

88 Indirect questions



1 Use

We use indirect questions to ask for information in a polite way, eg:
Can/could you tell me ...? Do you know ...? I'd like to know ... :
Excuse me, could you tell me where the nearest bank is?

2 Wh- questions

In indirect questions the subject of the verb comes after the *wh-* word and before the verb.

DIRECT QUESTION	INDIRECT QUESTION
<i>What time is it?</i>	<i>Do you know what time it is?</i>
<i>Where is the English exam?</i>	<i>Can you tell me where the English exam is?</i>
<i>How much are these jeans?</i>	<i>I'd like to know how much these jeans are.</i>
<i>Who is that man?</i>	<i>Do you know who that man is?</i>
<i>When are they coming back?</i>	<i>I'd like to know when they are coming back.</i>
<i>Where has Neil gone?</i>	<i>Do you know where Neil has gone?</i>

! X *Can you tell me where is the station?* ✓ *Can you tell me where the station is?*

3 Wh- questions with *do*, *does* and *did*

In indirect questions, we do not use *do*, *does* or *did* after the *wh-* word.
 We use the normal verb form for positive sentences:

DIRECT QUESTION	INDIRECT QUESTION
<i>Where does he live?</i>	<i>Do you know where he lives?</i>
<i>How often do you go shopping?</i>	<i>Could you tell me how often you go shopping?</i>
<i>Where did they go for their holiday?</i>	<i>I'd like to know where they went for their holiday.</i>

! X *I'd like to know what did he say.* ✓ *I'd like to know what he said.*

4 Yes/No questions (*Is ...? Do ...? Have ...? Will ...?* etc.)

In indirect questions, we use *if* or *whether* + subject and the normal verb form for positive sentences:

DIRECT QUESTION	INDIRECT QUESTION
<i>Is there a petrol station near here?</i>	<i>Could you tell me if there is a petrol station near here?</i>
<i>Will he be at the party?</i>	<i>I'd like to know if he will be at the party.</i>
<i>Has she seen that film?</i>	<i>Do you know whether she has seen that film?</i>

🔊 Pronunciation ► 1.32