

Subject, Object & Indirect Questions: Advanced Asking

INTERMEDIATE

Focus: Questions with who and what, Avoiding do/does/did, Subject as question word, Object as question word, Expressing surprise, Seeking agreement, Why don't/wasn't...?, Answering yes/no to negative queries, Do you know where...?, Word order changes

1. Subject vs. Object Questions

In English, the structure of a question changes depending on whether we are asking about the **Subject** (who did the action) or the **Object** (who received the action).

- **Object Questions (Standard):** When asking about the object, we use auxiliary verbs (**do, does, did**).
 - *Answer:* I called **John**.
 - *Question:* Who **did** you call? (Word order: Question Word + Auxiliary + Subject + Verb)
- **Subject Questions:** When **Who** or **What** is the subject of the sentence, we **do not** use do/does/did. The word order looks like a normal positive sentence.
 - *Answer:* **John** called me.
 - *Question:* Who called you? (Word order: Question Word + Verb)

2. Indirect Questions

Indirect questions are used to be more polite. They often start with phrases like "Do you know...", "Can you tell me...", or "I wonder...".

- **Rule:** The word order changes back to a **positive sentence structure** (Subject + Verb).
- **Important:** We remove **do/does/did**.
 - *Direct:* Where **is** the bank?
 - *Indirect:* Do you know where **the bank is**? (NOT: ~~where is the bank~~)
 - *Direct:* When **does** the film start?
 - *Indirect:* Can you tell me when **the film starts**? (NOT: ~~when does the film start~~)
- **Yes/No Questions:** If there is no question word (who/what/where), use **if** or **whether**.
 - *Direct:* Is he married? → *Indirect:* Do you know **if** he is married?

3. Negative Questions

We use negative auxiliary verbs (Don't, Didn't, Haven't, Isn't) to start questions for specific reasons:

- **Expressing Surprise:** *Don't you want to come?* (I thought you wanted to come).
- **Seeking Agreement:** *Isn't it a beautiful day?* (I think it is beautiful).
- **Suggestions (Why don't...):** *Why don't we go for a pizza?*
- **Answering:** Answer according to the truth, not the grammar.
 - Q: Don't you like coffee?
 - A: **Yes**, I do. (I like it). / **No**, I don't. (I dislike it).

Practice Exercises

Instructions: Complete the sentences using the correct form of the verbs provided.

Pay attention to:

- **Subject vs. Object:** Do you need an auxiliary verb (do/did)?
- **Indirect Questions:** Watch the word order (Subject + Verb).
- **Negative Questions:** Use the negative form provided.

1. **Subject Question:** Who _____ (break) the window in the kitchen?
2. **Object Question:** What _____ (you/buy) for your mother's birthday last week?
3. **Indirect Question:** Do you know where _____ (the nearest bus stop/be)?
4. **Negative Question:** _____ (you/not/want) to come to the cinema with us? You look bored.
5. **Subject Question:** What _____ (happen) at the end of the movie?
6. **Indirect Question:** Can you tell me what time _____ (the bank/open)?
7. **Object Question:** Who _____ (she/invite) to the wedding?
8. **Indirect Question:** I wonder why _____ (he/leave) the party so early last night.
9. **Negative Question:** Why _____ (we/not/take) a taxi? It's much faster.
10. **Subject Question:** Which student _____ (write) the best essay?
11. **Indirect Question (Yes/No):** Do you know if _____ (David/need) any help with his project?
12. **Object Question:** What _____ (you/look) for? Did you lose your keys?
13. **Negative Question:** _____ (it/not/be) a lovely surprise to see her again?
14. **Indirect Question:** Could you tell me how much _____ (this jacket/cost)?
15. **Object Question:** Who _____ (you/speak) to on the phone just now?

Answer Key

- 1.** broke (Subject Question - no auxiliary)
- 2.** did you buy (Object Question - needs auxiliary)
- 3.** the nearest bus stop is (Indirect Question - standard word order)
- 4.** Don't you want / Didn't you want (Negative Question)
- 5.** happened (Subject Question - no auxiliary)
- 6.** the bank opens (Indirect Question - remove 'does', verb takes 's')
- 7.** did she invite (Object Question - needs auxiliary)
- 8.** he left (Indirect Question - remove 'did', verb becomes past simple)
- 9.** don't we take (Negative Question - Suggestion)
- 10.** wrote (Subject Question - no auxiliary)
- 11.** David needs (Indirect Question - remove 'does')
- 12.** are you looking (Object Question - Present Continuous)
- 13.** Isn't it / Wasn't it (Negative Question - Seeking agreement)
- 14.** this jacket costs (Indirect Question - remove 'does')
- 15.** were you speaking / did you speak (Object Question)