

What type of boss do you work for? Check one.

Type 1: My boss always needs it now!

"Haven't you finished it yet? Hurry up!"

Type 2: My boss needs it today.

"Sorry, but can I ask you if you've finished it yet?"

Type 3: My boss needs it sometime this week (or next).

"You haven't finished it? No problem."

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Presentation

Negative questions

You can ask questions using the negative form of the verb:

Haven't you finished it yet?

When you use negative questions in spoken English, you normally use contracted forms. Full forms are less common:

Haven't they called you back? (more common)

Have they not called you back? (less common)

You often use negative questions to:

- show surprise or annoyance: *Haven't you finished it yet? You've been working on that report for hours.*
- suggest something: *Why don't you work late tonight?*
- request something (often impolite or expecting a negative response): *Can't I finish it later?*
- check information or something you think is probably true: *Isn't the deadline for this report next Friday?*
- exclaim something: *Don't you work long hours!*

When you use negative question forms for exclamations, you use an exclamation mark (!) not a question mark (?).

Indirect ways of asking questions

You can use certain expressions to make questions less direct. They often make the questions more polite or more tentative:

Have you finished it yet? → *Can I ask you if you've finished it yet?* (more polite and less direct)

Common expressions to ask a question indirectly:

Can/Could I ask you if ...? Can/Could you/anyone tell me ...? Do you know/remember/think ...? Do you have any idea ...? I don't know/'d like to know ... I wonder/was wondering ...

After the expression, the word order is the same as an affirmative sentence (subject before the verb):

I was wondering if you've finished it yet. (not *I was wondering if have you finished it yet.*)

With yes/no questions, use *if/whether*:

Can I ask you if/whether you've finished it yet?

With object questions, do not use an auxiliary verb (*do, does, did*) in the present simple or past simple:

Do you have any idea what time she wants the report? (not *Do you have any idea what time does she want the report?*)

Statements as questions

You can make an affirmative sentence into a question by using rising intonation at the end. This type of question often shows surprise or checks information:

[↗]
You haven't finished it? What have you been doing?
(= This has taken longer than I expected.)

[↗]
A: *The office is open on Saturday?* (= I'm fairly certain, but I want to check.)

B: *That's right, but only until noon.*

1 Put these words in the correct order to make questions or statements.

- 1 done he a hasn't good job
Hasn't he done a good job
- 2 come you I with can't
- 3 they take a break soon won't
- 4 they how expensive know don't this is
- 5 Phillip me can you tell where is
- 6 you think will like Marilyn do our idea
- 7 know mistakes how I made so many I don't
- 8 idea you have are coming do any how many people

2 Match a statement as a question (1–6) to the questions (A–F).

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 You've left your job? | A What is it now? |
| 2 They've changed the password? | B So who's in charge? |
| 3 It's this afternoon? | C What will you do instead? |
| 4 Your car's broken down again? | D Do you think they all received one? |
| 5 No one's replied to our invitations? | E Wasn't it at the mechanic's only last week? |
| 6 The boss is on vacation? | F Why did I need to get up so early then? |

3 Read the first sentence or question. Rewrite each to ask the question indirectly, or form a negative question, or make a statement as a question.

- 1 Have you talked to your boss about the problem? It would be a good idea to.
Why about the problem?
- 2 Is it OK if I take the rest of the day off?
Can't of the day off?
- 3 I thought today's lesson was canceled.
Isn't canceled?
- 4 How much are potatoes this week?
I'd like to know this week?
- 5 Aren't they coming? Why not?
They ? Why not?
- 6 I need you to help me move these books.
Could you these books, please?
- 7 How long has Gabriel been playing that computer game?
Do you have any idea that computer game?
- 8 Do you spell his last name C-H-U-I?
You ?