

Negative questions; echo questions;
questions with **that**-clauses

Negative questions

A We usually make a negative **yes/no** or **wh-question** with an auxiliary verb (*have, did, would, etc.*) + **-n't** to suggest, persuade, criticise, etc. (see also GR:E4–E6):

- Wouldn't** it be better to go tomorrow? **Why don't** we go out for a meal?

In formal contexts, or when we want to give some special emphasis to the negative (perhaps to show that we are angry, very surprised, or to strongly persuade someone), we can use **not** after the subject in negative questions. This happens particularly in **yes/no** rather than **wh-questions**:

- Did she not** realise that she'd broken it? (*less emphatically Didn't she realise that...?*)
 Can you not get there a bit earlier? (*less emphatically Can't you...?*)

B We sometimes use negative words other than **-n't** such as **never, no, nobody, nothing, nowhere**:

- Why do you never** help? **Have you nowhere** to go? (*or Do you have nowhere to go?*)

or less emphatically or more informally:

- Why don't** you ever help? **Haven't** you got anywhere to go? (*or Don't you have anywhere...*)

C We can make a suggestion with **Why not + verb** or **Why don't/doesn't...** (*but not Why do not/does not...*):

- Why not** *decorate* the house yourself? (*or Why don't you decorate...?*)
 Why not *give* her what she wants? (*or Why don't we give her ...?*)

Why didn't... isn't used to make a suggestion, but can show that we think an action was wrong. For example, depending on intonation and context, it can be used to criticise someone:

- Why didn't** you decorate the house yourself? (*I think you should have done*)
 Why didn't you tell me that in the first place? (*I'm annoyed that you didn't*)

D Negative question forms are used in exclamations giving opinions:

- Haven't** you grown! **Doesn't** she look lovely! **Didn't** it snow a lot!

Exclamations like this are usually said with a falling intonation.

Echo questions

E Echo questions are used when we haven't understood what has been said or to check that we heard correctly, perhaps because we found it very surprising. We might repeat, usually with a rising intonation, the whole of what was said:

- 'Jane's lost her job.' 'Jane's lost her job?' ↗

or focus on part of what was said using a stressed **wh-word** or a phrase with **how**:

- 'Tom's arriving at 6.30.' 'When's Tom arriving?/Tom's arriving when?' ↗
 'We paid £3,000 for the painting.' 'How much did you pay?/You paid how much?' ↗

We can use **what** or **'do' what** to focus on the verb or part of the sentence beginning with the verb:

- 'We paid £3,000 for the painting.' 'You what?' (*or 'You did what?'*)
 'I think she's having a sleep.' 'She's what?' (*or 'She's doing what?'*)

Questions with **that**-clauses

F A **wh-question** can refer to a following **that**-clause, particularly after verbs such as **expect, hope, reckon, say, suggest, suppose, and think**. We can leave out **that** in these questions:

- When** do you *reckon* (that) you'll finish the job?
 Why did they *suggest* (that) we should buy new computers for the library?

However, when the **wh-word** is the subject, object or complement of the verb in the subordinate clause, we do not use **that**:

- What** did you *think* was in the box? (*not What did you think that was in the box?*)
 Who do you *suppose* did it? (*not Who do you suppose that did it?*)

- 27.1 Write an appropriate negative question for each situation, using **-n't** in your answer. (A)
- Can you lend me £10?
Again? Haven't you got any money left? (...money left?)
 - I'm annoyed that you didn't come to the meeting.
Why? (...my letter/ on holiday?)
 - I've had to bring the children with me.
Why? (...babysitter?)
 - I'll just finish my homework before I go to school.
But (...be supposed to/ last night?)
 - I've put my bike in the sitting room.
The sitting room! (...outside?)
 - I'm taking the coach to Vienna.
But that will take ages. (...rather/ train?)
- 27.2 Expand the notes and write two alternative negative questions in each situation. In the first use **-n't**; in the second choose **never, no, nobody, nothing** or **nowhere**. (B)
- (*ever/ considered you might/ wrong*) 'Haven't you ever considered you might be wrong?'/
'Have you never considered you might be wrong?' 'No, I'm sure I'm right.'
 - (*you/ any interest/ Maths at all*) '.....?' 'No, I've always hated the subject.'
 - 'I spent the night in the railway station.' (*could/ find anywhere else/ sleep*)
'.....?'
 - (*can/ remember anything about/ accident*) '.....?' 'Not after getting into the car, no.'
 - (*why/ ever do well/ exams*) '.....?' 'Perhaps you don't revise enough.'
 - (*there anybody/ you can ask/ help*) '.....?' 'I can't think of anyone.'
- 27.3 Complete the echo questions using appropriate question words or phrases. Give a number of possible answers. (E)
- 'Jim's going to Chile.' 'He's going where? / He's doing what? / He's what?'
 - 'He's leaving at the end of next week.' 'He's leaving? / He's doing? / He's?'
 - 'He'll be away for three months.' 'He'll be away for? / He'll?'
 - 'It will cost about £5,000.' 'It'll cost? / It'll?'
 - 'He's sold his house to pay for the trip.' 'He's sold? / He's done? / He's?'
 - 'He's going climbing in the Andes.' 'He's going climbing? / He's doing? / He's?'
- 27.4 Expand the notes to form questions. Write (that) where that may be included. (F)
- (*why/ suppose/ left all/ money/ Charles*) 'Why do you suppose (that) she left all her money to Charles?' 'He was her favourite brother.'
 - (*who/ say/ vegetarian*) '.....?' 'Mary's sister.'
 - (*what/ suggest/ get/ her birthday*) '.....?' 'How about a pair of earrings?'
 - (*how long/ expect/ you'll be/ Istanbul*) '.....?' 'Two or three weeks.'
 - (*what/ he think/ the problem*) '.....?' 'A pipe needs replacing.'
 - (*who/ suppose/ lives there now*) '.....?' 'I think the house is empty.'
 - (*when/ she say/ she'll be arriving*) '.....?' 'In a couple of hours.'