

Rhetorical questions

A rhetorical question is a kind of question that is not meant to be answered. Rhetorical questions are used to make a point. This makes them different from Yes / No questions because the latter expect an answer.

Here is a quick review of Yes / No questions

Yes / No questions are asked to get a simple answer. They are usually answered with yes or no and an auxiliary verb.

Examples are given below.

Are you coming with me?

Yes, I am.

Would you like to go to the theater tonight?

No, I wouldn't.

Did you know the answer?

Yes, I did.

Are you working in the garage?

Yes, I am.

Wh-questions are also used for getting information.

They are introduced by the following question words:

Where

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What

When / What time

Which

How many / much / often / far / etc.

Why

These questions should be answered in full sentences so that the listener gets the information they need.

Examples are given below.

What do you do?

I work at a bank.

Where do you live?

I live in New York.

What time does the train leave?

The train leaves at 6.30.

How far is it to the next railway station?

It is a 30 minute drive from here.

Rhetorical questions don't expect an answer. They are asked with the objective of making

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people think.

A rhetorical question often has an implied meaning. Sometimes the person who asks the question does not want an answer. They are making a statement that the listener obviously knows.

For example, the rhetorical question 'Do you know what time it is?' simply means that you are late.