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ENGLISH

QUESTION FORMATION

What is Question Formation?

A question is asked either to seek information or to expect an affirmation or negation on a matter. In each of the cases, the structure of questions varies depending on the function they perform.

1. Questions which seek information

While framing a question to seek information, the auxiliary verb in the sentence is brought forward and a question word is added before it. Such questions are also known as 'Wh' Questions. They cannot be answered with 'Yes' or 'No'.

Examples:

- **What** did the archbishop find in the casket?
- **Why** should I tell you who I am?
- **When** will the winner be announced?
- **Where** are the stairs to the next level?
- **How** did the thieves enter?

Questions seeking information begin with words such as **What, Why, When, Where** and **How**.

The general structure of such questions is

Question word + **Auxiliary Verb** + **Main Verb** + **Object**

OR

Question word + **Auxiliary Verb** + **Subject** + **Main Verb**

The placement of the Subject and the Object in these forms depends on which part is the answer to the question.

Example:

Article	Noun	Auxiliary Verb	Main Verb	Article	Noun
The	detective	will	file	the	report.
Subject		Predicate		Object	

1. Who	will	file	the report?
Question word	Auxiliary Verb	Main Verb	Object

Answer: **The detective**

2. What	will	the detective	file?
Question word	Auxiliary Verb	Subject	Main Verb

Answer: **The report**

Other variations to the structure:

1. When the question word is also the subject of the sentence:

- i. The auxiliary verb is omitted and
- ii. The Subject + Main Verb + Object? format is used.

Examples: *What happened to the chicken? What did happen to the chicken?*
Who told you this story? Who did tell you this story?

2. If the order is reversed and the Question word is the Object of the sentence:

- i. An auxiliary verb is used after it to complete the question.

Examples: What will you gift her? Will – Auxiliary Verb
 Whom did the children call? Did – Auxiliary Verb

Questions with prepositions:

When asking for information regarding some location or position, the placement of the preposition determines the formality of the question. (Note: This is not a hard and fast rule.)

Usually if the preposition is placed right before the question word, it makes the sentence appropriate for a formal conversation of inquiry.

If the preposition is placed at the end of the question statement, then it makes the statement acceptable for a casual conversation, though it may not always be grammatically correct.

Examples:**Formal**

To whom did the client speak?

For how many guests did you order?

From where was the shot fired?

Informal

Whom did the client speak **to**?

How many guests did you order **for**?

Where was the shot fired **from**?

2. Questions which ask for an affirmation or negation as the answer (Yes/No questions)

These questions are framed differently based on three different types of sentences.

Sentences with an auxiliary verb: If a sentence which is to be converted to an affirmation or negation reply contains an auxiliary verb (including modal auxiliaries)

- i. The appropriate form of the auxiliary verb is placed before the subject in the question.

Examples:

1. **Was the gallon** filled when the buzzer sounded?

Yes. The gallon was filled when the buzzer sounded.

Subject: **the gallon; The gallon** Auxiliary Verb: **Was; was** Answer: **Yes**

Can you see the reason for this argument?

No. I can't understand the reason for this argument.

Subject: **you; I** Auxiliary Verb: **Can; can't** Answer: **No**

2. **Will** *they* report the incident?

Yes. *They will* report the incident.

Subject: *they; they*

Auxiliary Verb: **Will; will**

Answer: **Yes**

Sentences without an auxiliary verb: If the auxiliary verb is absent in the sentences

- i. Verbs *do*, *does* or *did* are used before the subject and the original order of the sentence is maintained.

Examples:

1. Did the school nurse treat your injury?

Yes. The school nurse treated my injury.

2. Did you learn this craft at school?

Yes. I learned this craft at school.

In such cases, the verbs *do*, *does* or *did* become the question words and do not need an additional Question word before them.

3. Question tags

Question tags are phrases added at the end of declarative or imperative sentences to turn them into questions asking for confirmation. Interrogative phrases are used to form question tags.

Question tags are formed in the following manner:

auxiliary + n't + subject (for positive statements)

Examples:

Reena has been busy with her dance classes, **hasn't she?**

There is no smoke without fire, **isn't it?**

auxiliary + subject (for negative statements)

Examples:

Kunal does not know how to drive, **does he?**

Dushant and Veena are not present today, **are they?**
