Question Tag

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What are Question Tags?

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Question tags are short question often found at the end of an affirmative or a negative sentence. In order to keep our conversations going, question tags can be used. Question tags are usually formed with a modal or an auxiliary verb and a personal pronoun.

EXAMPLE:

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We can’t go to the market, can we?

While forming question tags few important things should be kept in mind.

1. Affirmative sentences or positive sentences take negative question tags.
2. Negative sentences take positive or affirmative question tags.

EXAMPLE:

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Our principal is very strict, isn’t she?

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She didn’t eat her breakfast, did she?

Let’s look at the above mentioned examples. The first example is an affirmative sentence and it uses a negative tag while the second one is a negative sentence that uses a positive tag.

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Need of Tag Questions

Tag questions come at the end of a statement. They can also be called mini questions. We use tag questions when we want somebody to agree to what we are saying. We use them also to ask for confirmation or we want to make sure that whatever we are saying is correct. Tag questions mean something like Do you agree?

Example

We don’t have school tomorrow, do we? (We are asking for confirmation here)

Sachin Tendulkar is a great cricketer, isn't he? (We want somebody to agree to what we are saying)

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Form and Examples of Question Tags

FORM OF A TAG QUESTION:

Question tags are formed with modal or auxiliary verb and a personal pronoun. We will see that most of the time (the auxiliary verb or the main verb when in the form of be) which is there in the sentence is used to form the question tag. But there is one exception to this rule. Sentence that starts with I am is an exception to this rule. Such sentences will require an irregular tag question but sentences that starts with I am not take a regular tag question.

Example

I am sick, aren't I? (Irregular question tag)

I am not sick today, am I? (Regular tag)

Few More Examples:

With Auxillary Verbs	Positive Statement +Negative Question tag	Negative Statement +positive question tag
	They have come to visit us, haven't they?	They weren't present, were they?
Without Auxillary Verbs	She eats pizza, doesn't she?	They don't like meat, do they?
With Modals	You will come with us, won't you?	They couldn't talk to us, could they?

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Reference Links:

- http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/grammar-reference/question-tags
- http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/grammar/qu_tags.htm\
- http://english.stackexchange.com/questions/64646/question-tags-did-you-vs-didnt-you
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tag_question

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