



Asking Questions in Foreign Languages

KS2 MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

KS3 LANGUAGES

Ages 10-14 ⌚ 3 min read

What Are Question Words?

Question words are special words that help us ask for information. In English, we use words like 'what', 'where', 'why', 'who', 'when', and 'how'. Every language has its own versions of these words, and they follow different rules depending on the language.

Learning question words is one of the most useful things you can do when studying a foreign language. They help you have real conversations and find out information about the world around you.

How Different Languages Ask Questions

In **Spanish**, the question word for 'what' is '**qué**' (pronounced 'kay'). To ask 'What is this?', you would say '**¿Qué es esto?**' Notice the upside-down question mark at the start - Spanish always does this!

In **French**, 'what' becomes '**quoi**' or '**qu'est-ce que**' depending on how you're asking. For 'where' in French, you say '**où**' (pronounced 'oo').

In **German**, 'what' is '**was**' (pronounced 'vahs'), and 'where' is '**wo**' (pronounced 'vo'). German question words often come at the beginning of sentences, just like in English.

Think of it like learning different door codes for different buildings. Each language has its own set of 'keys' (question words) that unlock conversations. You need to learn each language's keys separately because they're not the same everywhere.

Word Order Matters

One tricky thing about questions is that word order changes in different languages. In English, we often move the verb around: 'Where **are** you going?' In Spanish and French, you might need to use a different word order entirely.

When you ask a question in **German**, the verb often comes second in the sentence. This is different from English, where we might say 'Do you speak German?' but in

German, you'd structure it differently: '**Sprichst du Deutsch?**' (literally 'Speak you German?').

Practice Makes Perfect

The best way to learn question words is through **repetition** and **practice**. Start by memorising the most common ones: what, where, why, who, when, and how. Then practise using them in simple sentences with a teacher or language app. Soon, asking questions will feel natural!