



QUESTION FORMS & INDIRECT QUESTIONS

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1. What is an indirect question?

Indirect questions are a **more polite or softer way** to ask for information.

Direct

Where is the station?

Indirect

Could you tell me where the station is?

Notice the word order.

✗ Could you tell me where **is the station**?

✓ Could you tell me where **the station is**?

After an indirect question phrase, we normally use **statement word order**.

2. Useful beginnings

You can begin an indirect question with:

- Could you tell me...?
- Do you know...?
- Can you tell me...?
- I'd like to know...
- Do you happen to know...?

Examples:

- Could you tell me **where the bank is**?
- Do you know what time the shop opens?
- Can you tell me how much it costs?

3. Direct or indirect?

Write **D** for direct or **I** for indirect.

1. Where is the train station? _____
2. Can you tell me how much this is? _____
3. Could you tell me where the train station is? _____
4. What time does the bank open? _____
5. Do you know what time the bank opens? _____
6. How much is this? _____

4. Change the direct questions

Change each direct question into an indirect question.

Example: Where is the bathroom?

Could you tell me where the bathroom is?

1. Where is the nearest bank? Could you tell me _____?
2. What time does the shop open? Do you know _____?
3. How much does this cost? Can you tell me _____?
4. Where can I buy a bus ticket? Could you tell me _____?
5. When does the next train leave? Do you know _____?
6. Why is the restaurant closed? Can you tell me _____?

REAL ENGLISH BOX – Polite Questions

In everyday situations, these are very useful:

Excuse me, could you tell me where the station is?

Do you know what time it opens?

Can you tell me how much it costs?

Do you happen to know where I can get a taxi?

Do you happen to know...? is a friendly, natural way to ask someone for information when you don't know if they have the answer.

5. Around town

Imagine you are in a new town.

Ask your partner these questions using **indirect questions**.

1. Where is the nearest ATM?
2. Where can I get a taxi?
3. What time does the shopping centre open?
4. How much does a bus ticket cost?
5. Where can I buy medicine?
6. When does the next bus leave?

Example

A: Excuse me. Could you tell me where the nearest ATM is?

B: Sure. It's next to the bank.

A: Thanks!

6. Make it more polite

Change each question.

1. Where is the toilet?

2. What time does the restaurant close?

3. How much is this shirt?

4. Where can I find the post office?

Teacher's Key

3. Direct or indirect?

1. D
2. I
3. I
4. D
5. I
6. D

4. Change the direct questions

1. where the nearest bank is
2. what time the shop opens
3. how much this costs
4. where I can buy a bus ticket
5. when the next train leaves
6. why the restaurant is closed

6. Possible answers:

1. Could you tell me where the toilet is?
2. Do you know what time the restaurant closes?
3. Can you tell me how much this shirt is?
4. Could you tell me where I can find the post office?