

QUESTION FORMATION

Questions can be used to start a conversation, learn new information and /or inquire about something. It is also one of the most difficult tasks for learners of English since English has its certain rules on question formation. There are a few different question types in English: subject question, object question, indirect question and question tags. The examples of each type are the following:

- a) **Subject question:** Who wrote 'Oliver Twist'?
- b) **Object question:** What novel did Dickens write?
- c) **Indirect question:** Could you tell me what novel Dickens wrote?
- d) **Question tags:** Dickens wrote 'Oliver Twist', didn't he?

The most usual problem occurs with subject and object questions where an auxiliary verb plays an important role- in object questions it is obligatory (e.g. What novel **did** he write?), while in subject questions it is omitted (e.g. Who wrote 'Oliver Twist'?, **not** Who **did write** 'Oliver Twist'?).

Another most frequent mistake English learners make is in indirect questions, where the word order is extremely important: e.g. 'Could you tell me where the nearest bus stop is? And not 'Could you tell me where is the nearest bus stop?.

1. Can you identify which type are the following questions: subject (S), object (O), indirect (I) or question tag (QT)?

- 1) Which type of car goes 250 m.p.h.?
- 2) How often do you go to the cinema?
- 3) You have been to England, haven't you?
- 4) Who loves Peter?
- 5) Could you please tell me where the museum is?

Key: 1S, 2O, 3QT, 4S, 5QT, 6I

One tip that can help you when forming a question in English is the use of the acronyms QUASI and ASI:

QUASI stands for **Q**uestion word- **A**uxiliary- **S**ubject- **I**nfinitive

e.g. *Who did you see in the office?*

(question word) (auxiliary) (subject) (infinitive)

ASI stands for: **A**uxiliary- **S**ubject – **I**nfinitive

e.g. *Do you smoke?*

(auxiliary) (subject) (infinitive)

2. Which of these questions are QUASI and which ones ASI?

- 1) Have you seen Peter lately?
- 2) Where did you find those suppliers?
- 3) Did you send that report last week?
- 4) How many employees does their company have?
- 6) Do they work in your department?

Key: 1 ASI, 2 QUASI, 3 ASI, 4 QUASI, 5 ASI

3. Put the following words in order to make a question. Remember to conjugate the verbs and add an auxiliary verb if required.

1. he/who/visit/last week/ ?
2. him/invite/who/dinner/to/yesterday?
3. what/you/TV/buy?
4. know / who / do / sign / report / you / this?
5. most / the / which / have / language /words?

*Key: 1. Who did he visit last week?, 2. Who invited him to dinner yesterday?,
3. What TV did you buy?, 4. Do you know who signed this report?, 5. Which language has the most words?*

4. Ask an appropriate question for the response. In the first exercise an example question is given.

- 1) A steak, please. - 'What would you like?'
- 2) We are going to visit France. - _____
- 3) I usually get up at 7 o'clock. - _____
- 4) No, she is single. - _____
- 5) Oh, I stayed at home and watched TV. - _____

Possible questions: 2. Where are you going for your next holiday?; 3. When do you usually get up?; 4. Is she married?; 5. What did you do last night /last weekend?