

Question Formation

Feel free to explore these on your own. If you have any questions, let's hear them.

TASK 1

Various parts of sentences 1 – 4 below are underlined. Write questions in which you ask about the underlined parts. Keep the structure of the original sentence (including tenses and all semantically important words), the only task is to transform it to a question.

Example:

He is going to write the final part of the thesis next month.

Which part of the thesis is he going to write next month?

1. The cells continued to die in the Petri dishes.
2. Genetic engineering draws our attention to serious ethical issues.
3. Protein modeling has been a great help to scientists.
4. The virus escaped from the laboratory.
5. Nanobots can remove plaque from arteries.

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Example:

He is going to write the final part of the thesis next month.

Which part of the thesis is he going to write next month?

1. The passengers continued to complain about the train timetables.
What did the passengers continue to complain about?
What were the passengers still complaining about?
About what did the passengers continue to complain?

2. Clowns draw our attention to serious matters.
What is the clowns' purpose?
Who draws your attention to serious matters?
Who draw your attention to serious matters?
Who your attention draw to serious matters?

3. Einstein's theory has been rejected by his colleagues.

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4. A later version can be found in the library.

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Example:

He is going to write the final part of the thesis next month.

Which part of the thesis is he going to write next month?

1. The students continued to complain about the teacher's lessons.
About what did the students continue to complain?
What did the students continue to complain about?
2. The Health Minister emphasizes the importance of wearing masks.
Who emphasizes the importance of wearing masks?
Who does emphasise the importance of wearing masks?

Who runs the show here?

Jack runs the show here.

Jack does not run the show here?

Who does run the show here?

3. Einstein's theory has been questioned in the article.
Whose theory has been questioned in the article?
Which theory has been questioned in the article?

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4. Alternative data can be found in the new study.
Where can we find alternative data?
Where can alternative data be found?

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Question formation.

Four basic things to remember:

1. Starting with a question word is always easier: where, when, who, whom, which, why, what, how...
2. If there is an auxiliary verb (do, does, will, have...), place it directly after the question word.
3. Then comes the subject.
4. Place the main verb after the subject.
5. Anything else comes after that.

Examples

Simple Present Questions:

QUESTION WORD	AUXILIARY VERB	SUBJECT	MAIN VERB	
Where	do	you	work?	
What	does	Jana	think	about the smell?
Whom	do	you	love	the most?
How	do	you	like	your new Ferrari?
How many experiments	does	Vít	run?	

Simple Past Questions:

QUESTION WORD	AUXILIARY VERB	SUBJECT	MAIN VERB	
How	did	they	learn	English so fast?
When	did	you	get home	from lab yesterday?
What	did	the supervisor	think	about your results?
Where	did	you	buy	that biological weapon?

Present Continuous Questions:

QUESTION WORD	AUXILIARY VERB	SUBJECT	MAIN VERB	
What	are	you	doing	on 18 May 2029?
Why	is	he	ignoring	the bullet in his brain?
What time	are	we	meeting up	for a beer?
Who	is	she	dating	this week?

Past Continuous Questions:

QUESTION WORD	AUXILIARY VERB	SUBJECT	MAIN VERB	
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Who	were	you	talking	to on the phone?
What	was	Jim	doing	when you called?
Why	were	the animals	changing	their behaviour?
How	was	he	feeling	after the surgery?

Present Perfect Questions:

QUESTION WORD	AUXILIARY VERB	SUBJECT	MAIN VERB	
How much money	have	you	spent	on toothpicks this month?
How long	has	your dog	sung	in the opera?
What	have	they	been doing	all night?
How long	has	the patient	been waiting	for treatment?

Future Questions:

QUESTION WORD	AUXILIARY VERB	SUBJECT	MAIN VERB	
Who	will	you	invite	to the book launch?
What	will	your parents	think	about the tattoo on your eyelids?
When	are	you	going	to clean your teeth?
Why	is	she	going	to shave her head bald?

Modal Questions:

QUESTION WORD	AUXILIARY VERB	SUBJECT	MAIN VERB	
What	would	you	do	if you lost a million crowns?
How	could	we	improve	our English in ten seconds?
Where	should	I	go	to escape reality?

Exceptions:

Yes/No questions do not use a question word...

...but they still follow the pattern: *Auxiliary verb – Subject – Main verb*

- Do you like pandemics?
- Did you enjoy pain?
- Are you studying English?

- Were you sleeping when there was a party upstairs?
- Have you finished your workout?
- Will you call me when you get to the North Pole?
- Are you going to accept the insult without a fight?
- Should we take the back roads?

Questions where the main verb is “be” also don’t follow the pattern:

- Are you thirsty?
- Is she a teacher?
- Were your parents angry when you failed the test?
- Was her ex-boyfriend a prince on a white horse?

Adapted from <https://www.espressoenglish.net/an-easy-way-to-form-almost-any-question-in-english/>