

Questions Tags

Let's Learn!

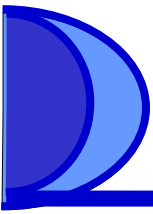
Listen and repeat as your teacher reads the statement below in two ways.

“Hello, you're Katie, aren't you?” (*with rising intonation*)

“Hello, you're Katie, aren't you?” (*with falling intonation*)

How is the meaning different each time?

- A question tag is added to a statement to make it into a question.
- The intonation used on the question tag shows the speaker's attitude to their question.
- Most questions tags are opposite to their statement (negative/positive or positive/negative) and use the following intonation:
 - **Falling Intonation** on the question tag gives the impression that the statement is correct. The speaker is not really asking a question, rather he/she is asserting what he thinks and sort of asking the other person to confirm/agree with what he/she is saying.
 - **Rising Intonation** on the question tag means that the speaker is not confident of his/her statement and he/she is asking the other person to find out about it.
- Imperatives can be followed by a **rising question tag** with a modal verb (will, could, would, etc.)
- Suggestions can also be followed by a **rising question tag** with shall.
- Positive statement and positive tag with **rising intonation** can be used to show sarcasm or suspicion.
- Question tags are common in British English but rare in American English.



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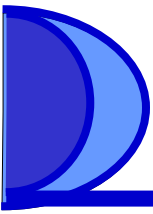
Let's Practice!

Read the following statement and tag combinations with **falling intonation**:

- That's a beautiful piece of art, isn't it?
- They were so noisy, weren't they?
- Susan will be on her way by now, won't she?
- He can run really fast, can't he?
- This film will win awards, won't it?
- Arsenal are brilliant, aren't they?

Read the following statement and tag combinations with **rising intonation**:

- John's finished his exams, hasn't he?
- It's not ten o'clock yet, is it?
- The Smiths were at the party , weren't they?
- That's your car, isn't it?
- John can't play the trumpet, can he?
- You don't think England will win, do you?



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Let's Try!

Directions: Take turns reading the conversation with the teacher and explain the use of intonation in each tag afterwards.

A: You won't forget to call me when you arrive in New York, ↘ will you?

B: I'll try not to mum.

A: And you know that the subway is dangerous at night, ↘ don't you?

B: Yes mum.

A: And if anyone strange approaches you, you'll walk away, ↘ won't you?

B: You think I'm stupid, ↘ don't you? I can look after myself you know?

A: Yes darling, but you can't be too careful these days, ↘ can you?

And you're my son, so I'm allowed to worry, ↗ aren't I?

B: Yes mum, of course you are.

- **Why does the mother use falling intonation in tags 1~5?**
- **In tag 6 the mother uses rising intonation. Why?**