Question tags rules in English (Free PDF)

Question tags (*are you?, isn't it?, don't you?*, etc...) are very common in English. A positive response is expected:

- It is beautiful, isn't it?

When the sentence is affirmative, the question tag is negative: auxiliary + not + subject pronoun

This tag allows you to ask for confirmation:

- She can speak english, can't she?
- He has written a book, hasn't he?

In the present and in the past, there is no auxiliary in the affirmative statement, so we use the auxiliary of these two times: do and did.

- He looks young, doesn't he?
- Paul sent you a message, didn't he?

When the **sentence is negative**, the question tag is positive. We expect a negative response:

- "You haven't finished your homework, have you?" "Not yet!"
- He doesn't like bananas, does she?
- They haven't arrived yet, have they?

With the verb *be* in the *first person singular* (I), the negative tag is formed with **are** and not am:

- I am tanned, arent't I?

For imperative sentences, we use a positive tag with will:

- Open the door, will you?
- Don't come in, will you?

⚠ Question tags are very often used to ask for confirmation: their intonation is then descending, as in an affirmative sentence.

⚠ You can have a question tag in an affirmative sentence to express a reaction (surprise, irony, solicitude). The intonation is then rising:

- You think you're smart, do you?