
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute Grammar

Question forms



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NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Neil.

Sophie

And me, Sophie. Hello.

Neil

Today's programme is all about questions.

Sophie

Yes: we'll take a look at different types of yes-no questions...

Neil

We'll hear lots of w-h questions...

Sophie

And we'll be using the questions to get to know each other a little bit better.

Neil

So if you want a reminder of English question forms...

Sophie

Or if you're if you're studying them for the first time...

Neil

Keep listening and join in with the task we'll be giving you later on.

Sophie

So let's get started.

In English, there are two basic question types: yes/no questions and w-h questions.

Neil

And here's Finn with our first yes-no question:

Finn

Can you speak English? Can you speak English?

Neil

Thanks Finn. That's a useful first question.

Sophie

Yes, and it's made with the auxiliary verb *can*, plus the subject *you* and a verb: *speak*. *Can you speak? Can you speak English Neil?*

Neil

Yes, *I can*. Another question please Finn?

Finn

Do you work every day? Do you work every day?

Sophie

Auxiliary *do*, subject *you*, verb *work*. *Do you work every day, Neil?*

Neil

I don't, no. I don't work at weekends. Finn?

Finn

Do you have any brothers and sisters?

Sophie

Auxiliary *do*, subject *you*, verb: *have*. *Neil, do you have any brothers or sisters?*

Neil

Yes I do I've got one sister. Now another way to make yes-no questions is with the verb *to be* plus a subject. Let's demonstrate. Sophie: *Are you married?*

Sophie

No, Neil, I'm not. Is your boss married?

Neil

My boss? No, he isn't. Neil, Were you in the office yesterday?

Sophie

Yes, sadly I was in the office yesterday.

IDENT

You're listening to BBC Learning English.

Neil

And we're talking about question forms.

Sophie

Now the second main type of question in English starts with either *what, where, when, which, why, who*, or the odd one out:

Neil

... *how*.

Sophie

So let's try making a question with *where*. We add an auxiliary...

Neil

... such as *do*

Sophie

... then we can add a subject plus a verb. For example: Neil: *Where do you live? Where do you live?*

Neil

I live in south London. *Where do you live Sophie?*

Sophie

I live in north London. Now let's change the question word and the verb. *Which languages do you speak?*

Neil

And here we add a noun to *which*: *Which languages do you speak?*

Sophie

Just English. And with a different auxiliary: *Which languages can you speak?*

Neil

We can add nouns to some of the other question words: *What time do you start work?*

Sophie

About 9 o'clock in the morning. And if we ask *What time is it?* We're making a *w-h* question with the verb *to be*. I can ask: *Where were you born?*

Neil

I was born in England. *When is your birthday?*

Sophie

In September. *What is your work address?*

Neil

It's WIA. Lots of useful questions with *to be* there. Now for a very personal question with *to be*: *Sophie: How old are you?*

Sophie

You should never ask a woman her age! And for questions with *how*, we usually add an extra word. To ask about age it's:

Finn

How old...

Sophie

For price it's:

Finn

How much...

Neil

For size we ask:

Finn

How big...

Sophie

And for height it's

Finn

How tall.

Sophie

How tall are you, Neil?

Neil

About 180cm. And of course, you can't answer a *w-h* question with *yes* or *no*. *How tall are you, Sophie?*

Sophie

I think we're actually the same height.

Neil

Let me see, back to back... No, I'm taller!

Is it time for a practice task Sophie?

Sophie

Yes, it is. Join in at home if you like. I'm going to give you a topic to ask me about, and you have to make one *yes/no* question and one *w-h* question. And Neil will give some possible answers. Here's the first topic: Ask me about my age.

Neil:

Ok so you could ask: *How old are you? When were you born?*

Sophie

Now ask me about my home.

Neil

Do you live with your family? What is your address?

Sophie

Now ask me about my work.

Neil

Do you work near here? How much do you earn?

Sophie

Thanks Neil. And well done to you at home if you joined in with the task.

Neil

So that's a look at some basic question types we can use when we're getting to know people. We had *yes/no* questions,

Sophie

And we looked at questions starting with *w-h* words.

Neil

And we found out some interesting information about each other. I didn't know how tall you were, Sophie?!

Neil

I know, it's quite amazing really. And there's lots more about questions forms on our website at bbclearningenglish.com. Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

All

Bye.