

63 how, which/what, who and whose

So you flew from Hong Kong International, **what's it like?**



Wow! **How** did they build it?

Fantastic – really modern. It's basically an artificial island in the sea.



1 how

We usually use *how* to ask about the WAY something is done: **How did they build it?**

We use *how* + adjective/adverb when we expect the answer to be a number or a measurement of something:

'**How old** is the Taj Mahal?' 'It's 400 years old.' '**How long** is the film?' 'It's 90 minutes long.'

'**How often** are the classes?' 'Once a week.' '**How many** people work here?' 'About 200.'

'**How much** do the lessons cost?' 'They're £30 an hour.'

⚠ When the question contains the adjectives *tall*, *high*, *long*, *wide*, *deep*, we put the adjective in the answer. Notice the word order: **How tall** is Thomas now?

✗ *Thomas is tall 1.8 metres.* ✓ *Thomas is 1.8 metres tall.*

⚠ Notice the answer to a question asking about a person's age: ✗ *My daughter is seven years.* ✓ *My daughter is seven.* / *My daughter is seven years old.*

We use *how* to ask about health, opinions and progress, often in set phrases:

'**How are you?**' 'Fine, thanks.' '**How's the hotel?**' 'It's OK.'

'**How's the new job going?**' 'Well, thank you.'

2 which and what

Which and *what* both have similar meanings but *which* asks about one or more of a small number of things:

	small number	large number	+ noun	with people	with things
which	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
what	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓

What's for dinner? **What** are they playing? **What sort** of shoes should I wear? **What time** is it?

Which airport did you fly from, Heathrow or Gatwick? **Which teacher** have you got for history?

• We do not need a noun if it is clear what we are asking about:

'Our college offers language courses.' 'Really? **Which** do you teach?' (= which course)

• We use *what* + *do* to ask about a person's work:

What do you do? **What did your grandfather do?**

⚠ We can use *what* + *be* + *like* (but not *how*) to ask for a description:

✗ *How is it like?* ✓ **What's it like?**

What was the exam like? ✗ *It was like easy!* ✓ *It was easy!*

Notice the difference between:

'**What's she like?**' 'She's young and attractive, and she's very clever.'

'**What does she like?**' 'She likes climbing – she goes every weekend.'

3 who and whose

We use *who* to ask about people, but we use *whose* (with or without a noun) to ask about relationships and possessions:

Who did you meet at the conference? **Who's** your favourite film star?

Whose daughter is she? **Whose newspaper** is this? **Whose** is that?

More on *whose* ► Unit 72.1