Unit 12: TAG QUESTIONS

We can use tag questions in speaking, and sometimes in writing, at the end of a sentence. We use only the first auxiliary verb—the same as with short answers (Unit 11).

Affirmative sentences

With **AFFIRMATIVE SENTENCES (+)** use a **NEGATIVE TAG (-)**.

- He *was* on the team last year, *wasn’t* he?
- She *has* been swimming, *hasn’t* she?
- We *should* have left earlier, *shouldn’t* we?

With one-word verb formations, use the correct form of the verb **do** (Unit 15):

- You like rock music, *don’t* you?  *NOT* *liken’t* you?
- He studies hard, *doesn’t* he?
- They went yesterday, *didn’t* they?

Negative sentences

With **NEGATIVE SENTENCES (-)** use an **AFFIRMATIVE TAG (+)**.

- John *is* not an accountant, *is* he?
- You *don’t* like classical music, *do* you?  *NOT* *like* you?
- She *hasn’t* been playing tennis, *has* she?
- The students *couldn’t* do the test, *could* they?

Using tag questions

a **TO CHECK SOMETHING**

- You play football, *don’t* you?
- John doesn’t like milk, *does* he?

b **WHEN YOU WANT SOMEONE TO DO SOMETHING**

- It’s a lovely day, *isn’t* it?  I want you to agree.
- You’re a mechanic, *aren’t* you?  I want help with my car.

c **TO SHOW SURPRISE (WITH NEGATIVE STATEMENTS ONLY)**

- You don’t play football, *do* you?
- I have just learnt that you play football, but this surprises me.