**building blocksEmbedded Questions =INDIRECT QUESTIONS**

**Introduction**

An embedded question is a question that is included inside another question or statement.

They are common after introductory phrases, such as:

I wonder  
Could you tell me  
Do you know  
Can you remember  
Let's ask  
We need to find out  
I'd like to know  
Could you tell me  
I'm not sure  
Would you mind explaining

**Five Rules for Using Embedded Questions**

**Rule One**

If the embedded question is part of a statement, use a period and not a question mark at the end of the sentence. Also, if the question is in the present or past simple verb tense, omit the auxiliary verbs **do**, **does**, and **did** and change the verb to its appropriate form, as in the example below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct Question** | What time **did** he **leave**? |
| **Embedded Question** | I wonder what time he **left**. |

**Rule Two**

If the embedded question includes an auxiliary verb or the verb "to be", reverse the positions of the subject and the auxiliary verb, as in the examples below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct Question** | What **did he** say? |
| **Embedded Question** | Could you tell me what **he said**? |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct Question** | **Can you** help me? |
| **Embedded Question** | I wonder if **you could** help me. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct Question** | **Is he** a doctor? |
| **Embedded Question** | Do you know if **he is** a doctor? |

**Rule Three**

Do not use a verbal contraction at the end of the sentence.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct Question** | Where **is he**? |
| **Correct Embedded Question** | Do you know where **he is**? |
| **Incorrect Embedded Question** | Do you know where **he's**? |

**Rule Four**

Embedded questions are introduced by **whether**, **whether or not**, and **if** when there is no question word in the sentence (yes/no questions).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct Yes/No Question** | Will he be there? |
| **Embedded Question** | Do you know **if** he will be there? Do you know **whether or not** he will be there? Do you know **whether** he will be there or not? |

**Rule Five**

The infinitive can follow a question word or whether in embedded questions, as in the following example.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct Question** | What should I do? |
| **Embedded Question** | Please tell me what I should do. |
| **Embedded Question with an Infinitive** | Please tell me what to do. |

**Using Embedded Questions**

There are times when native English speakers prefer to use embedded rather than direct questions. Here are two examples.

**1. Politely Asking for Information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct Question** | What time does the bus arrive? |
| **Embedded Question** | Could you tell me what time the bus arrives? (more polite) |

**2. Talking About Something Which Is Unknown to the Speaker**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct Question** | Why did she decide not to come with us? |
| **Embedded Question** | I don't know why she decided not to come with us. |

When you are sure that you understand the lesson, you can continue with the exercises.