

(1) DO, DOES, DID OR AM, ARE, IS, WAS WERE

(2) One of my students, Rogerio, commonly mixes up his tag questions, for example, he might say:

X “You had a pleasant day today, **aren’t** you”

(3) Another student, Alexandre, after I asked, “Do the kids get paid?” replied:

X I think they **are**.

(4) So, both of these responses are incorrect.

So how do we know when to use DO and when to use AM?

(5) So, I want you to think of :

DO with verbs and actions

and

I want you to think of:

AM with nouns and adjectives

(6) Let's take a look .

If I say the sentence:

He went to school.

This is action, "HE WENT", right?

So we're going to use "DO"

Did he go to school?

He went to school, didn't he?

She eats pizza every day.

Again, an action word: eats.

So we're going to use "DO"

Does she eat pizza?

She eats pizza, doesn't she?

(7) Okay, now let's talk about nouns and adjectives:

He is sick today.

Here we see a describing word (sick) and we see the verb IS. Right? He's sick.

Is he sick today?

He is sick today, isn't he?

She is a real queen.

This is a noun, “queen” describing *her*. And we have the verb “is”. So we’re going to say:

Is she a real queen?

She is a real queen, isn't she?

(8) One exception to the rule is when using the progressive tense. In this case you are using “am/are/is”, but only because it’s the required HELPING VERB for the progressive tense form.

For example:

He is talking to the driver. You have the action word, “**talking**” but because it’s in the progressive tense, you have that verb “**is**”, and you will use it in your question.

Is he talking to the driver?

He is talking to the driver, isn't he?

They are earning money.

We have progressive tense “are earning”, the helping verb “are” is in there, and so you ask, “Are they earning money”

Are they talking earning money??

They are earning money, aren't they?

(9) The CHEATING way to know when to say “do” and when to say “am/are/is” is just to look for the being verb (am, are, is),

When you see it, you use it!

(10) He went to school.

Do I see the being verb? No. It's an action verb (went).

So I use "do"

Did he go to school?

We better start went to school, **didn't** he?

(11) He is talking to the driver:

Oh! I see "is". Okay, I'm going to use "is" in my question:

Is he talking to the driver?

He is talking to the driver, **isn't** he?

It's a pretty simple concept. Once you see it, it seems a little obvious.

(12) So you DID learn something, DIDN'T YOU?

You ARE catching on to this, AREN'T YOU?

Let's try some practice sentences.

Write some questions based on the following sentences:

(1) *Tommy loves icecream.*

(1) _____

(2) _____

(2) *That boy is an excellent soccer player.*

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) *She works out every morning.*

(1) _____

(2) _____

(4) *He is a strong cyclist.*

(1) _____

(2) _____

(5) *She is studying every evening.*

(1) _____

(2) _____

(6) *They run 10 kilometers on weekends.*

(1) _____

(2) _____

(7) *The man is very tall.*

(1) _____

(2) _____

(8) *They were singing in the halls.*

(1) _____

(2) _____

(9) *He traveled to Spain.*

(1) _____

(2) _____

(10) *We are going to Disneyland.*

(1) _____

(2) _____

ANSWERS

- (1) *Tommy loves ice cream.*
- (1) *Does Tommy love ice cream?*
(2) *Tommy loves icecream, **doesn't** he?*
- (2) *That boy is an excellent soccer player.*
- (1) *Is that boy an excellent soccer player?*
(2) *That boy is an excellent soccer player, **isn't** he?*
- (3) *She works out every morning.*
- (1) *Does she work out every morning?*
(2) *She works out every morning, **doesn't** she?*
- (4) *He is a strong cyclist.*
- (1) *Is he a strong cyclist?*
(2) *He is a strong cyclist, **isn't** he?*
- (5) *She is studying every evening.*
- (1) *Is she studying every evening?*
(2) *She is studying every evening, **isn't** she?*
- (6) *They run 10 kilometers on weekends.*
- (1) *Do they run 10 kilometers on weekends?*
(2) *They run 10 km on weekends, **don't** they?*
- (7) *The man is very tall.*
- (1) *Is the man very tall?*
(2) *The man is very tall, **isn't** he?*
- (8) *They were singing in the halls.*
- (1) *Were they singing in the halls?*
(2) *They **were singing** in the halls, weren't they?*
- (9) *He traveled to Spain.*
- (1) *Did he travel to Spain?*
(2) *He traveled to Spain, **didn't** he?*
- (10) *We are going to Disneyland.*
- (1) *Are we going to Disneyland?*
(2) *We are going to Disneyland, **aren't** we?*