

Affirmative/Positive and Negative Sentences

The Affirmative or Positive sentences present things/ideas denoted by them positively, whereas the Negative sentences do it in a negative manner. Normally, a negative sentence is constructed by adding the word **not** or its contracted form **n't** to an auxiliary verb in the sentence. If there is no auxiliary verb already available in the Affirmative sentence, we have to add **not** or **n't** to **do**, **does** or **did** in accordance with the tense of the verb to make it a Negative sentence.

24 Auxiliary/ Helping Verbs					
11 Primary Auxiliary Verbs			13 Modal Auxiliary Verbs		
<i>Affirmative forms</i>	<i>Negative Long forms</i>	<i>Negative Contracted forms</i>	<i>Affirmative forms</i>	<i>Negative Long forms</i>	<i>Negative Contracted forms</i>
Am	Am not	*Amn't (ungrammatical)	Shall	Shall not	<i>Shan't</i>
Is	Is not	Isn't	Should	Should not	Shouldn't
Are	Are not	Aren't	Will	Will not	<i>Won't</i>
Was	Was not	Wasn't	Would	Would not	Wouldn't
Were	Were not	Weren't	Can	Cannot	Can't
Do	Do not	Don't	Could	Could not	Couldn't
Does	Does not	Doesn't	May	May not	Mayn't
Did	Did not	Didn't	Might	Might not	Mightn't
Have	Have not	Haven't	Must	Must not	Mustn't
Has	Has not	Hasn't	Need	Need not	Needn't
Had	Had not	Hadn't	Dare	Dare not	Daren't
			Ought to	Ought not to	Oughtn't to
			Used to	Used not to	**Usedn't to (rare)

**Amn't* as a contracted form of 'am not' is wrong and ungrammatical. So, the long form should always be used. In the same way, *Shalln't* and *Willn't* are wrong and ungrammatical usage.

**Though the contracted form *usedn't* is rarely used in informal occasions, the formal and the commonest negative form is '*used not to*'. In informal style, the negative and interrogative forms are also possible with '*did*' as in '*He didn't use to like cricket*'; '*Did he use to like cricket?*' respectively instead of "*He used not to like cricket*" and "*Used he like to cricket?*" in the formal style.

Exercise 1: Transform the following affirmative sentences into negative using the contracted form **n't** wherever possible. In the case of a contracted form is '*rare usage*' or *ungrammatical*, use the long form.

1. Ali can speak three languages.	6. She dare complain to the principal about it.
2. They will finish the work in a week.	7. You must come on all Sundays.
3. I am a magician.	8. They prepare for their examination.
4. We shall come to the party.	9. She participated in all school cultural activities.
5. I used to walk to school when I was a student.	10. He beats me every day.

Note: All the above sentences will change their meaning when transformed from positive to negative. Sometimes, we have to transform sentences from affirmative to negative without changing their meaning. The easiest way to do this exercise is to use **not** or **n't** (or a **negative word**) with the antonyms of the topic words of the given sentences.

➤ Transform the following affirmative sentences into negative without changing the meaning.

Affirmative / Positive	Negative
Moscow is a big town.	Moscow is not a small town.
The problem is difficult.	The problem is not easy.
Anu writes very fast.	Anu does not write very slowly.
The water was polluted.	The water was not pure.
Alyakhin was a cruel person.	Alyakhin was not a kind person.
The dog Eel was always respectful.	The dog Eel was never disrespectful.
It was a dark night.	It was not a moonlit night.
I have a miserable life worse than a dog's.	I don't have a comfortable life better than a dog's.

Note: There are many negative words like *little, few, seldom, rarely, barely, hardly, scarcely, never, none, nothing* etc. that can make sentences negative.

Tag Questions

A tag question is a small question attached at the end of a sentence, and it is comprised of an Auxiliary verb (affirmative or negative with contracted form **n't**) and a subject pronoun.

- A positive sentence will take a negative tag question and a negative sentence will take a positive tag question
- A sentence containing any of the negative words as given above can make it negative, and such sentences will also take a positive tag question.

Steps to Creating Tag Questions:

- Identify the given sentence whether it is negative or affirmative.
- Find out the auxiliary verb and use the same in the tag question.
- If there is no auxiliary verb in the sentence, use **do, does, or did** in accordance with the tense of the main verb.
- Use a subject pronoun suitable to the subject of the sentence and end the question tag with a question mark.

Certain Special Rules of Tag Questions:

1. A positive sentence starting with **"I am"** will take **"aren't I?"** as the tag question.
2. A sentence beginning with **"Let's"** will have the tag question **"shall we?"**
3. An imperative sentence (command or request) can have either **"will you?"** or **"won't you?"** as the tag question.
4. A sentence with **"this"** or **"that"** as its subject will take **"it"** as the subject of the tag question.
5. A sentence with **"these"** or **"those"** as its subject will take **"they"** as the subject of the tag question.
6. If the subject of the sentence is **"there"**, the same word **"there"** is the subject of the tag question.
7. If the subject of the sentence is an indefinite pronoun such as **"somebody, someone, anybody, anyone, nobody, no one, everyone, everybody"**, etc., **"they"** is used as the subject of the tag question.
8. A sentence containing the modal auxiliary **"ought to"** can take either the same auxiliary verb or **"should"** in the tag question.

9. A sentence containing the modal auxiliary verb “used to” will take “did” as the auxiliary verb of the question tag.

Study carefully the examples given in the table:

<i>Positive sentence</i>	<i>Negative tag</i>	<i>Negative sentence</i>	<i>Positive tag</i>
You are a doctor,	aren't you?	I am not a student,	am I?
Something has happened,	hasn't it?	Nothing was true,	was it?
He needs some help,	doesn't he	He scarcely visits us,	does he?
Come here,	won't you?	Don't open the door,	will you?
He used to live here,	didn't he?	He will never lie,	will he?
I think he is honest,	isn't he?	I think you can't manage it,	can you?
This is a nice idea,	isn't it?	There is no way,	is there?
I am a student,	aren't I?	Nobody told me,	did they?
Let's go home now,	shall we?	Neither of them came,	did they?

Answer to the exercise 1

1. Ali can't speak three languages.	6. She daren't complain to the principal about it.
2. They won't finish the work in a week.	7. You mustn't come on all Sundays.
3. I am not a magician.	8. They don't prepare for their examination.
4. We shan't come to the party.	9. She didn't participate in all school cultural activities.
5. I used not to walk to school when I was a student.	10. He doesn't beat me every day.

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