

INDIRECT QUESTIONS

B1 | Teens / Adults | Grammar Practice | 35-45 minutes

Learn and practise | Ask for information politely using statement word order.

1. READ: At a station information desk

Read the conversation. Notice the bold grammar and how the speakers use it.

Aya: Excuse me. **Could you tell me where platform six is?**

Staff: Down the stairs and on your left.

Aya: Thanks. **Do you know if the lift is working?** I've got a heavy suitcase.

Staff: Yes, it is. You'll find it beside the ticket barriers.

Aya: And **could you tell me when the next train leaves?**

Staff: In twelve minutes. You've got plenty of time.

2. GRAMMAR: Polite opening + embedded question

After a polite opening, use subject + verb. Use if/whether for an embedded yes/no question.

Use / form	Pattern	Example
Wh-question	where / when + subject + verb	Could you tell me where it is?
Yes/no question	if / whether + subject + verb	Do you know if it is open?
No do in clause	subject + main verb	Could you tell me when it leaves?

Direct: Where does she work? **Indirect:** Do you know where she works?

Do not backshift merely because the opening is polite. Could you tell me...? refers to now.

The whole polite question still ends with a question mark.

A. CHOOSE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Could you tell me where is it / it is?
2. Do you know if / which Jo is here?
3. Can you tell me when does it open / it opens?
4. Do you know where she lives / does she live?
5. Could you tell me whether / what it's open?
6. Do you know how much it costs / does it cost?
7. Could you tell me where the lift is / is the lift?
8. Do you know if she can / can she help?

Read each answer aloud. Explain which meaning or time clue helped you.

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Use it | Complete a context, write sentences and speak with a partner.

B. COMPLETE: Travel information

Complete the embedded questions. Use the appropriate present form.

1. Could you tell me where the station _____ (be)?
2. Do you know when the ticket office _____ (open)?
3. Could you tell me how much a day ticket _____ (cost)?
4. Do you know if the lift _____ (work) at the moment?
5. Could you tell me whether I _____ (can / use) this ticket?
6. Do you know where the buses _____ (stop)?

C. CHANGE THE SENTENCES

1-2: Begin with Could you tell me...?

Example: Where is Jo? **Could you tell me where Jo is?**

1. When does the train leave?
2. How much is the ticket?

3-4: Begin with Do you know if...? Example: Is it open? **Do you know if it is open?**

3. Does this bus stop here?
4. Can I pay by card?

D. WRITE ABOUT YOU

Write three polite questions for a station, hotel or tourist office. Include one yes/no question.

Example: **Could you tell me where the museum is? Do you know if it is open today?**

E. SPEAK WITH A PARTNER

Role-play asking for information. One person is a visitor; the other is staff.

Ask three indirect questions, then switch roles in a different location.

INDIRECT QUESTIONS

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Answer key | Keep this page separate during student practice.

1. READ: At a station information desk

Sample target language from the conversation:

Aya: Excuse me. **Could you tell me where platform six is?**

Aya: Thanks. **Do you know if the lift is working?** I've got a heavy suitcase.

Aya: And **could you tell me when the next train leaves?**

A. CHOOSE

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. it is | 2. if |
| 3. it opens | 4. she lives |
| 5. whether | 6. it costs |
| 7. the lift is | 8. she can |

B. COMPLETE: Travel information

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| 1. is | 2. opens |
| 3. costs | 4. is working |
| 5. can use | 6. stop |

C. CHANGE THE SENTENCES

1. Could you tell me when the train leaves?
2. Could you tell me how much the ticket is?
3. Do you know if this bus stops here?
4. Do you know if I can pay by card?

D. WRITE ABOUT YOU / E. SPEAK

Personal answers will vary. Check the target grammar.

Sample: Could you tell me where the cafe is? Do you know when it opens? Do you know if it serves lunch?

Teacher note: Distinguish polite indirect questions from past reported questions. No automatic backshift here; accept whether for if.