

# 23 Asking polite questions

In English, asking questions directly can sometimes be seen as impolite. It is very common for English speakers to make their questions more indirect.

⚙️ **New language** Direct and indirect questions

Aa **Vocabulary** Job interviews

🧩 **New skill** Asking questions politely

## 23.1 KEY LANGUAGE POLITE OPEN QUESTIONS

If an indirect question contains "to be," this verb comes after the subject.

What **are** your career goals?



Could **you tell me** what your career goals **are**?

Polite questions usually start with one of these phrases.

The auxiliary verb "to have" also comes after the subject in indirect questions.

What **have** you designed before?



I **was wondering** what you **have** designed before.

The auxiliary verb "to do" does not appear in indirect questions.

Why **do** you enjoy working in fashion?



I'd **like to know** why you enjoy working in fashion.



## 23.2 REWRITE THE DIRECT QUESTIONS AS INDIRECT QUESTIONS

What are your strengths?

== Could you tell me what your strengths are?

① When are you available?

== I was wondering \_\_\_\_\_

② Why have you applied for this job?

== I'd like to know \_\_\_\_\_

③ What is our best-selling product?

== Do you have any idea \_\_\_\_\_

④ Who was your last manager?

== I'm curious to know \_\_\_\_\_



### 23.3 KEY LANGUAGE POLITE "YES / NO" QUESTIONS

An indirect, more polite, way of asking "yes / no" questions is to use "if" or "whether."

Have you worked in a café before?



Could you tell me **if** you have worked in a café before?

"If" can be replaced by "whether," to make the question more formal.



### 23.4 REWRITE THE DIRECT QUESTIONS AS INDIRECT QUESTIONS USING "IF" OR "WHETHER"

Have you ever led a team?

== Could you tell us if you have ever led a team?

1 Do you like working with animals? == We were wondering \_\_\_\_\_

2 Have you applied for other jobs? == Would you mind telling us \_\_\_\_\_

3 Do you have any computer skills? == Could you tell me \_\_\_\_\_

4 Do you have relevant experience? == We'd like to know \_\_\_\_\_



### 23.5 REWRITE THE INDIRECT QUESTIONS, PUTTING THE WORDS IN THE CORRECT ORDER

you

us

tell

your

Could

more

skills?

leadership

about

Could you tell us more about your leadership skills?

1 wondering were you last left We why your job.

2 your you future Could tell about us career ambitions?

3 like to know you taking whether I'd like risks.





## 23.6 READ THE ARTICLE AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

Wear whatever you want to the interview.

True ☐ False ☒

- 1 You shouldn't wear your interview outfit before the interview.

True ☐ False ☐

- 2 You will probably be asked questions about the company.

True ☐ False ☐

- 3 You should learn detailed answers by heart.

True ☐ False ☐

- 4 You should think of questions to ask the interviewer.

True ☐ False ☐

### YOUR CAREER

## Top Tips for Job Interviews

- 1 Dress well for the interview. Try on your interview outfit so that you feel comfortable wearing it.



- 2 Know the company and the job. You will be expected to talk about both of them.

- 3 Think of potential questions and your answers. Don't learn answers by heart, but think about possible points you could make.

- 4 Think of questions to ask the interviewer. It's a great opportunity to make yourself look interesting and interested.

- 5 Be calm and confident. You've got something they like to get this far!

## 23.7 KEY LANGUAGE STALLING TECHNIQUES

If you need extra time to think about a difficult question before answering it, you can start your response with a stalling phrase that indicates you are considering the question.

Would you be happy to work on weekends?

Well, I do have two children.

What are your strengths?

Good question. I have excellent computer skills.



Why should we hire you?

Let's see... I think my experience would be very useful.





## 23.8 LISTEN TO THE AUDIO AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS



Sunaina is interviewing Rhodri for a job at her company.

What does Rhodri say about Alphomega?

Its reputation is not that good ☐

Its reputation is growing ☐

It's a well-respected company ☒

- 1 Why does Rhodri say that, as a new graduate, he would benefit the company?

He is clever and so learns things easily ☐

He has learned new techniques and skills ☐

He will not have developed bad habits ☐

- 2 Why didn't Sunaina ask about Rhodri's strengths?

She had already read about them ☐

She thought he might not tell the truth ☐

She thought it might be boring ☐

- 3 What did Rhodri say was his greatest weakness?

He used to be very critical of himself ☐

He gets bored easily because he's so smart ☐

He is honest when he shouldn't be ☐

- 4 Why had Rhodri researched Alphomega Marketing so thoroughly?

He knew he was coming for an interview ☐

It was part of his final-year project ☐

It was part of his second-year project ☐



## 23.9 RESPOND TO THE AUDIO, SPEAKING OUT LOUD USING STALLING TECHNIQUES

What is your proudest career moment?

Good question. I think it'd be when I was promoted to senior manager.

- 1 When have you worked as part of a team?

Well, \_\_\_\_\_

- 2 What do you know about our company?

Actually, \_\_\_\_\_

- 3 Where do you see yourself in five years?

Let's see. \_\_\_\_\_

- 4 Why do you think we should hire you?

Good question. \_\_\_\_\_

## 23 CHECKLIST



Direct and indirect questions ☐

Aa Job interviews ☐



Asking questions politely ☐