

41 Short answers

When answering closed questions in English, some words can often be left out to make responses shorter. These short answers are often used in spoken English.

See also:

Present simple 1 Types of verbs 49

Modal verbs 56 "There" 85

41.1 SHORT ANSWERS

When the question uses the verb "be," "be" is used in the same tense in the short answer. When the question uses the auxiliary verb "do," "do" is used in the same tense in the short answer.

Question uses "be."

Are you a doctor?

Yes, I am.

No, I'm not.

"A doctor" doesn't need to be repeated in the answer.



Question uses "do."

Do you like coffee?

Yes, I do.

No, I don't.

"Like coffee" doesn't need to be repeated in the answer.



FURTHER EXAMPLES

Is your name Sophie?

Yes, it is.



Are you having fun?

Yes, I am.



Was the train on time?

No, it wasn't.



Does he live here?

Yes, he does.



Do you like cake?

Yes, I do.



Did you enjoy the play?

No, I didn't.



41.2 SHORT ANSWERS WITH AUXILIARY VERBS

When the question uses an auxiliary verb, including modal verbs, the same auxiliary verb is used in the short answer.

Can you ride a bicycle?



Yes, I can.



No, I can't.



FURTHER EXAMPLES



Would you like to play chess?

Yes, I would.



Should I sell my house?

Yes, you should.



Have they bought a new car?

No, they haven't.



Will he be at the party later?

No, he won't.



COMMON MISTAKES SHORT ANSWERS WITH AUXILIARY VERBS

If a question uses an auxiliary verb, including modal verbs, it must be used in the short answer. The main verb should not be used at all.

Can you ride a bicycle?



Yes, I can.



Yes, I ride.



41.3 SHORT ANSWERS WITH "THERE"

When the question uses "there," it is also used in the answer.

Is there a hotel in the town?



Yes, there is.



No, there isn't.



Short for: "No, there isn't a hotel in the town."

Are there hotels in the town?



Yes, there are.



No, there aren't.

