

Question words

English Grammar · A1

what, where, who

Question words

What?	Where?	Who?	When?
a thing	a place	a person	a time
<i>What is it?</i>	<i>Where? Home.</i>	<i>Who is she?</i>	<i>When? At six.</i>

Question words: reference card grid

Question words are placed at the **beginning** of a question to ask for specific information.

- **what** (what), **where** (where), **who** (who)

What is your name?

What's your name?

Where do you live?

Where do you live?

Who is that man?

Who is that man?

Note: A be verb or auxiliary do/does often follows the question word: Where **do** you work?

when, why, how

- **when** (when), **why** (why), **how** (how / in what way)

When is the party?

When is the party?

Why are you sad?

Why are you sad?

How do you spell it?

How do you spell this?

Note: **how** can also combine with adjectives to ask about degree: How old are you?
How much is it?

Common Errors

- × ~~Where you live?~~ → ✓ Where **do** you live? — After the question word, you still need do/does or be; you cannot follow directly with the subject.
- × ~~What means this word?~~ → ✓ What **does** this word **mean**? — mean is an ordinary verb: question word + does + subject + base form.
- × ~~Why you are late?~~ → ✓ Why **are** you late? — When there is a be verb in the sentence, move be before the subject.
- × ~~How to spell it?~~ → ✓ **How do you spell** it? — A literal translation of “How to spell?” loses the subject and auxiliary verb; these must be added.