

ENGLISH

Grammar: Question Tags



Question Tags and Short Answers

What is a Question Tag?

A question tag is a grammatical structure where a short question is asked to express interest rather than seek information.

Examples

*Sunil loves to ride his horse, **doesn't he?***

*Radha doesn't want to participate in the competition, **does she?***

*Gauri and Ketan have not met grandmother yet, **have they?***

*Children find games amusing, **don't they?***

The phrases **doesn't he**, **does she**, **have they** and **don't they** are question tags.

Question Tags – Pattern

For positive statements: Question tag = Auxiliary + n't + Subject

*The guests have come, **haven't they?***

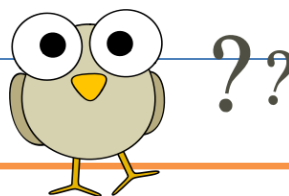
*Puja bought this dress, **didn't she?***

For negative statements: Question tag = Auxiliary + Subject

*The guests haven't come yet, **have they?***

*Puja didn't buy this dress, **did she?***

How to Form Question Tags?



It is easy to form a question tag:

1. Rewrite the sentence replacing the full-stop with a comma (,).
2. Change the verb in the sentence to its contracted form for negative tagging.
3. Add the appropriate verb for positive tagging.
4. Add the appropriate pronoun after the verb/contraction.
5. Add a question mark (?) to finish.

Examples

*He is a librarian, **isn't he?***

*She is not coming, **is she?***

*Dorothy called you several times, **didn't she?***

*They couldn't hear me, **could they?***

*I am the greatest, **aren't I?***

What are Short Answers?

- Short answers are generally used in direct speech or during an engaging conversation.
- The questions to short answers usually begin with auxiliary verbs.

Short Answer - Pattern

Yes + pronoun + auxiliary

Or

No + pronoun + auxiliary + n't (not)

Examples

Are you going to the party?

Yes, I am.

No, I am not.

Can we have some coffee before that?

Yes, we can.

No, we can't/cannot.

Is Joel coming for the party?

Yes, he is.

No, he isn't.