

Activity Type

Reading, writing, listening and speaking activity

Language Focus

Indirect questions

Aim

To learn and practice how to form indirect questions.

Preparation

Make one copy of the two worksheets for each student.

Level

Pre-intermediate

Time

25 minutes

Introduction

This enjoyable worksheet activity is ideal for teaching students how to make indirect questions.

Procedure

Give each student a copy of the two worksheets.

Read through the grammar explanation and review the indirect question examples together as a class.

Students then use the information from the first worksheet to change direct questions into indirect questions using polite expressions.

When the students have finished, check the answers with the class.

Answer key - Exercise A

1. Could you tell me where the station is?
2. Could you let me know if you are coming to the party?
3. Could you explain how it works?
4. Could you tell me if Lucy has been to Mexico?
5. I'd like to know where you are from.
6. Do you know how long it takes to get there?
7. Do you have any idea what you are doing?
8. Do you know what time you are leaving?
9. Could you tell me if he is a lawyer?
10. I was wondering if you drink coffee.

After that, students rewrite indirect questions in the correct word order.

When the students have finished, go through the answers.

Answer key - Exercise B

1. Would you mind telling me where the nearest bank is?
2. I'd like to know how to make an indirect question.
3. Could you tell me how to get an 'A' in this class?
4. Do you know what the weather will be like tomorrow?
5. Could you tell me how long you have been studying English?
6. I was wondering what you do in your free time?
7. I'd be interested to hear what you think of these questions.

Finally, divide the students into pairs. The students then practice asking and answering the questions with their partner.

Indirect questions are polite longer forms of direct questions. We use them when talking to a person we don't know very well or in professional situations.

Examples:

Where is the department store? - Direct question

Could you tell me where the department store is? - Indirect question

What is his name? - Direct question

Do you know what his name is? - Indirect question

Indirect questions are formed of two parts: a **polite expression** and a question that has no subject/verb inversion like a direct question.

Examples:

Where is the post office? - Direct question

Do you know where the post office is? - Indirect question

What is the time? - Direct question

Do you have any idea what the time is? - Indirect question

Indirect questions do not use the auxiliary verbs 'do', 'does' or 'did'.

Examples:

When does the next train arrive? - Direct question

Do you know when the next train arrives? - Indirect question

Do you know when does the next train arrive? - Incorrect

When did the cinema close down? - Direct question

Could you tell me when the cinema closed down? - Indirect question

Could you tell me when did the cinema close down? - Incorrect

When the direct question is a yes or no question, we use 'if' and the word order of a normal positive sentence.

Is the restaurant closing now? - Direct question

Can you tell me if the restaurant is closing now? - Indirect question

Does Sophia live in New York? - Direct question

Do you know if Sophia lives in New York? - Indirect question

A. Read the direct questions and change them into indirect questions using the polite expressions.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Where is the station? | Could you tell me _____ |
| 2. Are you coming to the party? | Could you let me know _____ |
| 3. How does it work? | Could you explain _____ |
| 4. Has Lucy been to Mexico? | Could you tell me _____ |
| 5. Where are you from? | I'd like to know _____ |
| 6. How long does it take to get there? | Do you know _____ |
| 7. What are you doing? | Do you have any idea _____ |
| 8. What time are you leaving? | Do you know _____ |
| 9. Is he a lawyer? | Could you tell me _____ |
| 10. Do you drink coffee? | I was wondering _____ |

B. Rewrite the indirect questions in the correct word order.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Would you mind telling me | the is bank where nearest? |
| _____ | _____ |
| 2. I'd like to know | an question to indirect make how. |
| _____ | _____ |
| 3. Could you tell me | an to class this how 'A' get in? |
| _____ | _____ |
| 4. Do you know what | like tomorrow the be weather what will? |
| _____ | _____ |
| 5. Could you tell me | you been how English have long studying? |
| _____ | _____ |
| 6. I was wondering | free your do what time you in? |
| _____ | _____ |
| 7. I'd be interested to hear | questions of these you what think. |
| _____ | _____ |

C. Now, ask and answer the questions with a partner.