

62 Wh- questions



- Q **When** was the Taj Mahal built?
 A In the seventeenth century.
 Q **Who** built it?
 A Shah Jehan.
 Q **Why** did he build it?
 A To remember his wife after she died.

1 Wh- questions and question words

Wh- questions ask for information. They always start with a *wh-* word:

Wh- WORD	EXAMPLE
who, what	<i>Who</i> can you talk to about your course? <i>What</i> do you want to ask?
when, how	<i>When</i> did your visitors arrive? <i>How</i> did they get here?
where, why	<i>Where</i> have you been? <i>Why</i> did you leave so suddenly?
whose, which	<i>Whose</i> book are you using? <i>Which</i> chapter are you on?

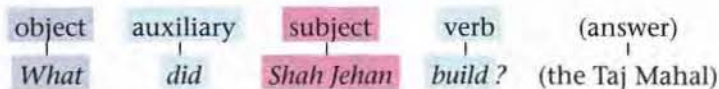
- ! We need to use *be*, an auxiliary verb or a modal verb in most *wh-* questions:
 X *Where you living?* ✓ *Where are you living?* X *How you get here?* ✓ *How did you get here?*
- With *what*, *whose* and *which* we can have a noun before the verb:
What time is it? Whose class are you in? Which subjects are you taking this year?
 - We can also make negative questions:
What didn't you understand? Why didn't you say something?

! We usually say *wh-* questions with a falling intonation (↘): *Where have you been?*

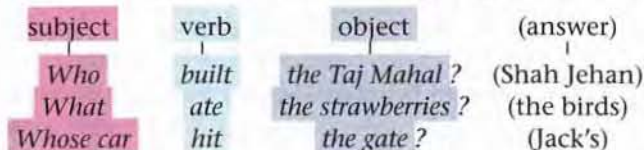
🔊 **Pronunciation** ▶ 1.30

2 Subject and object questions

In most *wh-* questions the *wh-* word is the OBJECT of the verb; we use the question word order:



Who, *what*, *which* and *whose* can be the SUBJECT of the verb; we use statement word order:



Compare these subject and object questions:



- ! *Who* and *what* in subject questions take a singular verb:
 X *Who live in this house?* ✓ *Who lives in this house?*
 X *What happen after the interview?* ✓ *What happens after the interview?*

3 Wh- questions + prepositions

If we use a verb + preposition in a *wh-* question, we usually put the preposition at the end of the question:

Which hotel did they stay at? Who were you living with then?

With *when* and *where*, we don't usually use a preposition:

X *Where did they stay at?* ✓ *Where did they stay?*