Test Your Grammar Skills

Direct & Indirect Questions – Lesson Plan

1. Write ‘Direct Questions’ on the board. Elicit from SS (students) two kinds of Direct Questions: wh and yes/no. Elicit from SS: wh questions provide information, while yes/no questions provide confirmation.

2. Elicit from SS seven wh question words: what, where, when, why, who, which, how.

3. SS write ten (or x) direct questions. Different students write ten on the left-hand side of the board. (See board plan, p.3.)

4. T says: ‘These are the kind of questions we learn at school. The problem is that English people often do not use these questions! We prefer Indirect Questions.’

5. T writes ‘Could you tell me’ on the right-hand side of the board, opposite a direct question. T invites SS to complete the question. They may get inversion wrong, or not use if/whether. T corrects them, and outlines the main points:

    - There are three parts in the sentence:
      polite phrase | wh or if/whether | normal sentence, without inversion

    - If it is a wh question, use the wh question word

    - If it is a yes/no question, use if or whether. Whether sound better because it has a nicer rhythm, but if is also fine

    - There can’t be two questions in the sentence, e.g. <u>Do you know</u> <u>how is he</u>?

    - Why do we use indirect questions – the English are not a direct race; we hide behind language; we do not wish to appear rude; we use language to smooth over the differences between us; we may be false-polite; we may use it sarcastically, e.g. parents do this; the longer the polite phrase the more polite (or sarcastic it is); list a few situations in which we could use them, e.g when we want something of value that somebody else has, even if it is only information, e.g asking a stranger the time. T emphasises that even in families and with close friends we prefer indirect questions to direct ones, which somehow seem ruder to us

    - Native speakers have attuned their ears to hear a question in a statement such as: ‘I just can’t understand where I put my bag.’ They will (or may!) help you look for it, seemingly without being asked

6. T tries to elicit more polite phrases, e.g. Do you know... There are many because the English love to be polite (and sarcastic)! See *50 Polite Phrases for Beginning Indirect Questions* for examples from the five worksheets – and there are dozens more possible different combinations of phrases with verbs like *tell*, *know*, and *wonder*. After a while T has written ten on the board, opposite the direct questions. SS have to convert the ten direct questions into indirect ones.

7. T checks and corrects with the group. SS read out the answers.

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Direct & Indirect Questions – Lesson Plan

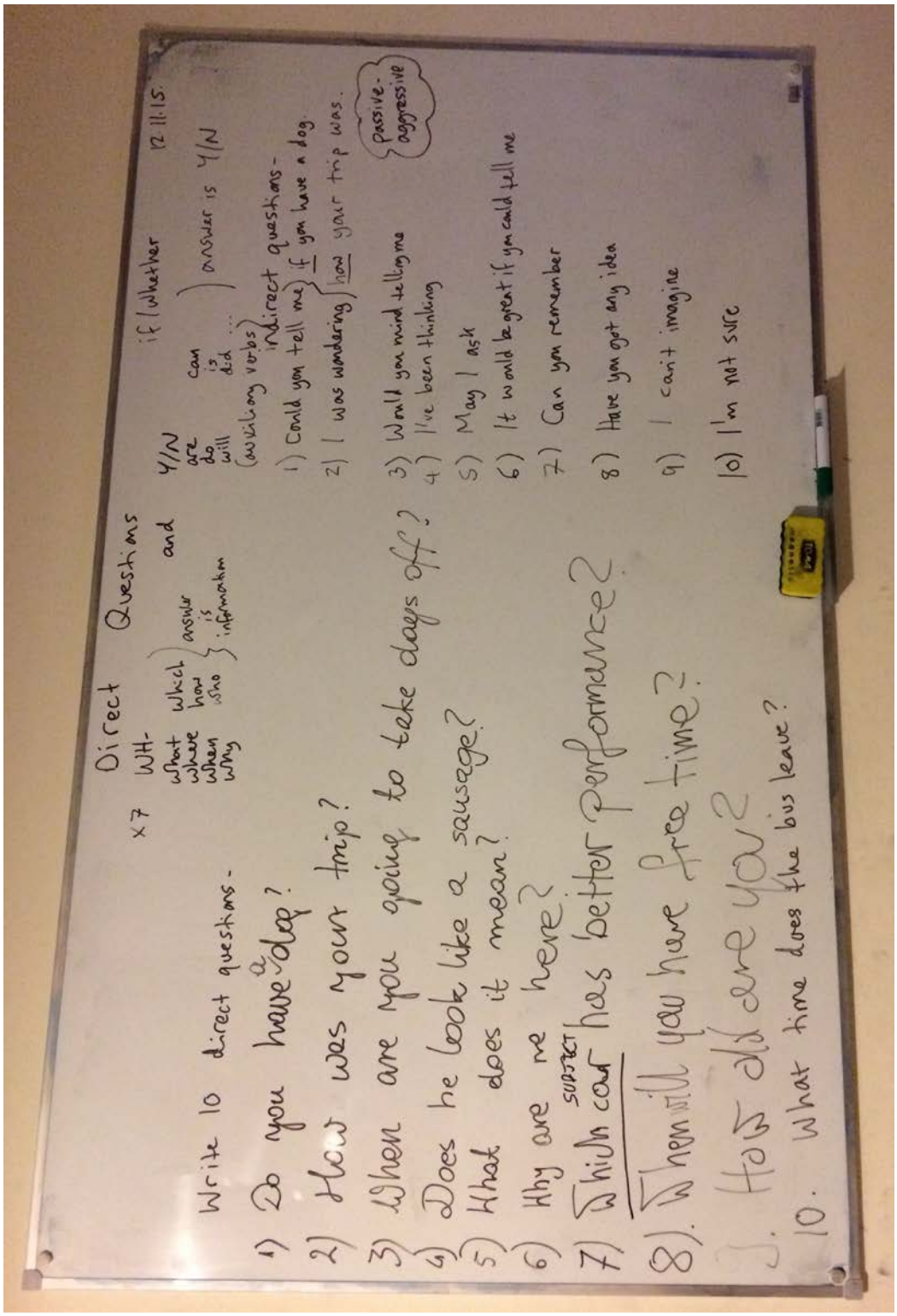
8. SS work in pairs; they choose a situation and develop a short role play using x new polite indirect questions. They perform it for the group. Straight afterwards, they perform the same role play with direct questions instead of indirect questions. What differences are noticed? e.g. using indirect questions will sound more like natural English.

9. Consolidate learning with five different worksheets for homework – or for practice in class, or a test in class:

    - *Write Direct & Indirect Questions from Prompts 1*
    - *Write Direct & Indirect Questions from Prompts 2*
    - *Direct & Indirect Questions – Mixed-Up Questions 1*
    - *Direct & Indirect Questions – Mixed-Up Questions 2*
    - *Direct & Indirect Questions – Mixed-Up Questions 3*

Test Your Grammar Skills

Direct & Indirect Questions – Lesson Plan



Test Your Grammar Skills

Write Direct & Indirect Questions from Prompts 1

Use the keyword prompts in the right order in an appropriate tense to write direct and indirect questions. Note – answers may vary:

1. bus | leave | what time *direct:* _____

   indirect: Could you tell me _____

2. be | where | pencil *direct:* _____

   indirect: Do you know _____

3. why | break | lamp *direct:* _____

   indirect: Would you mind informing me _____

4. phone | who | steal *direct:* _____

   indirect: Do you remember _____

5. capital | what | Portugal *direct:* _____

   indirect: May I ask you _____

6. tomorrow | will | snow *direct:* _____

   indirect: Can you say _____

7. late | you | why *direct:* _____

   indirect: Can you explain _____

8. Mike | do | here | work *direct:* _____

   indirect: I was wondering _____

9. how | save | document *direct:* _____

   indirect: Have you got any idea _____

10. package | why | not deliver *direct:* _____

    indirect: I would be very interested to know _____

11. have | lose | anybody | handbag *direct:* _____

    indirect: It would be great if you could let me know _____

12. not get | upgrade | why *direct:* _____

    indirect: I just can't understand _____

Test Your Grammar Skills

Write Direct & Indirect Questions from Prompts 1

Answers will vary. Sample answers:

1. What time does the bus leave?

   Could you tell me what time the bus leaves?

2. Where is my pencil?

   Do you know where my pencil is?

3. Why is that lamp broken?

   Would you mind informing me why that lamp is broken?

4. Who stole your phone?

   Do you remember who stole your phone?

5. What is the capital of Portugal?

   May I ask you what the capital of Portugal is?

6. Will it snow tomorrow?

   Can you say whether it will snow tomorrow?

7. Why are you late?

   Can you explain why you are late?

8. Does Mike work here?

   I was wondering if Mike works here.

9. How can I save this document?

   Have you got any idea how I can save this document?

10. Why wasn't my package delivered?

    I would be very interested to know why my package wasn't delivered.

11. Has anybody lost their handbag?

    It would be great if you could let me know whether anybody has lost their handbag.

12. Why didn't I get upgraded?

    I just can't understand why I didn't get upgraded.

Test Your Grammar Skills

Write Direct & Indirect Questions from Prompts 2

Use the keyword prompts in the right order in an appropriate tense to write direct and indirect questions. Note – answers may vary:

1. due | concert | finish | when *direct:* _____

   indirect: Can you tell me _____

2. open | 8pm | dry cleaner's *direct:* _____

   indirect: Does anybody know _____

3. test | you | fail | why *direct:* _____

   indirect: I'd love to know _____

4. here | railway station | get | how *direct:* _____

   indirect: Do you happen to know _____

5. wear | be | tomorrow | what *direct:* _____

   indirect: I've been meaning to ask you _____

6. blouse | blue | available *direct:* _____

   indirect: Would you mind telling me _____

7. when | pay | will | last invoice *direct:* _____

   indirect: I'm writing to ask you _____

8. not do | why | washing up *direct:* _____

   indirect: I wonder if you could tell me _____

9. put | glasses | where *direct:* _____

   indirect: I can't remember _____

10. be | where | toilet *direct:* _____

    indirect: I was wondering whether you would be so kind as to let me know _____

11. painting | price *direct:* _____

    indirect: May I enquire as to _____

12. what | after | happen | lunch *direct:* _____

    indirect: I was hoping that you could fill me in on _____

Test Your Grammar Skills

Write Direct & Indirect Questions from Prompts 2

Answers will vary. Sample answers:

1. When is the concert due to finish?

   Can you tell me when the concert is due to finish?

2. Is the dry cleaner's open until 8pm?

   Does anybody know whether the dry cleaner's is open until 8pm?

3. Why did you fail the test?

   I'd love to know why you failed the test.

4. How can I get to the railway station from here?

   Do you happen to know how I can get to the railway station from here?

5. What will you be wearing tomorrow?

   I've been meaning to ask you what you will be wearing tomorrow.

6. Is this blouse available in blue?

   Would you mind telling me if this blouse is available in blue?

7. When will you pay my last invoice?

   I'm writing to ask you when you will pay my last invoice.

8. Why haven't you done the washing up?

   I wonder if you could tell me why you haven't done the washing up.

9. Where did I put my glasses?

   I can't remember where I put my glasses.

10. Where is the toilet?

    I was wondering whether you would be so kind as to let me know where the toilet is.

11. What is the price of that painting?

    May I enquire as to the price of that painting?

12. What is happening after lunch?

    I was hoping that you could fill me in on what is happening after lunch.

Test Your Grammar Skills

Direct & Indirect Questions – Mixed-Up Questions 1

Unjumble the questions and write them correctly. Circle either **D** *or* **I** *to show whether each sentence is direct or indirect:*

1. whether I'm can asking item you if I doesn't return this it fit?
   _____ **D | I**
2. you pop do or rock prefer music?
   _____ **D | I**
3. know I why don't crying is Kerry.
   _____ **D | I**
4. before had the left boss already they arrived?
   _____ **D | I**
5. you heard have this in whether the will be sale?
   _____ **D | I**
6. here I know to how would long I to like wait need.
   _____ **D | I**
7. like Rabbit the movie Peter you new do?
   _____ **D | I**
8. which didn't use software you anybody inform you needed about to?
   _____ **D | I**
9. where Malcolm is?
   _____ **D | I**
10. most was which you do sofa comfortable the recall?
    _____ **D | I**
11. you I'm ringing whether home have to ask contents insurance.
    _____ **D | I**
12. pavement your do you mind why dog is fouling the you I ask if?
    _____ **D | I**
13. going will to the if ask barn he's you dance Tom?
    _____ **D | I**
14. need Deptford for I bus do which?
    _____ **D | I**
15. going bike whether Christmas he's to Jack wants to a know new for get.
    _____ **D | I**

Test Your Grammar Skills

Direct & Indirect Questions – Mixed-Up Questions 1

Answers:

1. I'm asking you whether I can return this item if it doesn't fit. **I**
2. Do you prefer pop or rock (*or* rock or pop) music? **D**
3. I don't know why Kerry is crying. **I**
4. Had the bus already left before they arrived? (*or* Had they... before the bus...) **D**
5. Have you heard whether this will be in the sale? **I**
6. I would like to know how long I need to wait here. **I**
7. Do you like the new Peter Rabbit movie? **D**
8. Didn't anybody inform you about which software you needed to use? **I**
9. Where is Malcolm? **D**
10. Do you recall which sofa was the most comfortable? **I**
11. I'm ringing to ask whether you have home contents insurance. **I**
12. Do you mind if I ask you why your dog is fouling the pavement? **I**
13. Will you ask Tom if he's going to the barn dance? **I**
14. Which bus do I need for Deptford? **D**
15. Jack wants to know whether he's going to get a new bike for Christmas. **I**

Test Your Grammar Skills

Direct & Indirect Questions – Mixed-Up Questions 2

Unjumble the questions and write them correctly. Circle either **D** *or* **I** *to show whether each sentence is direct or indirect:*

1. was afternoon what doing all Janet?
   _____ **D | I**
2. bottom left who the stairs at of the the skateboard?
   _____ **D | I**
3. to in your you yesterday did assignment hand have?
   _____ **D | I**
4. what did Gill tell you going arrive her granma is time to?
   _____ **D | I**
5. forward week tonight, or do the is clocks go it next?
   _____ **D | I**
6. will how there be in the students class many?
   _____ **D | I**
7. possibly moment tell could me Dr. James is you busy please whether at the?
   _____ **D | I**
8. you a suit wearing are why?
   _____ **D | I**
9. all why I've I wondering wasn't course accepted been on that morning.
   _____ **D | I**
10. I can't which it's funny but best skirt suited remember me.
    _____ **D | I**
11. love would it son if didn't why tell a you my get could distinction me I.
    _____ **D | I**
12. party was night Christmas the who at last?
    _____ **D | I**
13. you I have how here been cannot recall long working.
    _____ **D | I**
14. you at the working where moment are?
    _____ **D | I**
15. who I will wedding be at can't Maureen's imagine.
    _____ **D | I**

Test Your Grammar Skills

Direct & Indirect Questions – Mixed-Up Questions 2

Answers:

1. What was Janet doing all afternoon? D
2. Who left the skateboard at the bottom of the stairs? D
3. Did you have to hand in your assignment yesterday? D
4. Did Gill tell you what time her grandma is going to arrive? I
5. Do the clocks go forward tonight, or is it next week? D
6. How many students will there be in the class? D
7. Could you possibly tell me whether Dr. James is busy at the moment, please? I
8. Why are you wearing a suit? D
9. I've been wondering why I wasn't accepted on that course all morning. I
10. It's funny, but I can't remember which skirt suited me best. I
11. I would love it if you could tell me why my son didn't get a distinction. I
12. Who was at the Christmas party last night? D
13. I cannot recall how long you have been working here. I
14. Where are you working at the moment? D
15. I can't imagine who will be at Maureen's wedding. I

Test Your Grammar Skills

Direct & Indirect Questions – Mixed-Up Questions 3

Unjumble the questions and write them correctly. Circle either **D** *or* **I** *to show whether each sentence is direct or indirect:*

1. the what's time?
   _____ **D | I**
2. fridge happened cheese to the what in all the?
   _____ **D | I**
3. reset on alarm my phone the who?
   _____ **D | I**
4. have Alan and many Margaret children how got?
   _____ **D | I**
5. I when off our can plane will ask take?
   _____ **D | I**
6. been why you I've were during wondering the lesson talking.
   _____ **D | I**
7. get a from me can the newsagent's paper you?
   _____ **D | I**
8. department you the at new did get store job that?
   _____ **D | I**
9. have cutting idea garden why my that man no is I down a tree in.
   _____ **D | I**
10. there invalid any that ticket is you could tell why possibility my me is?
    _____ **D | I**
11. the meeting how with others Teddy long and the will last?
    _____ **D | I**
12. didn't brother you buy any why for David and fudge his?
    _____ **D | I**
13. any car borrowed of you my telling is there me why chance you?
    _____ **D | I**
14. birthday not what Joanne sure I'm wants her for.
    _____ **D | I**
15. you deli the need do anything from?
    _____ **D | I**

Test Your Grammar Skills

Direct & Indirect Questions – Mixed-Up Questions 3

Answers:

1. What's the time? **D**
2. What happened to all the cheese in the fridge? **D**
3. Who reset the alarm on my phone? **D**
4. How many children have Margaret and Alan (*or* Alan and Margaret) got? **D**
5. Can I ask when our plane will take off? **I**
6. I've been wondering why you were talking during the lesson. **I**
7. Can you get me a paper from the newsagent's? **D**
8. Did you get that (*or* the) job at the (*or* that) new department store? **D**
9. I have no idea why that man is cutting down a tree in my garden. **I**
10. Is there any possibility that you could tell me why my ticket is invalid? **I**
11. How long will the meeting with Teddy and the others last? **D**
12. Why didn't you buy any fudge for David and his brother? **D**
13. Is there any chance of you telling me why you borrowed my car? **I**
14. I'm not sure what Joanne wants for her birthday. **I**
15. Do you need anything from the deli? **D**

Test Your Grammar Skills

50 Polite Phrases for Beginning Indirect Questions

POLITE PHRASE + WH- QUESTION WORD *or* IF / WHETHER

Excuse me...

Can I ask e.g. 'Can I ask you what time **it is**?' *not* 'What time **is it**?' (direct)
Can you explain
Can you say
Can you tell me
Could you possibly tell me
Could you tell me
Did (name) tell you
Didn't anybody inform you about
Does anybody know
Do you happen to know
Do you know
Do you mind if I ask you
Do you recall
Do you remember
Has (name) told you
Have you got any idea
Have you heard
I cannot recall
I can't imagine
I can't remember
I don't know
I don't seem to be able to recall
I have no idea
I just can't understand
I'm asking you
I'm not sure
I'm ringing to ask
I'm writing to ask
Is there any chance of you telling me
Is there any possibility that you could tell me
It's funny, but I can't remember
It would be great if you could let me know
I've always wondered
I've been meaning to ask you
I've been wondering
I was hoping that you could fill me in on
I was wondering
I was wondering whether you would be so kind as to let me know
I wonder if you could tell me
I would be very interested to know
I would like to know
I would love it if you could tell me
I would love to know
May I ask you
May I enquire as to
(name) wants to know
Will you ask (name)
Would you be able to ask (name)
Would you mind informing me
Would you mind telling me

...please (?)

(and many other phrases using the above words in different combinations!)