

Wh- questions

1. Description

Wh- questions are questions which are used to ask for information i.e. **open questions**. (Contrary to **closed questions**, which only require a **yes / no** answer).

They are:

Who - for a person

What - for a thing

When - for a time

Where - for a place

Which - for a choice

Why - for a reason

Whose - for possession

How - for a means of doing something.

2. Object question structure

A basic **object question** structure in English can be divided into 4 columns:

Question word	Auxiliary	Subject	Verb
What	do	you	do?
Where	have	they	gone?
Who	is	she	talking to?
When	will	we	arrive?
How	did	he	find out?

The **auxiliary** depends on the **tense** being used and the **verb structure** depends on the **auxiliary**.

Reminder:

Simple present

do / does + infinitive

Simple past

did + infinitive

Simple future

will + infinitive

Present continuous

am / is / are + verb -ing

Present perfect

have / has + past participle

3. Subject question structure

Subject questions differ from **object questions** in that the only information the questioner requires is the identity of the person or thing which performed the action or provoked the event.

The structure of the initial sentence does not change, but the **subject** of the sentence is replaced by a **question word**. (*who, what or which*).

John is talking on the phone. > **Who** is talking on the phone?

Their cat is very ill. > **Whose** cat is very ill?

4. Obtaining information

We can reconstruct a sentence using questions:

Daniel got in his car and drove to town.

Who got in his car? > **Daniel.**

What did Daniel do? > He **got in his car.**

Where did Daniel go? > He **drove to town.**