



QUESTION TAGS

Grammar: QUESTION TAGS

We use question tags in English when we speak so they are informal.

Question tags are not really questions but a way of asking the other person to confirm or comment on the discussion.

In order to make a question tag, we use auxiliaries, most commonly: do, does or did.

1/ Negative question tags

When the sentence is a positive statement, we make a negative question tag.

Negative question tags are more common.

Example:

It's cheap, isn't it?

You can swim, can't you?

You know the truth, don't you?

They called, didn't

they? He will forget,

won't he?



2/ Positive question tags

When the sentence is a negative statement, we make a positive question tag.

Example:

It isn't expensive, is it?

There isn't a bank here, is
there? It can't be, can it?

You don't work, do
you? She didn't cry,
did she?

They won't listen, will they?

3/ Exceptions

When we use the plural form of the imperative, that is 'let's', the question tag is made with 'shall'.

Example:

Let's go to the cinema, shall we?

4/ Answers to question tags

When we want to answer a question tag, we use the same auxiliary.

Example:

She's pretty, isn't she? ~ Yes, she is / No, she isn't.

It isn't very good, is it? ~ No, it isn't. In fact, it's terrible.



Dialogue:

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

- Sarah: I CANNOT BELIEVE IT!
- Wentworth: What is it you can't believe?
- Sarah: I'm mad at the hypocrisy of the press
- Wentworth: Aren't you overreacting, are you? Calm down for a second and please explain.
- Sarah: Some journalists and politicians made racist comments and no one seems to be outraged.
- Wentworth: What did they say?
- Sarah: I don't want to repeat their vile comments. I do think there is a double standard.
- Wentworth: What do you mean?
- Sarah: If politicians or celebrities say something inappropriate, people are forgiving and so am I. But a journalist shouldn't be biased?
- Wentworth: A journalist shouldn't be biased? What is journalism, according to you?
- Sarah: It is the objective report concerning one piece of news in details.
- Wentworth: You really think journalists are objective, don't you?
- Sarah: Yes, I do. I think most of the time they are.
- Wentworth: This is not journalism. Journalism is about reporting facts. However, you can't deny when something happens, you see it with your own eyes. As a result you obviously see it from a certain perspective, don't you?
- Sarah: I guess so!
- Wentworth: I'll be honest with you. I no longer read newspapers because it is too depressing or appalling. But I know one thing... Their freedom of speech supports our freedom of speech as humble citizens.
- Sarah: I don't understand your point.
- Wentworth: You can't expect to hear only politically correct statements from journalists or others, can you? Journalism is debating, knowing the ins and outs but also taking a stand. I'm not telling you I agree with what they tend to think but they should have the right to express their ideas as well as those they refer to, don't you think?
- Sarah: That's what freedom of speech is about, I guess.
- Wentworth: As long as we hear all voices, good or bad opinions are valid. If people don't react, there must be a reason. We have all the luck in the world to express ourselves without a lot of censorship, we are free to be whoever we want, to discuss whatever we like, to wear anything we feel like wearing, to meet who we we want to. We have more freedom than limitations. And as far as these limitations are concerned, they are our common ground. Thankfully (=grace à dieu?!), everyone knows good from bad. Don't panic or get worked up, have a look, gather different sources, wait 2 or 3 weeks, and there
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