

Understanding and Answering Questions

Question Words

- Dónde
- Qué
- Cómo
- Quién
- Cuánto
- Cuál

Verbs

Any verb may be used in a question (although not all verbs can be used with all question words). For example:

- Ser
- Buscar
- Mirar
- Hablar
- Necesitar

The key to deciphering questions.

When you see or hear a question, follow these steps:

- Figure out what the question word is asking.
- Figure out what the verb means.
- Figure out who or what the verb is asking about (what form is it in?)

¿Qué buscas?

- Step 1: Figure out what the question word is asking.
(qué=what)
- Step 2: Figure out what the verb means.
(buscar=to look for)
- Step 3: Figure out who or what the verb is asking about.
(Buscas is in the tú form, so it is asking about *you*)
- Step 4: Put the pieces together:
» What are you looking for?

¿Dónde trabaja él?

- Step 1: Figure out what the question word is asking.
(dónde=where)
 - Step 2: Figure out what the verb means.
(trabajar=to work)
 - Step 3: Figure out who or what the verb is asking about.
(Trabaja is in the third person form, so it is asking about *him, her, or you[formal]*. Since *él* is in the sentence, we know that the question is asking about *him*.)
- Put the pieces together: Where does he work?

Answering

Once you know what the question is asking, you can figure out how to answer it.

- When you answer a question, you will probably want to use the same verb that was used in the question.
- However, you may have to change the form of the verb, depending on the subject of the question.

¿Qué llevas hoy?

- If we follow our steps, we are able to figure out what this question is asking. It asks, “What are you wearing today?” (or “What do you wear today?”)
- When we answer this question, will you keep the same verb form, or will you have to change it?
- We will have to change it. In English, if you hear the question, “What are you wearing today?” you automatically change the verb in your answer, and say, “*I am wearing...*” Likewise, in Spanish, if the question asks about *tú*, you will make your answer be about *yo*.

¿Quién lleva una camiseta?

- Again, we can figure out what this question is asking.
- Do we want to keep the verb form or change it?
- We probably want to keep it:
 - María lleva una camiseta.
 - Rodrigo lleva una camiseta.
- (However, if we wanted to say, “I am wearing a t-shirt,” or “You are wearing a t-shirt,” we would have to change the verb form.)