

Simple and Complex Indirect Questions

- Are you more **direct** or do you prefer an **indirect** approach?

Would you rather say:

- **Why is it so hot in here? OR I wonder why...it's so hot in here.**
- **Will I get hired this year? OR My big concern is... if I'll get hired this year.**

Simple and Complex Indirect Questions

- We are going to look at the difference between **Direct** and **Indirect** questions,
And does it REALLY matter which one we use???

You might have heard phrases like:

“I wonder ” and “I'd like to know”, “My big concern is”, “I wonder where...” and there are many more-----

Look at 4 Points:

- **What indirect questions are**
- **Why we use them**
- **Grammar part: simple and complex-- forms/structures**
- **How to use them**

(Simple and Complex Indirect Questions)

1. What they are: indirect questions.

- They come from direct questions
- They're a question **in the form of a statement**.
- They are **a little more formal** than direct questions
- They are sometimes considered **more polite**.
- And sometimes we prefer to use the *indirect form* instead.

2. Why do we use indirect questions?

Well there's a couple reasons for using indirect questions:

a. A direct question usually requires a direct response. ***"Why is it so hot in here?"***

b. With **indirect questions**, we **don't necessarily expect someone to have the answer**.

...but we're leaving it open for them to respond or give their thoughts, ideas, opinions, answers

c. We're thinking out loud and voicing our thoughts

d. Indirect questions are considered to be **more formal and polite**, especially *when we are asking for something*

3. Grammar Part: Forms/Structures

As I've already mentioned, we make indirect questions by using expressions such as: There are many-----

I'd like to know, I want to know; I wonder; I was wondering; My concern is;

...is my concern;

I don't understand;

what I can't understand is;
what I don't get is;
It's beyond me;
...is beyond me;

And use the question words *who, what, why, when, where, how*;
“I'd like to know how....*why...when, etc..*”

- Simple Indirect Questions

1. I mentioned the terms “simple” and “complex” indirect questions:
Of course, you're not going to be thinking of simple and complex when you're having a conversation with someone, but in case you need to know this for a formal grammar test or quiz.

Simple:

- Begin with indirect expressions and use **statement word order**.

Example:

I'd like to know *when I can register for classes.*

*What is it I'd like to know? **When** I can register for classes. (noun clause). Statement word order → subject/verb “I can”*

NOT: “*When can I register for classes.*”

- Complex Indirect Questions

Complex: basically the same-----

- Also use statement word order and indirect expressions. *BUT, they begin or end with clauses or phrases with “be”.*
- Example: What I don't get is how you can eat so much and not gain weight.
- **Expression?** “**What I don't get is**” how you can eat so much and not gain weight.

- So you can see there's a verb of "be" that 'separates' these two clauses:
- What I don't get is how you can eat so much and not gain weight.
- " (indirect expression) "be" (noun clause)

Complex Indirect Questions:

- Sometimes, you can switch the order of the clauses:
- "How you can eat so much and not gain weight is what I don't get."
 - (noun clause as subject) "be" (indirect expression)

Another example:

- Example: Why he quit his job now is beyond me.
 - **The noun clause comes first** "Why he quit his job now" then we have the complex indirect expression that begins with the verb of "be" **is** → "**is beyond me**".
- So you can see there's a verb of "**be**" that 'separates' these two clauses:
- Why he quit his job now is beyond me.
 - (noun clause) "be" (indirect expression)

What if we switched these clauses?

✓ "It is beyond me why he quit his job now."
Well, now we're back to a SIMPLE indirect question.

- **It is beyond me why** he quit his job now.

- ✓ The verb of “be” **is** does not begin or end the indirect expression. It does not separate or come between the noun clause and the indirect expression.

● **How to use Indirect Questions:**

Direct question -----→ Indirect question:

1. **Why** doesn't the city have more public transportation? (I'd like to know..)

I'd like to know why the city doesn't have more public transportation. (Simple)

Making Requests: I'd like to know: who, what, why, when, where, how...

2. Will I be able to get into the class? (My concern is...)

This is a yes/no question: *yes/no → if/whether (or not)

My concern is if I will be able to get into the class. (Complex)

3. How do I correct a mistake on my phone bill? ~~Yes/no~~ (I want to find out)

I want to find out how ~~do~~ I correct a mistake on my phone bill. (Simple)

4. **Will** there be a quiz tomorrow? (I wonder...)
yes/no → if/whether

I wonder **if** there will be a quiz tomorrow. (Simple)

5. **Why** are there so many accidents on this street?
(...is something I can't understand)

Why there are so many accidents on this street is something I can't understand. (Complex)

Test your knowledge with the quiz

Happy Learning!

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