

Types of Questions

There are four kinds of questions in English: general, alternative, special, disjunctive.

1. A **general** question requires the answer “yes” or “no” and is spoken with a rising intonation. General questions are formed by placing part of the predicate (i.e. the auxiliary or modal verb) before the subject.

E.g. *Do you like art?*
May I come in?

Sometimes such questions have a negative form and express astonishment or doubt. In Russian the words “*Разве ... не*”, “*Неужели...*” are used in such questions.

E.g. *Haven't you seen him yet?*

2. An **alternative** question denotes choice and is spoken with a rising intonation in the first part and a falling intonation in the second part. It consists of two general questions connected by means of “or”, one of the questions can be elliptical.

E.g. *Are you a first or a second year student?*

3. A **special** question begins with an interrogative word or phrase (*Where...*, *How...*, *Why...*, *How many...*, *What colour...*, etc.) and is spoken with a falling intonation. The order of words is the same as in general questions but the interrogative word or phrase precedes the auxiliary verb.

E.g. *Where do you live?*

When a special question is put to the subject or to an attribute of the subject, the order of words is that of a statement. (i.e. no inversion is used). The notional verb comes in the 3rd person singular or plural.

E.g. *Who lives in this house?*
Whose pen is on the table?
Whose children are playing here?
What colour are the walls?

4. A **disjunctive** question requires the answer “yes” or “no” and consists of two parts: an affirmative statement followed by a negative question or a negative statement followed by an affirmative question. The first part is spoken with a falling intonation, the second part – with a rising intonation.

E.g. *He is a student, isn't he?*
You are not tired, are you?