Question Tags

IT IS SNOWING. (declarative)

4 ways of asking a question:

Is it snowing? (inversion)
It is snowing? (intonation)
Snow/snowing? (intonation)
It is snowing, isn`t it? (question tag)

A **question tag** or **tag question** is a grammatical structure in which a declarative statement or an imperative is turned into a question by adding an interrogative fragment (the "tag"). For example, in the sentence "You're John, aren't you?", the statement "You're John" is turned into a question by the tag "aren't you".

Form

auxiliary verb + subject

1. If the auxiliary verb in the sentence is positive, the tag is negative.
You are Spanish, **aren't you?**

2. If the auxiliary verb in the sentence is negative, the tag is positive.
You're not Spanish, **are you?**

3. If there is no auxiliary verb in the sentence, we use do.
You live in Spain, **don't you?**

Functions and examples

1. We use tag questions to confirm information.
This meal is horrible, **isn't it?**

2. We use tag questions when we are already sure of the answer and just want confirmation (falling intonation with the tag question).

3. We use tag questions to check information.
You haven't got a piece of paper, **have you**?

Important points

1. In the present tense, if the subject is *'I'*, the auxiliary changes to *'are'* or *'aren't'*.
I'm sitting next to you, **aren't I?**

2. With 'let's', the tag question is *'shall we'*.
Let's go to the beach, **shall we?**

3. With an imperative, the tag question is *'will you'*.
Close the window, **will you?**

4. We use a positive tag question after a sentence containing a negative word such as *never, hardly, nobody*.
Nobody lives in this house, **do they?**
You've never liked me, **have you?**

5. When the subject is nothing, we use *'it'* in the tag question.
Nothing bad happened, **did it?**

6. When the subject is *nobody, somebody, everybody, no one, someone,* or *everyone*, we use *'they'* in the tag question.
Nobody asked for me, **did they?**

7. If the main verb in the sentence is *'have'* (not an auxiliary verb), it is more common to use *'do'* in the question tag.
You have a Ferrari, **don't you?**

8. With <u>used to</u>, we use *'didn't'* in the tag question.
You used to work here, **didn't you?**

9. We can use positive question tags after positive sentences to express a reaction such as surprise or interest.
You're moving to Brazil, **are you?**