

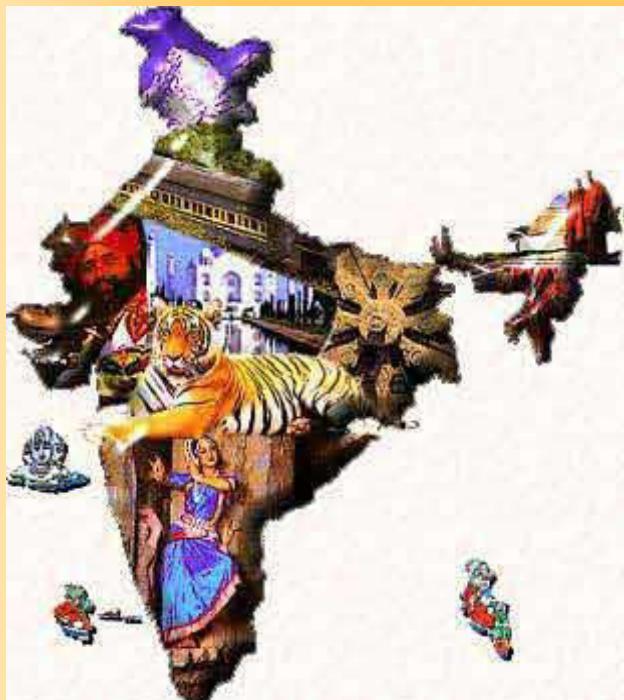
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RESOURCE WORLD

GENERAL ENGLISH



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Question Tag

Book for Various Competitive Exams

(Like KPSC technical Post C, KSRTC, PDO, RRB, SSC, FDAA, SDAA, PSI, PC, CET, etc..)

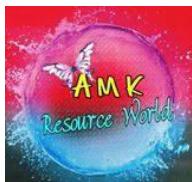


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Question tag

Question tags are short questions at the end of statements.

They are mainly used in speech when we want to:

- confirm that something is true or not, or
- to encourage a reply from the person we are speaking to.

Question tags are formed with the auxiliary or modal verb from the statement and the appropriate subject.

A **positive** statement is followed by a **negative** question tag.

- Jack **is** from Spain, **isn't** he?
- Mary **can** speak English, **can't** she?

A **negative** statement is followed by a **positive** question tag.

- They **aren't** funny, **are** they?
- He **shouldn't** say things like that, **should** he?

When the verb in the main sentence is in the present simple we form the question tag with do / does.

- You *play* the guitar, **don't** you?
- Alison *likes* tennis, **doesn't** she?

If the verb is in the past simple we use **did**.

- They *went* to the cinema, **didn't** they?

- She *studied* in New Zealand, *didn't* she?

When the statement contains a word with a **negative** meaning, the question tag needs to be **positive**

- He **hardly ever** speaks, **does** he?
- They **rarely** eat in restaurants, **do** they?

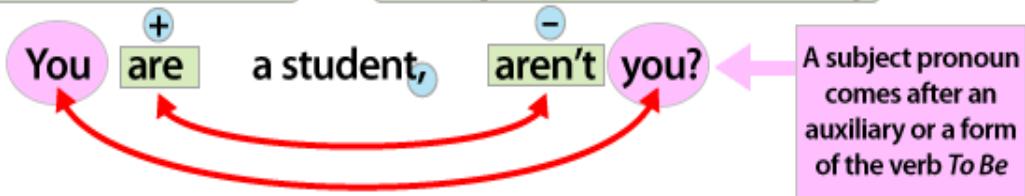
Question Tags Summary Charts

Question Tags

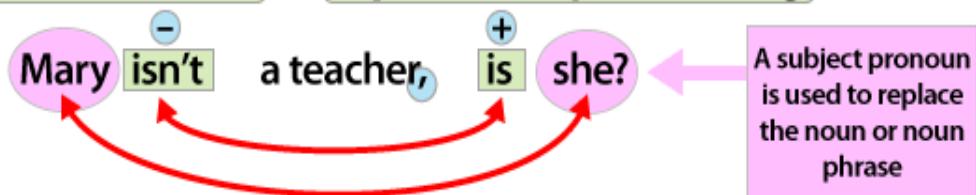


*A question tag is a small question at the end of a statement.
Question tags are used when asking for agreement or confirmation.*

a positive statement + a negative question tag



a negative statement + a positive question tag



Intonation and Meaning

The intonation of a question tag shows the exact meaning of it.
If the intonation of the question tag goes **up**, it means you are not sure and you want to know the answer.

John **doesn't** speak Spanish, **does** he?

If the intonation of the question tag goes **down**, it means you are checking / confirming information or making conversation.

John **doesn't** speak Spanish, **does** he?

Negative Question Tags



Question tags are used when asking for agreement or confirmation.

a positive statement + a negative question tag

Positive Statement

You **are**

He **is**

He **was**

They **were**

You **speak**

He **studies**

You **studied**

You **have** studied all week,

You **had** arrived before he left,

You **will** pass the exam,

You **can** speak two languages,

You **could** do it for me,

We **must** be patient,

You **should** go now,

You **would** like a new job,

a student,

very busy,

happy,

surprised,

English,

Spanish,

for the test,

Negative Tag

aren't you?

isn't he?

wasn't he?

weren't they?

don't you?

doesn't he?

didn't you?

haven't you?

hadn't you?

won't you?

can't you?

couldn't you?

mustn't we?

shouldn't you?

wouldn't you?

Negative auxiliaries and verbs in tags are usually in their contracted form (= n't)

Exceptions

I **am**

Let's go

late,

home,

aren't I?

shall we?

BE
CAREFUL

Exceptions

Some verbs / expressions have different question tags. For example:

I am – I am attractive, **aren't** I?

Positive imperative – Stop daydreaming, **will** / **won't** you?

Negative imperative – Don't stop singing, **will** you?

Let's – Let's go to the beach, **shall** we?

Have got (possession) – He has got a car, **hasn't** he?

There is / are – There aren't any spiders in the bedroom, **are there?**

This / that is – This is Paul's pen, **isn't** it?

Positive Question Tags



Question tags are used when asking for agreement or confirmation.

a negative statement + a positive question tag

Negative Statement

You	aren't	a teacher,	are you?
He	isn't	crazy,	is he?
He	wasn't	relaxed,	was he?
They	weren't	late,	were they?
You	don't speak	French,	do you?
You	didn't study	for the test,	did you?
You	haven't been	here all week,	have you?
You	hadn't done	it before then,	had you?
You	won't fail	the exam,	will you?
You	can't drive	a car,	can you?
You	couldn't do	it for me,	could you?
We	mustn't say	anything,	must we?
You	shouldn't be	so busy,	should you?
You	wouldn't stop	me,	would you?

Positive Tag

Statements using *barely, hardly, neither, no, nobody, none, nothing* and *seldom* are treated as negative statements.

Nobody **went** to the meeting, **did** they?
Nothing **is** ready, **is** it?

1. Use

frequently used in spoken English when you want someone to agree or disagree

2. Form

positive statement → question tag negative → **You are Tom, aren't you?**

negative statement → question tag positive → **He isn't Joe, is he?**

3. Examples

3.1. with auxiliaries

You've got a car, haven't you?

3.2. without auxiliaries (*don't, doesn't, didn't*)

They play football on Sundays, don't they?

She plays football on Sundays, doesn't she?

They played football on Sundays, didn't they?

Questions tags are used to keep a conversation going. You can agree or refuse to a sentence with a question tag.

Affirmative sentence: **He is from Germany, isn't he?**

Negative sentence: **He isn't from Germany, is he?**

Possible answers are **Yes** or **No**. If you use **Yes**, do not use contracted forms. If you use **No**, contracted form are possible.

Yes, he is.

No, he is not. or No, he isn't. or No, he's not.

4. Special points

4.1. Although the negative word **not** is not in the sentence, the sentence can be negative.

Then we use the **positive** question tag.

He never goes out with his dog, does he?

4.2. If **have** is a main verb in the sentence and refers to states, there are two possible sentences – We have a car, _____?

We have a car, **haven't we?** mostly British English

We have a car, **don't we?** mostly American English

4.3. Use ***will/would*** with imperatives (Simple Present).

Open the window, **will you?**

Open the window, **would you?**

Don't open your books, **will you?**

4.4. We use ***won't*** with a polite request.

Open the window, **won't you?**

4.5. We use **shall** after ***Let's***.

Let's take the next bus, **shall we?**

4.6. Auxiliary ***must***

We **must** be at home at 8 pm, **mustn't we?**

Yes, **we must**.

No, **we needn't**.

EXAMPLES

It's beautiful, isn't it?

He has been, hasn't he?

You can, can't you?

It must be, mustn't it?

You know him, don't you?

He finished it, didn't he?

He will come, won't he?

It isn't very good, is it?

It hasn't rained, has it?

It can't be, can it?

Jenny doesn't know James, does she?

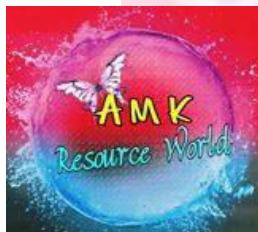
They didn't leave, did they?

He won't do it, will he?

EXAMPLES

1. She is collecting stickers, **isn't she?**
2. We often watch TV in the afternoon, **don't we?**
3. You have cleaned your bike, **haven't you?**
4. John and Max don't like maths, **do they?**
5. Peter played handball yesterday, **didn't he?**
6. They are going home from school, **aren't they?**
7. Mary didn't do her homework last Monday, **did she?**
8. He could have bought a new car, **couldn't he?**
9. Kevin will come tonight, **won't he?**
10. I'm clever, **aren't I?**

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