Section 8  questions and negatives

page 103

language notes

Question and negative forms of be, have, modals, and other verbs in their various tenses are revised in Sections 1–7. However, English question and negative formation is moderately complicated, and some students may still have difficulty forming these structures correctly. Continuing mistakes may include sentences like:

*What you are doing?
*Where all those people are going?
*Where were going all those people?
*Where you work?
*What does he wants?
*What she said?
*What did they wanted?
*I no understand/understood.
*She no has phoned.
*Why you no write to me?
*It not rains here in the summer.
*We don’t working tomorrow.

possible further activities

The cartoons are simply intended to provide amusing examples of two question structures. There is no need for students to do anything except look at them.

pages 104–105

language notes

In spoken English, declarative yes/no questions (which have the same word order as statements) are quite often used to check one’s beliefs (‘You’re coming tonight?’). These are dealt with in Oxford English Grammar Course Advanced. At lower levels, it’s best if students keep to the normal structure (auxiliary before subject), until they have stopped making mistakes with interrogative word order.

The ‘Pronunciation for grammar’ exercises here and elsewhere will help with the intonation of questions.

possible further activities

Completing the structure  Say or write up questions with the first word missing. How quickly can students find the first word? (There may be more than one answer.) Examples of possible questions:

you swim? (Do or Can) she understand? (Does, Did or Can)
you seen my keys? you ready? you watch TV yesterday?
he play football? they speak Japanese? she been to Scotland?

An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form or use.  ➔ Section 8 continues
**Question or statement?** Say third-person singular verbs and infinitives, mixed up. If students hear an infinitive, they put ‘Does she’ before it to make a question. If they hear a third-person form, they put ‘She’ before it to make a statement. Like this:

‘like’ – ‘Does she like?’
‘likes’ – ‘She likes.’
‘works’ – ‘She works.’
‘play’ – ‘Does she play?’

Keep it moving as fast as it will go without the students getting seriously confused. Encourage appropriate intonation.

**Personal questions** Students prepare 20 or more interesting questions about people’s pasts, interests, present activities etc. When they are ready, they interview each other and write reports.

**Invented personalities** Students invent imaginary personalities for themselves, and then prepare questions and interview each other as above. (‘Where do you live?’ ‘On the moon.’)

**Class interview** As above, but with more questions. Bring somebody into the classroom (for example a colleague, a friend, a student from another class); students ask their questions and write reports on what they have found out. This can also be done by dividing the class into groups, getting each group to prepare questions on a different topic (e.g. past, interests, present activities, beliefs), and bringing in as many visitors as there are groups. Visitors then rotate from group to group.

**Twenty questions** In this well-known game, one person (the ‘thinker’) thinks of something, and the rest of the group or class try to find out what it is. They can only ask 20 questions; the thinker can only answer ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. It helps if you suggest some useful questions in advance, explaining vocabulary where necessary. For example:

Is it in this room?
Can you eat it?
Is it made of …?
Is it bigger than a …?
Is it a part of the body?
Is it manufactured?
Is it useful?

The thinker may like to give a clue at the beginning (e.g. ‘It’s in this room’). A common approach is to say in advance that the object is ‘animal’ (in origin), ‘vegetable’ (in origin), ‘mineral’ (in origin) or ‘abstract’. However, it needs to be made very clear that for example ‘animal’ does not mean that the object is necessarily an animal – leather shoes or butter are animal in origin. Similarly, a cotton shirt is vegetable and a computer is mineral. In any case, however clear you make it, there will always be somebody who doesn’t understand this. It may work best if you act as the thinker for at least one round, and then let the students play in groups.

**‘What … like?’** Tell students that you come from (or have visited) a country called Fantasia, where everything is different. Give them a few minutes to prepare questions in groups, using the structure *What is/are … like?* Help with vocabulary if necessary. Then they ask their questions. Make sure you have some interesting answers prepared – for example:

‘What are the houses like?’ ‘Very small and made of glass.’

‘What is the government like?’ ‘There isn’t one.’

**Internet** Ask students if they can find five questions on the internet beginning “What are all those people …?” or “Why are all those people …?”.
The special structure of questions that have who or what as a subject can cause confusion:

*Who did say that?

*What did happen?

**Possible further activities**

**Memory test** Get each student in turn to say ‘Hi’ to one other student (not his/her neighbour). Then the students test your memory, like this:
‘Who did Maria say ‘Hi’ to?’ ‘Who said ‘Hi’ to Maria?’

**Quiz** Building on Exercise 3, get students to work in groups and prepare quizzes for the class. This can be done as a competition: take one group’s quiz and see which of the other students can get most answers right.

Informal questions ending in prepositions are difficult for most students, since few languages have a similar structure. Some intermediate students may still have problems.

*About what are you talking?*

*With who did you play?*

**Possible further activities**

**Mime** You mime the following actions. Students ask you appropriate questions.

- looking at something (‘What are you looking at?)
- listening to something
- thinking about something
- talking to yourself about something
- talking to somebody
- writing to somebody

Students mime things that they don’t do. The rest of the class guess what is meant.

(‘You don’t play the piano.’ ‘You don’t drive.’)

**Predictions** Students write sentences about things that they probably won’t do in the future. (‘I probably won’t work in a bank.’)

**Lies** Tell the students five things about yourself, including one lie. Students pick out the lie and contradict you. (‘You don’t live in a palace.’) Students can do the same in groups.

**Nobody …** Students try to write one sentence beginning in each of the following ways:

- Nobody can …
- Nobody knows …
- Nobody wants …
- Nobody likes …
- Nobody will …
Never  Students write or say sentences about themselves (one or more) beginning in each of the following ways:

- I never … (simple present)
- I have never …
- I will never …

‘No’ or ‘not’? Say a series of well-known nouns, adjectives and adverbs. Students repeat the words, putting either no or not before them. Like this:

- ‘money’ – ‘no money’
- ‘ready’ – ‘not ready’
- ‘fast’ – ‘not fast’
- ‘bread’ – ‘no bread’
- ‘today’ – ‘not today’
- ‘tickets’ – ‘no tickets’

Don’t include verbs: they can be followed by either no or not, depending on the structure.

Writing notices  Each student writes a notice, using NO with a noun or -ing form, to stop people doing something (in the classroom, in the town, in the country, …).

Finding notices  If students are in an English-speaking country, get them to look for notices beginning ‘NO’. If not, get them to look for notices that can be translated into English ‘NO’ notices. Who can find the most before the next lesson?

Internet  Students find one or more interesting sentences on the internet beginning “Nobody will ever”, and one or more beginning “Nobody has ever”.

pages 110–111

language notes

‘Pronunciation for grammar’ gives practice on the intonation of negative question exclamations.

possible further activities

Personalisation: confirming positive beliefs  You, and the students, ask other people questions about things you think about them, but are not quite sure of. Like this:

- ‘Haven’t you got a motorbike?’ ‘Yes, I have.’
- ‘Don’t you live in Newport?’ ‘No, I don’t. I live in Backfield.’

Visitor from space: confirming negative beliefs  Tell the class to imagine that you are a visitor from a distant planet where everything is different! They ask negative questions to check that everything really is different. Like this:

- ‘Don’t you have electricity?’ ‘No, we don’t.’
- ‘Don’t you eat?’ ‘No, we don’t.’
- ‘Don’t you fall in love?’ ‘Yes, we do,’