

# UNIT 52

## Question tags (are you? doesn't he? etc.)

- a) You haven't got a car, **have you?** It was a good film, **wasn't it?**

**Have you?** and **wasn't it?** are *question tags* (= mini-questions which we put on the end of a sentence). In question tags we use the auxiliary verb (see Unit 51a). For the present and past simple use **do/does/did**:

– They came by car, **didn't they?**

- b) Normally we use a positive question tag with a negative sentence:

<i>negative sentence</i> +	<i>positive tag</i>
Tom <b>won't</b> be late,	<b>will he?</b>
They <b>don't</b> like us,	<b>do they?</b>
That <b>isn't</b> George over there,	<b>is it?</b>

And normally we use a negative question tag with a positive sentence:

<i>positive sentence</i> +	<i>negative tag</i>
Ann <b>will</b> be here soon,	<b>won't she?</b>
Tom <b>should</b> pass his exam,	<b>shouldn't he?</b>
They were very angry,	<b>weren't they?</b>

Notice the meaning of **yes** and **no** in answers to question tags:

– You're not going to work today, are you?  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Yes. (= I am going)} \\ \text{No. (= I'm not going)} \end{array} \right.$

- c) The meaning of a question tag depends on how you say it. If the voice goes *down*, you aren't really asking a question; you are only asking the other person to agree with you:

– 'Tom doesn't look very well today, does he?' 'No, he looks awful.'  
– She's very attractive. She's got beautiful eyes, hasn't she?

But if the voice goes *up*, it is a real question:

– 'You haven't seen Ann today, have you?' 'No, I'm afraid not.'  
(= Have you seen Ann today?)

We often use a *negative sentence* + *positive tag* to ask for things or information, or to ask someone to do something. The voice goes up at the end of the tag in sentences like these:

– 'You haven't got a cigarette, have you?' 'Yes, here you are.'  
– 'You couldn't do me a favour, could you?' 'It depends what it is.'  
– 'You don't know where Ann is, do you?' 'Sorry, I've no idea.'

- d) After **Let's ...** the question tag is **shall we?**:

– Let's go out for a walk, **shall we?**

After the imperative (**do/don't do something**) the tag is **will you?**:

– **Open** the door, **will you?** – **Don't** be late, **will you?**

Notice that we say **aren't I?** (= am I not):

– I'm late, **aren't I?**

# UNIT 52 Exercises

52.1 In this exercise you have to put a question tag on the end of each sentence.

Examples: Tom won't be late, will he? They were very angry, weren't they?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Ann's on holiday, ..... ?               | 10 Let's have dinner, ..... ?           |
| 2 You weren't listening, ..... ?          | 11 This isn't very interesting, ..... ? |
| 3 Sue doesn't like onions, ..... ?        | 12 I'm too fat, ..... ?                 |
| 4 Jack's applied for the job, ..... ?     | 13 You wouldn't tell anyone, ..... ?    |
| 5 You've got a camera, ..... ?            | 14 Listen, ..... ?                      |
| 6 You can type, ..... ?                   | 15 I shouldn't have got angry, ..... ?  |
| 7 He won't mind if I go early, ..... ?    | 16 Don't drop it, ..... ?               |
| 8 Tom could help you, ..... ?             | 17 They had to go home, ..... ?         |
| 9 There are a lot of people here, ..... ? | 18 He'd never seen you before, ..... ?  |

52.2 This time you have to read a situation and then write a sentence with a question tag. In each example you are asking your listener to agree with you.

Example: You are with a friend outside a restaurant. You are looking at the prices. It's very expensive. What do you say? It's very expensive, isn't it?

- 1 You look out of the window. It's a beautiful day. What do you say to your friend?  
It's .....
- 2 You've just come out of the cinema with your friend. You both really enjoyed the film. You thought it was great. What do you say? The film .....
- 3 Tom's hair is much shorter. Clearly he has had his hair cut. What do you say to him?  
You .....
- 4 You are shopping. You are trying on a jacket. You look in the mirror: it doesn't look very nice. What do you say to your friend? It .....
- 5 You are talking about Bill. You know that Bill works very hard. Everyone knows this. What do you say about Bill? Bill .....

52.3 In these situations you are asking people for information, asking people to do things etc. Make sentences like those in section c.

Example: You want a cigarette. Perhaps Tom has got one. Ask him.  
Tom, you haven't got a cigarette, have you?

- 1 Jack is just going out. You want him to get some stamps. Ask him.  
Jack, you .....
- 2 You're looking for Ann. Perhaps Tom knows where she is. Ask him.  
Tom, you .....
- 3 You need a bicycle pump. Perhaps Tom has got one. Ask him.  
Tom, .....
- 4 Ann has a car and you don't want to walk home. You want her to give you a lift. Ask her.  
Ann, .....
- 5 You're looking for your purse. Perhaps Tom has seen it. Ask him.  
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