

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWER TAGS SIMPLIFIED

Under question and answer tags, we use subjective pronouns and contracted forms of verbs. We also use both positive tags and negative tags. Question and answer can assume tense (present and past), as well as future time.

### Fundamental Rules of Question Tags

#### RULE I

When the statement is positive, it requires negative tag.

Examples:

- a. I eat fufu, **don't I?**
- b. Ama is clever, **isn't she?**
- c. He came home, **didn't he?**

#### RULE II

When the statement is negative, a positive tag is required.

Examples:

- a. I don't eat fufu, **do I?**
- b. Ama is not clever, **is she?**
- c. He didn't come home, **did he?**

In order for you to grasp this concept easily, we are going to classify the question and answer tags into **Type I, Type II, Type III, Type IV, Type V, VI and Type VII.**

#### TYPE I

This type makes use of **auxiliary/modal verbs**, which may be positive or negative.

This is the easiest of all the types of question and answer tags due to the presence of the helping/modal verbs.

*Examples:*

- a. He **has** come, **hasn't he?**
- b. Amma **does not** eat, **does she?**
- c. It **has not** trained, **has it?**
- d. They **will not** come, **will they?**

## TYPE II

This type makes use of singular subjects in the present tense without using auxiliary/modal verbs. In this way, '**does**' is covertly used.

*Examples:*

- a. Amma **sings** beautifully – (Amma **does sing** beautifully), *doesn't she?*
- b. It **rains** everyday – (It **does rain** everyday), *doesn't it?*
- c. He **wants** to come – (He **does want** to come), *doesn't he?*

## TYPE III

This type makes use of **plural subjects** in the present tense without using auxiliary/modal verbs. In this way, '**do**' is covertly used.

*Examples:*

- a. They **sing** beautifully – (They **do sing** beautifully), *don't they?*
- b. We **come** every day – (We do come every day), *don't we?*
- c. The men **do** not eat, *do they?*

## TYPE IV

This type makes use of simple past tense for both singular subjects. In this way, '**did**' is used covertly.

*Examples:*

- a. I **met** the man – (I did meet the man), *didn't I?*
- b. We **arrived** late – (We did arrive late), *didn't we?*
- c. They **sent** him away – (They did send him away), *didn't they?*

## TYPE V

Sometimes, **more than one auxiliary verb appears** in a statement. When this happens, the **first verb should be used**.

*Examples:*

- Emma **shouldn't** have gone home, *should he?*
- She **will have** married by tomorrow, *won't she?*
- I **would have** gone, if you had not come, *wouldn't I?*

### TYPE VI

Where there is a complex sentence, the tag should focus on the subject and the operator of the main clause.

Examples:

- a. **Amma said** they would go home. - “Amma said’ is the main clause, so the tag should be: **didn’t she?**
- b. **Gideon would** make Rebecca sweep the room, **wouldn’t he?**
- c. **I think** she is honest, **don’t I?**

### TYPE VII

The seventh type deviates from the fundamental rules because it **concerns imperative sentences**.

Imperative sentences (requests or commands) use ‘shall or will’.

#### ▪Request:

- a. Let’s (Let us) go home, **shall we?**
- b. Let’s drink everything, **shall we?**

#### L ▪Command:

- a. Leave my house now (You leave my house now), **will you?**
- b. Close the door (You close the door), **will you?**

**It should be noted that relative pronouns take ‘they’**

- a. **Everybody** came, **didn’t they?**
- b. **Everybody** was there, **weren’t they?**
- c. **No one** was here, **were they?**

*No one, neither, scarcely, barely, hardly, seldom, nothing, etc are considered to be negative and therefore take positive tags.*

- a. Amma hardly eats at night, **does she?**
- b. Nothing has been found yet, **has it?**

**‘Used to’ takes past tense**

- a. I used to eat early, **didn’t I?**

b. We used to go to church late, **didn't we**?

**Choose the right tag in each case**

1. We do not know what the future holds for us,.....?

- A. do we
- B. don't they
- C. don't we
- D. isn't it

2. We are all amazed at his wonderful feat,.....?

- A. isn't it
- B. aren't we
- C. weren't we
- D. aren't they

3. You have never been to Accra .....?

- A. have you
- B. haven't you
- C. won't you
- D. do you

4. I hardly go there,....?

- A. don't I
- B. do I
- C. aren't I
- D. isn't it

5. Can you help me with this exam?

- A. No, I can.
- B. Yes, I can't
- C. No, I will
- D. No, I can't

6. You can drive car , can't you?

- A. Yes, I can.
- B. No, I can
- C. Yes, I can't
- D. No, I do.

7. You promised to pass the examination,.....?

- A. isn't it
- B. do you
- C. didn't you
- D. wasn't it

8. I told you I wasn't in school,.....

- A. wasn't it
- B. wasn't I
- C. didn't I
- D. don't I

9. I have a car, .....?

- A. haven't I
- B. don't I
- C. Isn't it
- D. won't I

10. I have eaten, .....?

- A. haven't I
- B. don't I
- C. Isn't it
- D. won't I

#### ANSWER TAG

They are eating rice, aren't they?

- Yes, they are
- No, they aren't.