

ECHO QUESTIONS (Short questions used in replies)

We often reply to statements by making short questions, containing just an **auxiliary verb** and a **personal pronoun**.

- *It was an awful party.*
- **Was it?**
- *Yes, there was nobody there I know, and ...*

These 'reply questions' do not ask for information. They express interest, concern, surprise, anger, or other reactions, depending on the intonation. Their most common use is just to show that we are listening.

- *We had a lovely holiday.*
- **Did you?**
- *Yes, we went ...*

- *I've got a headache.*
- **Have you, dear? I'll get you an aspirin.**

In reply questions, we use the same auxiliary verb that was used in the sentence we are answering. If there was no auxiliary verb, we use 'do'.

- *He smokes too much.*
- **Does he?**
- *Yes, he tried to give it up but ...*

We use negative echo questions in reply to negative statements.

- *It wasn't a very good film.*
- **Wasn't it? That's a pity!**

PRACTICE

Work in pairs. Take it in turns to make statements which are true for yourself. Your partner will reply with an echo question. A further remark must follow naturally.

Here's another example:

- *There aren't many languages you can learn at the Language School.*
- **Aren't there?**
- *Yeah, only French and English.*

