

Mrs. F B Kh

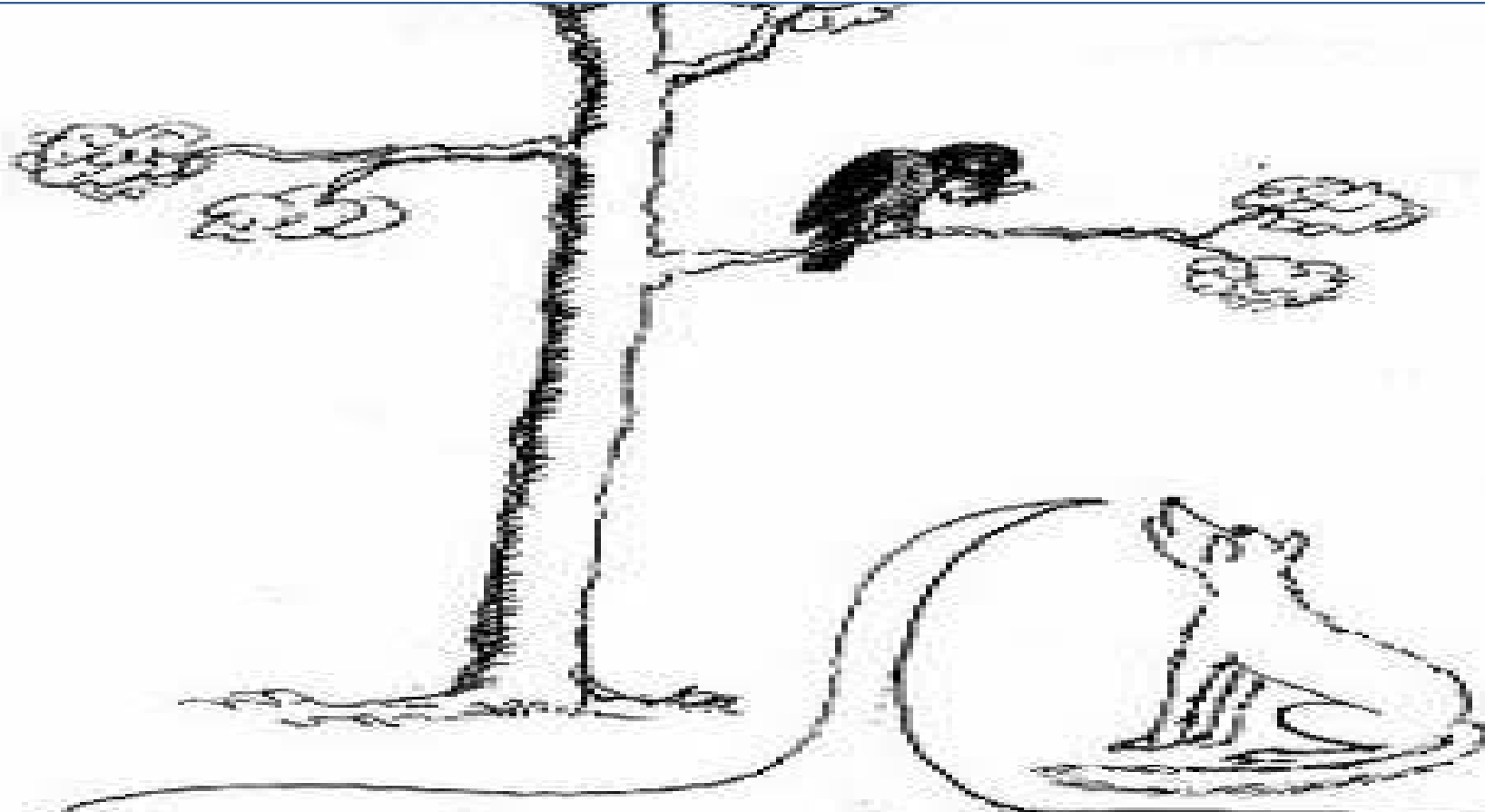
Grammar

**is fun,
isn't it?**



Tag Questions





You are the most beautiful bird -
in the world, aren't you?
You have nice feathers, haven't you?
You have a sweet voice, haven't you?
But, you can't sing, can you?

What is a Tag Question?



We use tags in spoken English but not in formal written English. They are not really questions but are a way of asking the other person to make a comment and so keep the conversation open.

Tag-Questions

Statement Sentences with short questions at the end with a question mark!



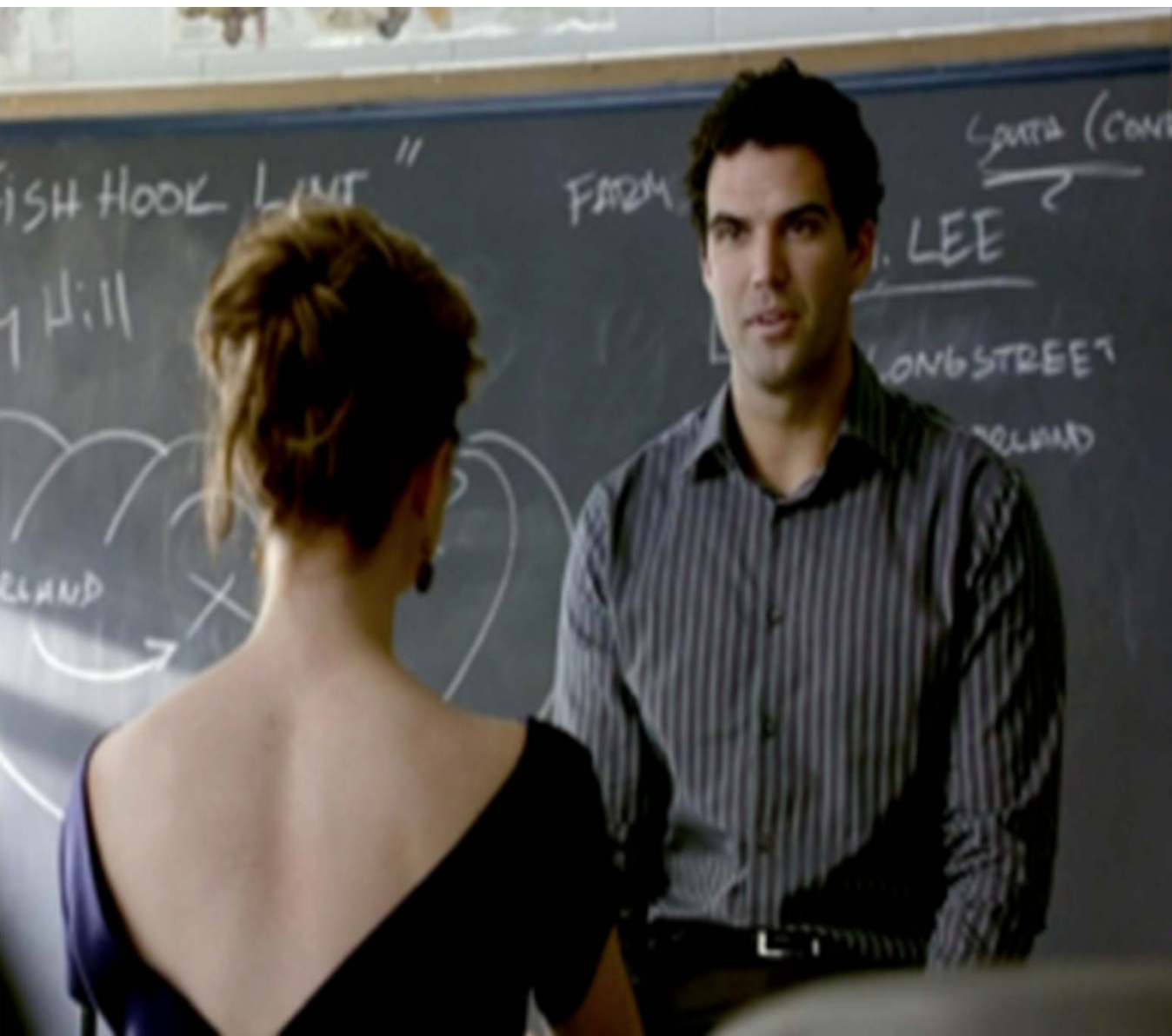
A ‘tag-question’ or ‘question tag’ is not a true question.

A tag question is used at the end of a Statement Sentence to get the confirmation from the listener, or just to express one’s doubt.

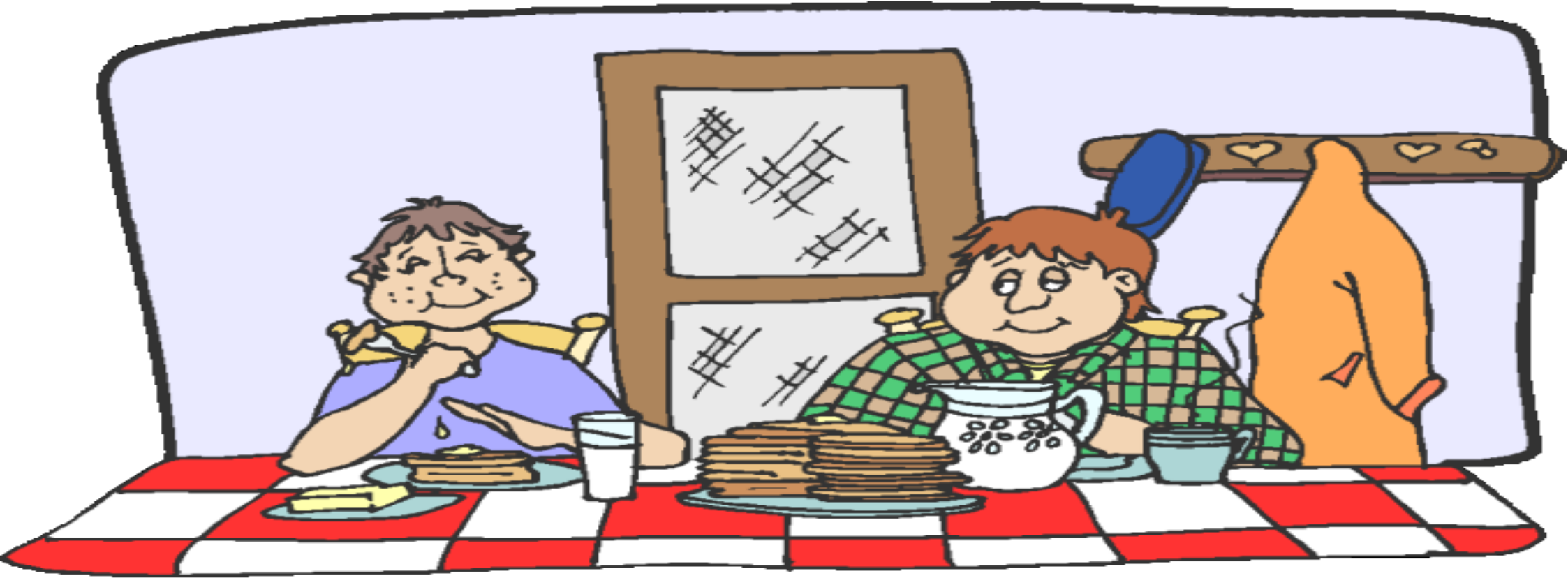
A question sentence, on the contrary, is used to get the answer.

Why are they called « Tag Questions »?

They are called tag questions, because the question is tagged onto the end, almost as an afterthought.



You are a
teacher,
aren't
you?



The food is delicious, isn't it?

There are five simple
points we should follow
when we use a Tag-
question:



You are listening to me, aren't you?

Statement

Question tag

Point 1

A **comma** is used between the main sentence and the ‘tag’ part.



She can
use the
computer,
can't she?



Tag questions must agree in gender, in number and in the tense of the verb with the statement before it.

Point 2

Even if the subject of the main sentence is a noun – proper noun or common noun – the subject of the ‘tag’ part is always a corresponding PERSONAL PRONOUN.

They are watching TV, aren't they?





Ahmed is a good student, isn't he?

proper noun , male,
singular
he

Point 3

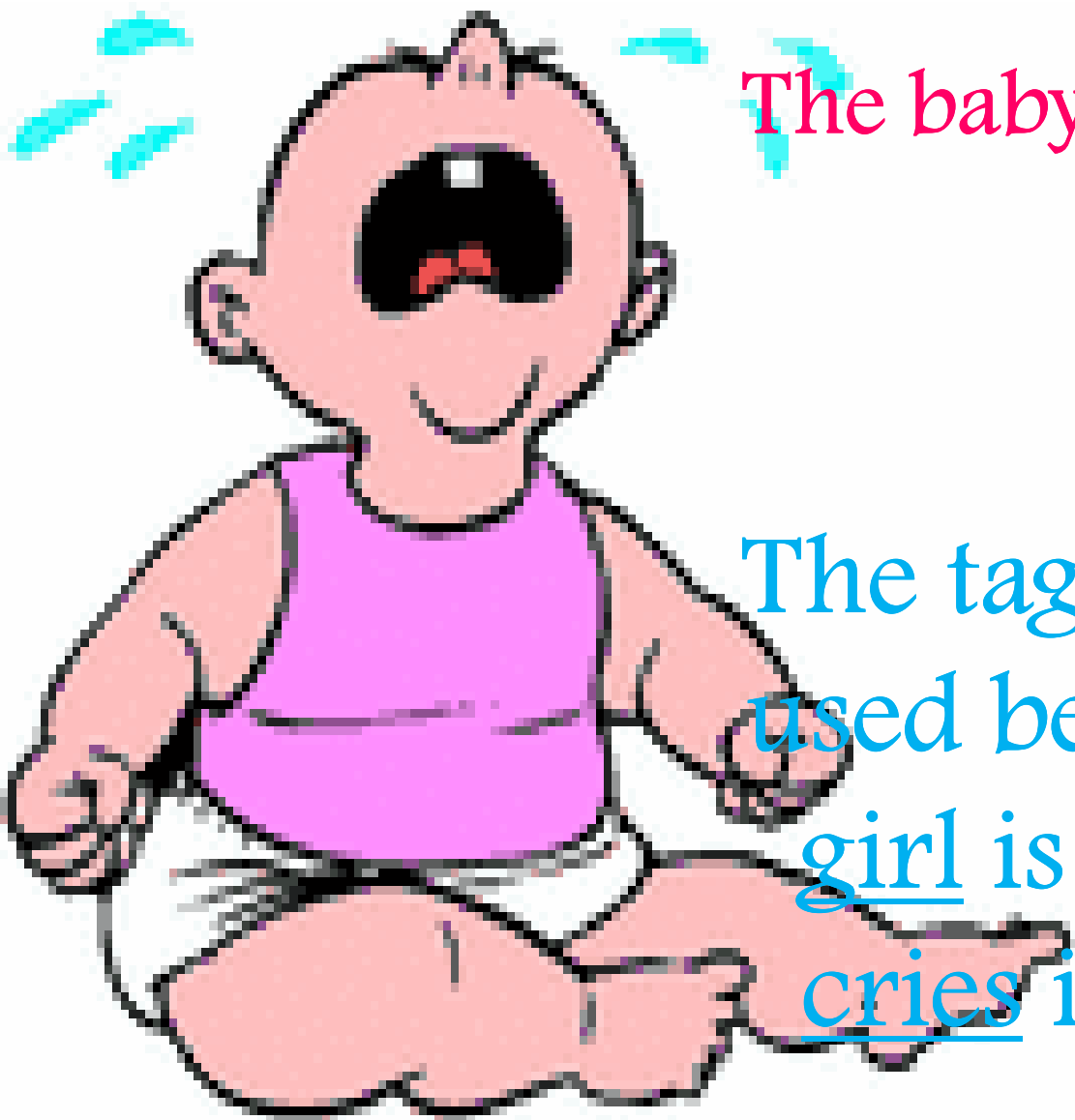
The verb in the ‘tag’ part depends on the verb in the main sentence:

If the verb in the main sentence is in **Present Tense**, the verb in the ‘tag’ part will be in **Present Tense**; and the verb in the main sentence is in **Past Tense**, the verb in the ‘tag’ part will be in **Past**, and so on.

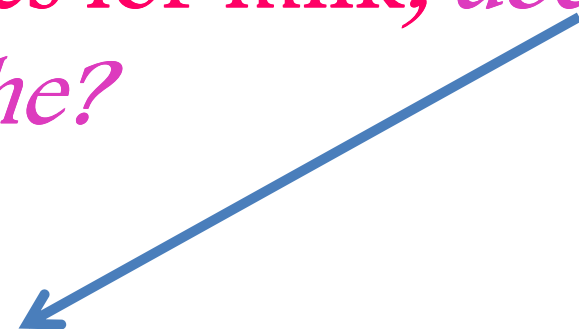
If the statement is positive, the tag
must be negative.

If the statement is negative, the
tag must be positive.



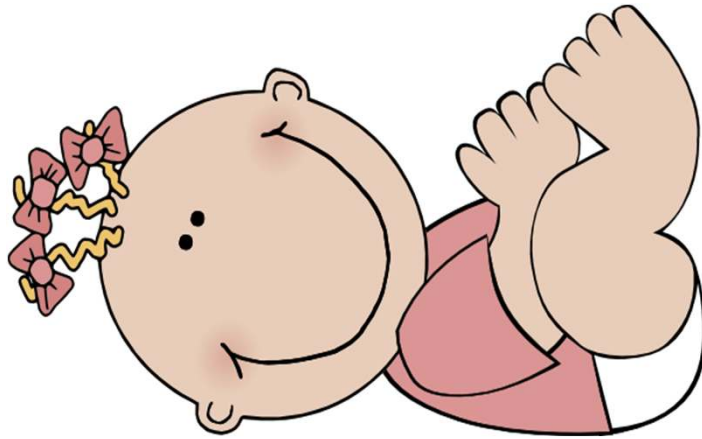


The baby girl cries for milk, *doesn't she?*



The tag question *doesn't she* is used because the subject baby girl is singular and the verb cries is in the present tense.

The pronoun she is used because *baby girl* is feminine in gender. Also, you are talking about the baby girl. Therefore you use 'she'. The tag question is negative because the statement part is positive.





The festivals
don't attract
many
tourists, do
they?

The tag question *do they* is used because the subject festivals is plural and the verb do attract is in the present tense.



The pronoun they is used because the subject '*the festivals*' is plural. Also, you are talking about them (the festivals), therefore you use '*they*'.

The tag question is positive because the statement part is negative (due to the presence of *not*).

The boy
climbed the
mountains,
didn't he?



The tag question *didn't he* is used because the subject *the boy* is singular and the verb *climbed* is in the past tense.

The pronoun *he* is used because the subject *'the boy'* is singular. Also, you are talking about him (*the boy*), therefore you use *"he"*.

The tag question is negative (*'not'* is added) because the statement part is positive.

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THIS WAS TO HAVE BEEN HILLARY'S GREATEST MOMENT...

She **is** your sister, **isn't** she?



Main verb

Present

simple

Positive

form



Simple

present

Negative

form





The mother is not upset, is she?

Present
simple
Negative
form

Present
simple
Positive
form

Brad **hasn't** done his homework, **has** **he**?

He

Present
perfect
Negative
form

Present
perfect
Positive
form



They go to school, don't they?



Present
simple
Positive
form



Present
simple
Negative
form





You **went** to New York, **didn't** you?



Past
simple
Positive
form

Past
simple
Negative
form

Point Four

If the statement part uses an auxiliary or a helping verb, the same helping verb is used in the tag question.

Helping verbs are

is, are, was, were, have, has, do, does, did, will, shall, would, can, could, must



The girls are
not prepared to
leave the shoe
shop, *are they?*

You notice that the helping verb *are* is used in the statement. Therefore we still use *are* in the tag question, taking off *not* to make it positive.

Since the statement is negative (due to the presence of *not*), therefore the tag question is positive (we remove 'not').

The pronoun *they* is used because the subject '*the girls*' is plural. Also, you are talking about them (the girls), therefore you use '*they*'.

Justin has
gathered
stones on the
shore, hasn't
he?



You notice that the helping verb *has* is used in the statement. Therefore we still use *has* in the tag question, adding *not* to make it negative. Since the statement is positive, therefore the tag question is negative. (we add *not* to 'has')

The pronoun he is used because the subject *Justin* is singular. Also, you are talking about “him”

Justin, therefore you use *‘he’*.



You should
do the
activity,
shouldn't
you?

You notice that the helping verb *should* is used in the statement. Therefore we still use *should* in the tag question, adding *not* to make it negative. Since the statement is positive, therefore the tag question is negative. (we add *not* to 'should')

The pronoun *you* is used because the subject '*You*' is plural. Also, you are talking about the other person, therefore you use '*you*'.

Point Five

The negative form of the verb
in the 'tag' part is always
contracted:

does not = doesn't; has not
= hasn't; will not = won't

Tag Questions with « I am »

Be careful with question tags with sentences that start '*I am*'. The question tag for '*I am*' is '*aren't I?*'



I am the fastest,
aren't I?

Tag Questions with « Let's »

‘Shall we’ is the question tag for *suggestions* with both ‘Let’s...’ or ‘Let’s not...’.

Let’s go to the beach, *shall we*?



Tag Questions with the Imperative

With an imperative statement, the tag question is *will you*.



Take your sheet,
will you?

We use an affirmative tag question after a sentence containing a negative word such as *never, hardly, nobody*.

Nobody lives
in this house,
do they?



When the subject is *nothing*, we use “*it*”
in the tag question.



Nothing bad
happened,
did it?

When the subject is *nobody, somebody, everybody, no one, someone*, or *everyone*, we use “*they*” in the tag.

Everybody
liked the meal,
didn't they?



With used to, we use “*didn't*” in the tag.



She used to be a
chef cook,
didn't she?



Intonation in Tag Questions

Statements are normally said with falling intonation.

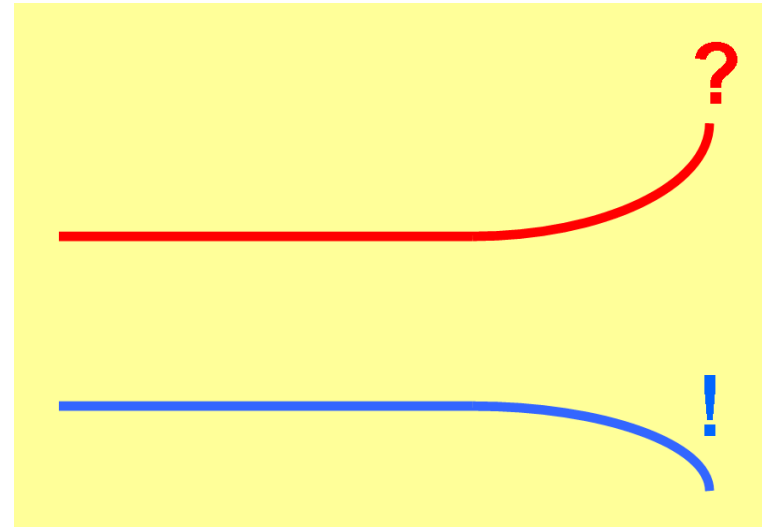
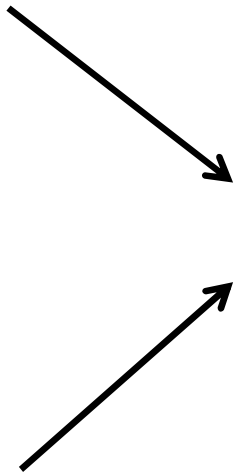
Yes / No questions are normally said with rising intonation.

The intonation of tag endings is different from both of these.

In tag questions, the tag endings (for example, isn't he?, is he?, hadn't they?, can he?) have two different intonations:



falling intonation
and
rising intonation



The intonation (falling / rising) of the tag endings is in addition to the intonation of the statement to which the tag ending is attached.

This means that after the normal intonation (falling) of the there will be the intonation of the tag ending (falling or rising):



Question 4 is difficult, isn't it?



Question 4 is difficult, isn't it?

The falling or rising intonation of
the tag endings communicates
different information.



Tag Endings with Falling Intonation

When someone asks a tag question and the question tag has falling intonation, the person who asks the questions is fairly sure that the statement before the tag ending is correct. Because the person asking the question is not *100%* sure, however, he or she still wants confirmation.

I think a question is difficult and want to know if you
feel the same way,

so I say



Q: Question 4 is difficult, isn't it?

A: Yes, it's difficult. / No, it isn't difficult. / I don't know.

Tag Endings with Rising Intonation

When someone asks a tag question and the tag has rising intonation, the person who asks the question is much less sure that the statement before the tag ending is correct. However, he or she still wants confirmation:



I think I have the answer for question 4 but am not very sure. I want to see if you agree with me (or if you will tell me what the answer is)



so I say



Q: Question 4 is difficult, isn't it?



A: Yes, it's difficult. / No, it isn't difficult. / I don't know.