



EasyWay
to learn

UNIT 47

WHAT, WHICH, HOW? THE QUESTION WORDS YOU NEED TO KNOW



WHAT

“**What**” is used to ask about things in general, ask for information about something, or ask about the nature of something.

Examples:

What is your name?

What are you doing?

What time is it?

What is the capital of France?



WHICH

“**Which**” is used to ask about a choice between two or more specific options. It implies a limited set of possibilities.

Examples:

Which do you prefer, tea or coffee?

Which car is yours, the red one or the blue one?



KEY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "WHAT" AND "WHICH"

The main difference lies in the existence or not of a limited set of options. If there are specific options to choose from, use "which." If the question is more open and there are no predefined options, use "what."

- **What is your favorite color?**
(Open question, many possibilities)
- **Which is your favorite color, red or blue?**
(Choice between two specific options)

USE OF “WHAT”

1. Asking about things:

Use "what" when you want to know the name or identity of something.

- **"What is this?"**
(You see an object you don't recognize.)
- **"What's in your hand?"**
(You can't see what someone is holding.)
- **"What's your name?"**
(You want to know someone's identity.)



USE OF “WHAT”

2. Asking about actions:

Use "what" when you want to know what someone is doing or what happened

- **"What are you doing?"**
(You see someone engaged in an activity.)
- **"What happened?"**
(Something has occurred, and you want details.)
- **"What did you say?"**
(You didn't hear or understand something.)



USE OF “WHAT”

3. Other common uses (simplified):

- Meanings: "What does it mean?" (You want a definition.)
- Jobs: "What do you do?"
(You want to know someone's profession.)
- Time: "What time is it?"
(You want to know the current time.)



USE OF “WHICH”

1. Choosing between stated options:
This is the most common use. You present the choices directly in the question.
- "Which do you prefer, tea or coffee?"
(Two options are given.)
 - "Which is faster, a car or a train?"
(Two options are given.)
 - "Which color do you want, red, blue, or green?"
(Three options are given.)



USE OF “WHICH”

2. Choosing from a known group:

Even if the options aren't stated directly in the question, "which" is used when the listener knows the possible choices.

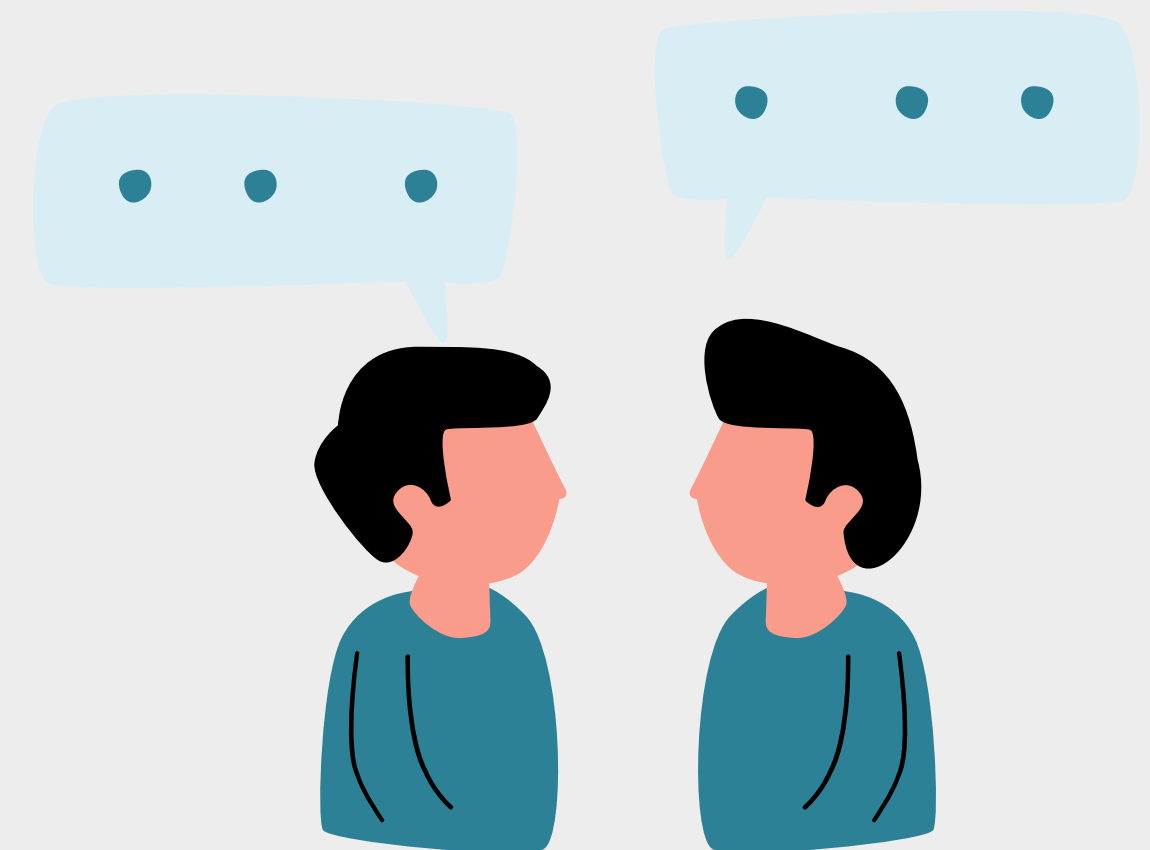
- **"Which is your car?"**
(The listener can see a parking lot full of cars.)
- **"Which way should we go?"**
(There are a few possible routes.)
- **"Which of these books is yours?"**
(There's a visible collection of books.)



USE OF “WHICH”

3. Asking for a specific item from a category:
You might use "which" when asking for a particular item from a general category, implying a limited selection within that context.

- **"Which movie did you see?"**
(Out of the movies currently showing or recently released.)
- **"Which restaurant did you go to?"**
(Out of the restaurants in a particular area or that you had discussed.)



HOW

"**How**" is used to ask about the manner, condition, degree, or extent of something. It's not about what something is, but rather **how** something is or is done.

USAGE OF “HOW”

1. Asking about manner or method:

This is asking in what way something is done.

"How do you spell your name?"
(What are the letters?)

"How do you cook pasta?"
(What are the steps?)

"How did you get here?"
(By car, bus, train, etc.?)

2. Asking about condition or state of being:

This is asking about someone's well-being, the state of something, or how someone feels.

"How are you?"
(Are you well? Are you happy?)

"How is the weather?"
(Is it sunny, rainy, cold, etc.?)

"How do you feel?"
(Physically or emotionally.)

USAGE OF “HOW”

3. Asking about measurements or dimensions:

This is asking about size, length, height, width, etc.

"How tall are you?"

"How long is the river?"

"How wide is the door?"



4. Asking about price or quantity:

"How much" is used for uncountable nouns (things you can't count individually, like water, money, time).

"How much does this cost?"

"How many" is used for countable nouns (things you can count individually, like apples, books, people).

"How many people are coming to the party?"

USAGE OF “HOW”

5. Asking about age:

"How old" is a specific phrase used to ask someone's age.

"How old are you?"
"How old is your brother?"

6. Asking about distance:

"How far" is used to ask about the distance between two places.

"How far is it to the airport?"
"How far do you live from school?"

USAGE OF “HOW”

7. With adverbs to form more specific questions:

"How" can be combined with adverbs to ask about frequency, duration, ability, etc.

- "How often do you go to the cinema?" (Frequency)
- "How long does it take to get there?" (Duration)
- "How well do you speak English?" (Ability)
- "How quickly can you finish this?" (Speed)

THANKS!

Do you have any questions?

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