

Sentence patterns using question word clauses

Subject + verb + interrogative adverb / pronoun + clause

Study the following sentences.

I know where he lives.

He asked when he should come.

I wonder why he is late today.

She explained how it could be done.

I know what I should do now.

Notes

Note the word order in the clause introduced by the interrogative adverb / pronoun. As you can see, the subject comes before the verb. In typical questions, the verb comes before the subject. But when a question word clause becomes the object of a verb, it has the same word order as an affirmative clause.

Incorrect: I don't know what does she want.

Correct: I don't know what she wants.

Incorrect: I know how should it be done.

Correct: I know how it should be done.

Subject + verb + noun / pronoun + questions word clause

They asked me what I was doing there.

He told us when we should start.

The teacher showed us how it could be done.

Tell me where I should go. (Here the subject you is not mentioned, but it is understood.)

I told him why it could not be done.