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Quick and Handy Grammar Review: Question Formation

One of the most difficult grammar tasks in English is forming questions. The typical *subject - verb* word order is often inverted. Tenses sometimes change, and modals or auxiliary verbs (*be, have,* or *do*) are inserted in the sentence.

The 20 key words for questions in English are:

Do	Modals		Have	Be
Do	Can	Could	Have	Am
Does	Will	Would	Has	Is
Did	Shall	Should	Had	Are
	May	Might		Was
	Must			Were

For each type of question, there is a specific word order.

Structures

X = Auxiliary Verb or Modal   **S** = Subject   **V** = Verb

I.   Yes / No Questions:

Structure: Auxiliary - Subject - Verb   (+ Object)
                      X   **S**   **V**

1.   Does   he   speak   Chinese?
        X   S   V   (object)

2.   Do   you   know   the professor?
        X   S   V   (object)

3.   Can   I   help   you?
        X   S   V   (object)

4.   May   I   borrow   your pen?
        X   S   V   (object)

5.   Have   you   finished   your homework?
        X   S   V   (object)

II.   **Yes / No Questions with Be:**

Structure: Verb - Subject
                             V   **S**

1.   Is   she   Korean?
        V   S   (adjective)

2.   Are   you   doing   your homework?
        V   S   V   (object)

3.   Am   I   in the right room?
        V   S   (prepositional phrase)

4.   Was   he   the president?
        V   S   (object)

5.   Were   you   tired?
        V   S   (adjective)

III.   **WH Questions:**

Who   What   When   Where   Why   Whose   How

Structure: Question word - Auxiliary - Subject - Verb   (+   Object)
                             Q   **X**   **S**   **V**

A.   **WH Questions with Do**

1.   When   do   we   eat?
         Q   X   S   V

2.   Where   does   he   eat?
         Q   X   S   V

3.   Why   did   they   eat   spicy food?
         Q   X   S   V   (object)

Note: The word _eat_ is in the _base form_ and does not change in the question according to singular/plural (do / does), or present/past (do / did).

B.   WH Questions with Modals

1.   When   can   I   come?
       Q   X   S   V

2.   Why   must   you   study?
       Q   X   S   V

3.   Where   will   we   meet   tomorrow morning?
       Q   X   S   V

C.   WH Questions with Have

1.   Why   has   your brother   gone   home?
       Q   X   S   V   (object)

2.   Where   has   your sister   worked   for the last two years?
       Q   X   S   V

3.   Who   have   you   talked to   recently?
       Q   X   S   V

Note: The V (verb) is in the *past participle* form and does not change in the question.

D.   WH Questions with Be

1.   Was   he   your husband?
        V   S   (adjective)

2.   Why   are   you   so happy today?
       Q   V   S   (adjective)

3.   Where   is   she   now?
       Q   V   S

Exercise 1:

Sentence stems. Complete the questions.

1. Who is _____ ?

2. What does he _____ ?

3. Why did Mark _____ ?

4. Where are we _____ ?

5. How many pieces of cake _____ ?

6. How much did you _____ ?

7. When is Marco going to _____ ?

8. Where did _____ ?

9. How much do _____ ?

10. How long _____ ?

Exercise 2:

Sentence conclusions. Use the following sentence conclusions to write present, past, or future questions.

1. _____ last month?

2. _____ next semester?

3. _____ right now?

4. _____ to the beach?

5. _____ me some advice?

6. _____ tomorrow evening?

7. _____ before we go home?

8. _____ on Sunday?

9. _____ next winter?

10. _____ after class ends?

Exercise 3:
Form questions for the following answers.

1. Four cups. _____?

2. At 3:00. _____?

3. Three years old. _____?

4. $425 a week. _____?

5. She is the professor. _____?

6. He is a butcher. _____?

7. $50 for the pair. _____?

8. Next Tuesday. _____?

9. From Korea. _____?

10. Last week. _____?

Exercise 4:

Form questions for the following answers.

1. Four times. _____?

2. At the mall. _____?

3. Three hundred years old. _____?

4. In 1984. _____?

5. She is in the hospital. _____?

6. To China. _____?

7. Twice a week. _____?

8. Tall and slender. _____?

9. Black. _____?

10. Chicken and rice. _____?

Exercise 5:
Error Correction. Correct the mistakes in the questions and answers.

1. What doing Robert tomorrow at 3:00? He going to the movies.

   _____

2. Why work Maria two jobs? She need the money.

   _____

3. What weather like yesterday? It is cold.

   _____

4. Do he know the professor name? It Professor Johnson.

   _____

5. He is work in a store? He make a good salary.

   _____

6. When did come Chang to class? In 3:00.

   _____

7. Can you to tell me what time is it? It 4:30.

   _____

8. Where were he yesterday? I no see him.

   _____

9. Do Victoria live in Salem? I no think so.

   _____

10. Why you no tell me about the test? I didn't never know about it.

    _____

Exercise 6:
Form questions to get the underlined information.

1. James works <u>in a cellphone store</u>. _____ ?

2. Maya is <u>22</u>. _____ ?

3. <u>John Wilkes Booth</u> assassinated Abraham Lincoln. _____ ?

4. Harry was driving <u>91 miles an hour</u>. _____ ?

5. <u>Joan</u> became the new head teller in Community Bank. _____ ?

6. Maria has to do her homework <u>now</u>. _____ ?

7. The Andersons will leave for Thailand <u>next Sunday</u>. _____ ?

8. Hye Seop graduated <u>in 2006</u>. _____ ?

9. Olga's raise was <u>$2000 a year</u>. _____ ?

10. <u>Lars Lindemann</u> is the coach of New City. _____ ?

Exercise 7:
Form questions to get the underlined information.

1. John is <u>a computer specialist</u>. _____?

2. Maria has <u>20 cousins</u>. _____?

3. <u>Harry Carson</u> is the owner of Amadeus Restaurant. _____?

4. My sister has to stay in the hospital <u>for three days</u>. _____?

5. Johan left early <u>because he has to wake up early tomorrow morning</u>. _____?

6. Mario likes <u>to cook</u>. _____?

7. Andy ate <u>four slices of pizza</u>. _____?

8. Chantel weighs <u>120 pounds</u>. _____?

9. Olivia was born <u>in 1980</u>. _____?

10. <u>Wassim</u> was born in Korea. _____?

Exercise 8:
Choose the correct question word for each question.

1. [   ] don't you like the pizza tonight?

   a. Who   b. Why   c. How   d. Where

2. [   ] does your brother work?

   a. Who   b. Why   c. How   d. Where

3. [   ] bag is that on the table?

   a. Who   b. Why   c. How   d. Whose

4. [   ] do you get from school to your house?

   a. Who   b. Why   c. How   d. Where

5. [   ] old is your little brother?

   a. Who   b. Why   c. How   d. Where

6. [   ] did you come late to class today?

   a. Who   b. Why   c. How   d. Where

7. [   ] lives next door to you?

   a. Who   b. Why   c. How   d. Where

8. [   ] did you come to the United States?

   a. Who   b. Why   c. How   d. Where

9. [   ] are you going to the party with?

   a. Who   b. Why   c. How   d. Where

10. [   ] is the nearest pharmacy?

    a. Who   b. Why   c. How   d. Where

Exercise 9:
Match each question word with the correct answer.

1. why?
   - a. nine years old
   - b. 42 degrees
   - c. at 1:00
   - d. because I was late

2. who?
   - a. my sister
   - b. 420 pounds
   - c. at 1:00
   - d. because I was hungry

3. when?
   - a. my aunt
   - b. $420
   - c. at 3:00
   - d. because she was tired

4. how much?
   - a. my uncle
   - b. $120
   - c. at midnight
   - d. at the mall

5. with whom?
   - a. my aunt
   - b. three days a week
   - c. at 9:00
   - d. never in my life

6. how often?
   - a. with my aunt
   - b. three days a week
   - c. at the airport
   - d. in 1971

7. which?
   - a. the green one
   - b. too many
   - c. in June
   - d. 500 miles

8. when?
   - a. my sister
   - b. with Han Min
   - c. in the summer
   - d. in India

9. why?
   - a. a police officer
   - b. $1200 a month
   - c. in Thailand
   - d. because she found a new job

10. what?
    - a. my friend
    - b. three pounds
    - c. at 2:00
    - d. an old dog

Exercise 10:

Write short answers to the following questions. Example: Is Tommy late? Yes, he is.

1. Is Barbara nice?   Yes, _____.

2. Was Harold on time?   No, _____.

3. Is your bag black?   No, _____.

4. Is Professor Herzog your teacher?   Yes, _____.

5. Are you from Pakistan?   Yes, _____.

6. Are you 24 years old?   No, _____.

7. Are we in the right room? Yes, _____.

8. Is the dog inside?   No, _____.

9. Were you driving 45 miles an hour?   Yes, _____.

10. Were you married last year?   No, _____.