

Direct and Indirect Questions

Activity Type

Grammar Exercises: writing and rewriting questions, unscrambling

Speaking Activity: asking and answering questions, freer practice

Focus

Direct and indirect questions

Aim

To learn and practice three rules for changing direct questions into indirect questions.

Preparation

Make one copy of the two-page worksheet for each student.

Level

Pre-intermediate (A2)

Time

30 minutes

Introduction

In this direct and indirect questions worksheet, students learn and practice three rules for changing direct questions into indirect questions.

Procedure

Give each student a copy of the two-page worksheet.

First, students read through an introduction to indirect questions and a grammar rule for verb placement.

Students then use the information to change direct questions into indirect questions using the polite expressions: *Could you tell me...?* and *Do you know...?*

Exercise A - Answer key

Could you tell me / Do you know...

1.where the station is?
2.what your job is?
3.how big the apartment is?
4.when the next train to Osaka is?
5.who our new English teacher is?

After that, students read the second rule that talks about how the helping verbs *do*, *does* or *did* are omitted from indirect questions.

Next, students put words in order to form direct questions with *do*, *does* and *did*, which they then make into indirect questions.

Exercise B - Answer key

1. Where does Bus 119 go to?
Could you tell me / Do you know where Bus 119 goes to?
2. How do you spell your last name?
Could you tell me how to spell your last name?
3. When does the boat leave?
Could you tell me / Do you know when the boat leaves?
4. Who does this book belong to?
Could you tell me / Do you know who this book belongs to?
5. Why does the shop close so early?
Could you tell me / Do you know why the shop closes so early?

(continued on the next page)

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Procedure continued

After that, students learn the last rule which looks at how to change direct yes/no questions into indirect ones.

Students then change yes/no questions into indirect questions using a polite expression with *if*.

Exercise C - Answer key

Could you tell me / Do you know...

1. ...if she likes Indian food?
2. ...if the game has started yet?
3. ...if he speaks English?
4. ...if there is a public toilet near here?
5. ...if this house is for sale?

Lastly, students write three indirect questions of their own and ask them to their classmates.

Direct and Indirect Questions

Indirect questions are polite longer forms of direct questions. We use them when talking to a person we don't know very well or in formal situations.

Examples:

Direct question: Where is the department store?

Indirect question: **Could you tell me** where the department store is?

Direct question: What is his name?

Indirect question: **Do you know** what his name is?

Rule 1: Indirect questions are formed of two parts: a **polite expression** and a question that places the verb after the subject unlike a direct question.

Examples:

Direct question: Where is the post office?

Indirect question: **Could you tell me** where the post office is?

Direct question: What is the time?

Indirect question: **Do you know** what the time is?



A. Read the direct questions and change them into indirect questions using the polite expressions: *Could you tell me...?* and *Do you know...?*

1. Where is the station?
2. What is your job?
3. How big is the apartment?
4. When is the next train to Osaka?
5. Who is our new English teacher?

Rule 2: Indirect questions do not use the helping verbs *do*, *does* or *did*.

Examples:

Direct question: When does the next train arrive?

Indirect question: **Do you know** when the next train arrives?

Do you know when does the next train arrive? - Incorrect

Direct question: When did the cinema close down?

Indirect question: **Could you tell me** when the cinema closed down?

Could you tell me when did the cinema close down? - Incorrect

Direct and Indirect Questions

B. Put the words in the correct order to form a direct question that uses *do*, *does*, and *did*. Then, underneath make the direct question indirect.

1. go / Bus 119 / where / to / does

.....

2. you / name / last / your / spell / do / how

.....

3. leave / does / the / boat / when

.....

4. to / book / this / belong / does / who

.....

5. early / close / shop / the / does / so / why

.....

Rule 3: When the direct question is a yes/no question, the indirect question uses the word *if* and the word order of a normal positive sentence.

Direct question: Is the restaurant closing now?

Indirect question: **Can you tell me** if the restaurant is closing now?

Direct question: Does Sophia live in New York?

Indirect question: **Do you know** if Sophia lives in New York?

C. Read the direct yes/no questions and change them into indirect questions using a polite expression with *if*.

1. Does she like Indian food?

2. Has the game started yet?

3. Does he speak English?

4. Is there a public toilet near here?

5. Is this house for sale?

D. Now, write three indirect questions of your own and ask them to your classmates.

1.

2.

3.