

Direct and indirect questions simplest responses game with small talk questions and checking/ clarifying questions

Listen to your teacher or partner read questions and hold up one of the two cards that you were given depending on if each question was a direct question (“(Wh-) + auxiliary verb + subject + main verb?”) or an indirect question (“polite start (+ Wh-) + subject + verb”). If you are not sure, think about if what you hear is the simplest way to ask that question (and so is a direct question) or is a more polite way of asking that question (and so is an indirect question).

Write “D” for “direct” or “I” for “indirect” next to each question below.

Ask about any anything you are not sure about below, for example:

- questions which you don't understand
- questions which don't know how to answer
- questions which you don't think need to be indirect
- questions which you think should be indirect but aren't below

Without looking below, brainstorm some personal questions which should be indirect and some personal questions which are okay as direct questions. Try to include as many different starts to indirect questions as you can.

Compare your ideas with those below and brainstorm more.

First without looking at the examples below, try to write rules for making indirect questions out of direct questions.

Look at the examples to check and improve your rules for making indirect questions.

Answer these questions and use your answers to check the rules that you described:

- Why do some indirect questions not end with a question mark?
- How and why does the word order change between direct questions and indirect questions?
- When and why is “if/ whether” used in indirect questions?

Play a similar simplest responses game, but this time saying if an indirect question that your partner asks is a Yes/ No question (in which case say “Yes No”) or a Wh- question (say “W,H”).

Practise answering the questions below.

Roleplay small talk conversations including a mix of direct and indirect questions, first when meeting someone for the first time, then when meeting someone again.



Cards to hold up

direct	indirect
direct	indirect
direct	indirect
direct	indirect
direct	indirect
direct	indirect
direct	indirect
direct	indirect

Mixed direct and indirect questions

- Can I check if you are over 55?
- Can I just check whether you are vegetarian?
- Did you have a good weekend?
- Did you have any problems getting here?/ Did you have any trouble finding us?
- Did you see the match/ game (between... and...) (last night)?
- Do you have (any/ many) more meetings today?
- Do you have to go (straight) back to your office (now/ after this)?
- Have you changed your hair?
- Have you come far?
- Have you finished (for today/ for the day/ for the day/ for the week)?
- Have you read any good books/ seen any good movies/... any good... recently?
- How are your family?/ How is your family?
- How has your day been/ week been/ stay been/ visit been/ trip been (so far)?
- (Long time no see). How have you been (since we last met)?
- Do you know how many employees your company has?
- Can I ask how much that coffee cost?
- How was your journey?
- How was your weekend?
- How's business?
- How's it going?/ How are you doing?/ How are things?/ How's life (treating you)?
- How's the weather (outside/ outside now/ in.../ back in...) (now)?
- How's work?
- Is it a big company?
- Can I ask if your company is famous?
- Is your office near here?
- What are you working on (at the moment)?
- What do you do?
- I'm wondering what CRM means.
- What does IP stand for?
- What does your company/ division/ department/ section/ team do?
- Can I ask what your wife/ husband/ boyfriend/ father/ mother/... does?
- Do you know what the weather forecast is (for tonight/ for this weekend/ for...)?
- Could you tell me what your email address is?
- Can you tell me what your extension number is?
- Could I ask what your first/ middle/ family name is?
- Could I just ask what kind of sandwich/ phone/ watch/... that is? (Is it any good?)
- Do you know what time this train leaves/ arrives (at...)?
- Could you tell me where I am (on this map)?
- Do you know where are toilets are?
- Where are you based?/ Are you based near here?
- Where is your company based?
- Can I ask where your office is?
- Which division/ department/ section/ team/... do you work in?
- Who do you work for?

Correction stage

The questions below are direct but should be indirect or are indirect but should be direct. Change them to the right form. Try to use a different indirect question starter for each one that needs to be indirect.

- Are you over 55?
- Can I ask if you had a good weekend?
- I'd like to know if you had any problems getting here.
- Could you tell me whether you saw the match?
- Do you know whether you have many more meetings today?
- I'm wondering if you have come far.
- Could I just ask how you are doing?
- How much did that coffee cost?
- Can I check how your journey was?
- Can I just check how your weekend was?
- What's the weather forecast (for tonight)?
- What's your email address?
- What's your first name?
- What kind of phone is that? (Is it any good?)

Check above. Sometimes different indirect question starters have different meanings/uses, so please check if you wrote something different.

Listen to your teacher or a partner read out a direct question. If it should be indirect, repeat back the correct form. If it is okay direct, just repeat the question as it is.

Listen to your teacher or a partner read out an indirect question. If it should be direct, repeat back a direct version of that question. If it is okay as it is, just repeat the indirect question.

List to a mix of direct and indirect questions. If the question seems fine, just answer it. If it should be changed, repeat back a correct form of the question for your partner to answer.

Change partners. Practise answering the questions above.

Roleplay whole small talk conversations, first with someone you know and then with someone you've never met before.

Homework

Write an email with three questions, using indirect questions where necessary/ suitable. Then write the response email. The emails can be formal or informal (depending on what you usually write, in English or your own language), but try to be consistent.