infinity"?*

(Co to je „infinity“?)

## EXERCISES

### I. Correct the following mistakes

1. Who does know the answer?

.....

2. I'd like to know what does it mean.

.....

3. Can you explain to me what does it mean the "smart wheel" system?

.....

4. Now we can see how is it important to save energy.

.....

5. I want to know why did you do it.

.....

6. The picture shows how big are these units.

.....

7. We must define what we do mean by efficiency.

.....

8. Can you tell us in what area do you cooperate with that company?

.....

### II. Join the questions with the phrases offered in the right-hand column.

1. Where are these motors used?

Could you tell us ....

.....

2. How is this done?

Could you explain to us ....

.....

3. When did that course start?

They want to know ....

.....

4. What does an "event" mean?

All of us know now .....

.....

5. Why isn't this method suitable in these conditions?

At last they understood .....

- .....
6. What is a “differential“? I’ve forgotten .....
- .....
7. How big should the box be? We haven’t decided yet .....
- .....
8. What does this option allow the user to do? Could you summarize .....
- .....
9. Which university did he receive his degree from? The interviewers asked him ....
- .....
10. How long did the experiment take? I don’t remember .....
- .....

### III. Translate

1. Co to znamená v češtině?
- .....
2. Můžeš mi říci, co to znamená v češtině?
- .....
3. Rád bych věděl, jak se definuje yard.
- .....
4. Kdo ví, kdy začíná školní rok?
- .....
5. Jeho spoluautoři chtějí vědět, zda článek byl přijat.
- .....
6. K jakým závěrům jste dospěli?
- .....
7. Chce vědět, které ze svých závěrů považujeme za nejdůležitější.
- .....
8. Nevím, zda byl podobný postup popsán v literatuře.
- .....
9. Už se rozhodl, jaké téma si zvolí pro svou dizertaci?
- .....
10. Myslím, že si neuvědomují, jak časově náročný ten projekt bude.
- .....

