Open Questions

Open questions are often called Wh.. questions:-

There are eight wh-questions - what, when, where, which, who, whom, whose and why and to this list we usually add how as they are all used to elicit particular kinds of information.

You use what when you are asking for information about something.
You use when to ask about the time that something happened or will happen.
You use where to ask questions about place or position.
You use which when you are asking for information about one of a limited number of things.
You use who or whom when you are asking about someone's identity.
You use whose to ask about possession.
You use why to ask for a reason.
You use how to ask about the way in which something is done.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question word</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>your name? My name is Lynne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>the party? The party is on Tuesday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td>are</td>
<td>you from? I'm from England.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>your car? The red car is mine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who</td>
<td>are</td>
<td>you? I'm Lynne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whose</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>this web site? It's mine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>this web site here? Because it is!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How</td>
<td>are</td>
<td>you? I'm fine thanks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What, which and whose can be used with or without a noun as a question word.

For example:-
What time is it? = What is the time?
Which car is yours? = Which is your car?
Whose web site is this? = Whose is this web site?

Whom can only be used to elicit information about the object of the sentence. Although using whom would be grammatically correct, we normally use who instead because it doesn’t sound so formal.

For example:-
"Whom did you see?" would normally be expressed as "Who did you see?"

Who, what, which and whose can all be used to elicit information about the subject or object of the sentence.

For example:-
If the answer is "I ate the banana." the object question would be "What did you eat?" and the subject question would be "Who ate the banana?"

Object Questions
Object questions ask about the object of a sentence. The word order of the question must be changed and the question requires the use of the auxiliary verb 'to do'.

*For example:*-
If the answer is "I caught the train to London." the question would be "Which train did you catch?"
If the answer is "I saw a film yesterday." the question would be "What did you do yesterday?"

**Subject Questions**
There are also subject questions. These are questions that we ask to find out about the subject. When what, which, who or whose refers to the subject, the question word comes before the verb without the use of the auxiliary verb.

*For example:*-
If the answer is "The train to London was late." the question would be "Which train was late?"
If the answer is "I won the race." the question would be "Who won the race?"

*More examples:*-
Object questions:--
Who gave you those chocolates?
What did you do today?
Which film did you like best?
Who did I phone?

Subject questions:--
Who did that?
What happened today?
Which film is the best?

We are going to practice open questions for the following tenses: Present Simple, Present Continuous, Past Simple, Past Continuous¹, Present Perfect, Present Perfect Continuous.

Examples:

1 She usually gets up at 7 o'clock.
   When does she usually get up? (Present Simple)
2 I am reading a book.
   What are you reading? (Present Continuous)
3 I saw them in Paris.
   Where did you see them? (Past Simple)
4 Mary was playing tennis.
   Who was playing tennis? (Past Continuous) – this is a subject question!
5 We have met three times.
   How many times have you met? (Present Perfect)
6 He has been studying English for ten years.

¹ Explanations regarding Past Simple and Past Continuous are on the pages 4 and 5.
How long have you been studying English? (Present Perfect Continuous)

Be careful not to change the tense when making a question. Basically, you need to put the sentence into question form and use an appropriate question word at the beginning of the question. The only exception are subject questions in which you should just start the question with the appropriate question word and copy the rest of the sentence (examples: Who helped you yesterday? Who likes chocolate? What makes you happy?).

Exercises:

Make questions. The underlined part of the sentence should be the answer to the question.

1 Columbus discovered America in 1492. (subject question)
2 I graduated from school two years ago.
3 The mechanic repaired the car last week.
4 He is always late because he never sets the alarm clock.
5 Mandy has just phoned her uncle.
6 I was wearing a yellow dress at the party.
7 Ronaldo is the best football player in the world. (subject question)
8 The shops open at 9 in the morning.
9 That book is mine.
10 I take Bus 52 to work.
11 The red shirt costs $99.
12 John is talking to my sister.
13 The traffic in the city makes me nervous. (subject question)
14 My mother is helping me because I have no free time.
15 Ann bought a new car last week.
16 Her mother has just brought her some tea.
17 Elizabeth saw a fox in the snow. (subject question)
18 Jake and his wife live in New Zealand.
19 He waters his plants once a week.
20 Brian usually comes home at 5 o'clock.
21 David has not played tennis this year. (subject question)

Try to do these on your own, then check the key on the following page.
Key to the exercise:

1 Who discovered America in 1492?
2 When did you graduate from school?
3 What did the mechanic repair last week?
4 Why is he always late?
5 Who(m) has Mandy just called?
6 What were you wearing at the party?
7 Who is the best player in the world?
8 When do the shops open?
9 Whose book is that?
10 Which bus do you take to work?
11 How much does the red shirt cost?
12 Who is John talking to?
13 What makes you nervous?
14 Why is your mother helping you?
15 What did Ann buy last week?
16 What has her mother just brought to her?
17 Who saw a fox in the snow?
18 Where do Jack and his wife live?
19 How often does he water his plants?
20 What time (when) does Brian usually come home?
21 Who has not played tennis this year?

Past Simple Tense

The form:

Verb + ed (for regular verbs)
Second column of irregular verbs

She played tennis yesterday.

Question form:
Starting with 'did', main verb changes into infinitive.
Did she play tennis yesterday?
Negative:
'Not' after 'did', main verb is in the infinitive form.
She did not play tennis yesterday.
The use:

Finished actions, states or habits in the past.
1: We use it with finished actions, states or habits in the past when we have a finished time word (yesterday, last week, at 2 o'clock, in 2003).

- I went to the cinema yesterday.
- We spent a lot of time in Japan in 2007.

2: We use it with finished actions, states or habits in the past when we know from general knowledge that the time period has finished. This includes when the person we are talking about is dead.

- Leonardo painted the Mona Lisa.
- The Vikings invaded Britain.

3: We use it with finished actions, states or habits in the past that we have introduced with the present perfect or another tense. This is sometimes called 'details of news'.

- I've hurt my leg. I fell off a ladder when I was painting my bedroom.
- I've been on holiday. I went to Spain and Portugal.

4: For stories or lists of events, we often use the past simple for the actions in the story and the past continuous for the background.

- He went to a café. People were chatting and music was playing. He sat down and ordered a coffee.

Past Continuous Tense

The form:

Past Simple of the verb 'to be' (was/were) + verb+ing

She was watching TV yesterday.
Question form: Inversion of the subject and was/were.
Was she watching TV yesterday?
Negative form: 'Not' after was/were.
She was not watching TV yesterday.

The use:

1 An action in the past which overlaps another action or a time. The action in the past continuous starts before and often continues after the other shorter action or time.
I was walking to the station when I met John. (I started walking before I met John, and maybe I continued afterwards.)

At three o'clock, I was working. (I started before three o'clock and finished after three o'clock.)

2: In the same way, we can use the past continuous for the background of a story. (We often use the past simple for the actions.) This is really a specific example of Use 1.

The birds were singing, the sun was shining and in the cafés people were laughing and chatting. Amy sat down and took out her phone.

3: Temporary habits or habits that happen more often than we expect in the past. We often use 'always', 'constantly' or 'forever' here. This is the same as the way we use the present continuous for habits, but the habit started and finished in the past. This thing doesn't happen now.

He was always leaving the tap running.

She was constantly singing.

4: To emphasise that something lasted for a while. This use is often optional and we usually use it with time expressions like 'all day' or 'all evening' or 'for hours'.

I was working in the garden all day.

He was reading all evening.

Put the verbs into Past Simple or Past Continuous.

1. A: What (you, do) ................ when the accident occurred?
   B: I (try) ................... to change a light bulb that had burnt out.

2. After I (find) ....... the wallet full of money, I (go, immediately) ........ to the police and (turn) ............... it in.

3. The doctor (say) ................ that Tom (be) ................ too sick to go to work and that he (need) .................. to stay at home for a couple of days.

4. Sebastian (arrive) .................. at Susan's house a little before 9:00 pm, but she (be, not) ................... there. She (study, at the library) ............... for her final examination in French.

5. Sandy is in the living room watching television. At this time yesterday, she (watch, also) ................. television. That's all she ever does!

6. A: I (call) ............ you last night after dinner, but you (be, not) ........... there. Where were you?
   B: I (work) .............. out at the fitness center.

7. When I (walk) ................ into the busy office, the secretary (talk) ............... on the phone with a customer, several clerks (work, busily) ............... at their desks, and two managers (discuss, quietly)............. methods to improve customer service.

8. I (watch) ............... a mystery movie on T.V. when the electricity went out. Now I am never going to find out how the movie ends.

9. Sharon (be) ................. in the room when John (tell)............ me what had happened, but she didn't hear anything because she (listen, not) ............... 

10. It's strange that you (call) ............... because I (think, just) ......................... about you.
The key:

1. A: What (you, do) **were you doing** when the accident occurred?
   B: I (try) **was trying** to change a light bulb that had burnt out.
2. After I (find) **found** the wallet full of money, I (go, immediately) **immediately went** to the police and (turn) **turned** it in.
3. The doctor (say) **said** that Tom (be) **was** too sick to go to work and that he (need) **needed** to stay at home for a couple of days.
4. Sebastian (arrive) **arrived** at Susan's house a little before 9:00 pm, but she (be, not) **was not** there. She (study, at the library) **was studying** at the library for her final examination in French.
5. Sandy is in the living room watching television. At this time yesterday, she (watch, also) **was also watching** television. That's all she ever does!
6. A: I (call) **called** you last night after dinner, but you (be, not) **were not** there. Where were you?
   B: I (work) **was working** out at the fitness center.
7. When I (walk) **walked** into the busy office, the secretary (talk) **was talking** on the phone with a customer, several clerks (work, busily) **were busily working** at their desks, and two managers (discuss, quietly) **were quietly discussing** methods to improve customer service.
8. I (watch) **was watching** a mystery movie on T.V. when the electricity went out. Now I am never going to find out how the movie ends.
9. Sharon (be) **was** in the room when John (tell) **told** me what had happened, but she didn't hear anything because she (listen, not) **was not listening**.
10. It's strange that you (call) **called** because I (think, just) **was just thinking** about you.