

61 Yes/No questions



1 Yes/No questions

Yes/No questions ask if something is true or not: *Is it the biggest palace in the world?*

- If a statement contains *be*, an auxiliary verb or a modal verb, this moves in front of the subject in questions:

The water is from a bottle. → *Is the water from a bottle?*

The builders were working here all day. → *Were the builders working here all day?*

- In present simple and past simple statements, there isn't an auxiliary verb, so we use *do/does/did*:

My mother worked when I was at school. → *Did your mother work when you were at school?*

VERB TYPE		SUBJECT	VERB	COMPLEMENT/OBJECT
main verb <i>be</i> :	<i>Is</i>	<i>the water</i>		<i>from a bottle?</i>
	<i>Was</i>	<i>the meal</i>		<i>enjoyable?</i>
auxiliary verbs, e.g.	<i>Is</i>	<i>the examiner</i>	<i>coming</i>	<i>to the school?</i>
	<i>Have</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>bought</i>	<i>some fruit?</i>
	<i>Did</i>	<i>your mother</i>	<i>work</i>	<i>when you were at school?</i>
modal verbs, e.g.	<i>Will</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>clean</i>	<i>your room this weekend?</i>
	<i>Should</i>	<i>the letters</i>	<i>be sent</i>	<i>out today?</i>

We usually say *yes/no* questions with a rising tone (↗): *Was the meal enjoyable?*

Pronunciation ▶ 1.29

2 Short answers

We can answer *yes/no* questions with a short answer. The short answer uses *be*, an auxiliary verb or a modal verb:

'Is that an interesting book?' *'Yes, it is.'*

'Have you bought some fruit?' *No, I haven't. I forgot.*

'Should I enter the competition?' *'Yes, you should.'*

'Does Ella speak any foreign languages?' *'No, she doesn't.'*

- ⚠ We don't use short forms in positive short answers:

'Is it raining?' ✗ *'Yes, it's.'* ✓ *'Yes, it is.'*

We usually use only the first auxiliary or modal verb in short answers, not the main verb:

'Have you bought some fruit?' ✗ *'Yes, I have bought.'* ✓ *'Yes, I have.'*

'Should the letters be sent out today?' ✗ *'Yes, they should be sent.'* ✓ *'Yes, they should.'*

3 Negative questions

We can make negative *yes/no* questions to check information or ask for agreement:

Isn't the Royal Palace in Madrid the biggest? 'Wasn't the traffic awful?' *'Yes, it was.'*

We can also use a negative question when we are surprised:

Didn't you know that? I thought everyone knew.

Note the answers to a negative question:

Didn't you know? Yes. (= I knew.) No. (= I didn't know.)