

3 Look at the mini-conversations and underline the most likely answer in bold. Then read the information in the box below.

- 1 A: The negotiations are going well, aren't they?
B: **Yes, they are.**/No, they're not.
- 2 A: The negotiations aren't going well, are they?
B: **Yes, they are.**/No, they're not.

- A positive statement with a negative tag often expects the answer *Yes*.
- A negative statement with a positive tag often expects the answer *No*.
- A negative statement with a positive tag is also used to be polite, or indirect, or ask for a favour. The answer could be *Yes* or *No*.
You haven't by any chance got a spare pen, have you?

4 Complete the sentences using a tag and any other necessary words.

You thought the meeting was good.

You say: 'That was a good meeting, wasn't it?'

- 1 You want to suggest that we go to the bar.
You say: 'Let's go _____?'
- 2 You want to check if the train leaves from platform 4.
You say: 'The train _____?'
- 3 You want to persuade someone that they can't afford to take a risk.
You say: 'You can't afford _____?'
- 4 You want to make sure that the other person will speak to their boss.
You say: 'You'll speak _____?'
- 5 You want to make sure your name is on the list.
You say: 'I'm on _____?'
- 6 You can't reach the salt and want someone to pass it to you.
You say: 'Pass _____?'
- 7 You're worried that the other person will be in danger.
You say: 'Take care, _____?'
- 8 You feel a cold current of air.
You say: 'Someone's left the door open, _____?'
- 9 You want to know if the other person has met Joelle.
You expect the answer is 'no'.
You say: 'You _____?'
- 10 You want to know if the other person has met Joelle.
You expect the answer is 'yes'.
You say: 'You _____?'
- 11 You want to ask a favour – for the other person to get you a sandwich from the shop.
You say: 'You couldn't get _____?'
- 12 You want to ask politely if the other person will be passing a post box on their way home.
You say: 'You won't by any _____?'

Negative questions

5 Match each negative question 1–4 with its use a–d. If several are possible choose the best one.

- 1 Don't you accept American Express?
 - 2 Don't you agree that anything that saves you time saves you money?
 - 3 Don't you eat meat?
 - 4 Don't you think that this proposal will just lead to increased costs and reduced efficiency?
- a) negative question to persuade
b) negative question to disagree politely
c) negative question to show surprise
d) negative question in social English to make it easier for the other person to say 'no'.

It is possible to use an uncontracted form with 'not' after the subject. This is formal and intensifies the meaning.

Do you not accept American Express? Do you not eat meat?

Do you not think that this proposal will just lead to increased costs and reduced efficiency?

6 Using the first sentence, add a tag question for a) and make a negative question for b). Look at the example.

'There's a deadline'.

a) *There's a deadline, isn't there?*

b) *Isn't there a deadline?*

- 1 It'll be expensive to use Air Express.
a) _____
b) _____
- 2 It'd be better to ship via Rotterdam.
a) _____
b) _____
- 3 We've met somewhere before.
a) _____
b) _____
- 4 You spoke to our sales agent yesterday.
a) _____
b) _____
- 5 There's always room for compromise.
a) _____
b) _____
- 6 You don't have insurance cover.
a) _____
b) _____
- 7 You haven't seen one of these before.
a) _____
b) _____

7 Rewrite 6b and 7b from Exercise 6 with an uncontracted form of 'not'. Note how this intensifies the meaning.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____