

The background features a large, faint watermark of the University of Basrah logo. The logo is circular and contains a central emblem of a palm tree above an open book. The text 'UNIVERSITY OF BASRAH' and 'COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FOR HUMAN SCIENCES' is visible around the bottom of the logo. The year '1975' is also present on the left and right sides of the logo.

**English Grammar
Fourth Year
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Week 8: The Complex Sentence

Lecture No. 22:

- **Wh-Interrogative Clauses**



Wh-Interrogative Clauses

In English grammar, a "wh"-clause is a subordinate clause that's introduced by one of the wh words (*what, who, which, when, where, why, how*). They may function as:

Subject: *How you protect yourself from getting infected depends on social distancing.*

direct object: *Peter writes what he wants.*

subject complement: *The problem is who will sing if the singer doesn't show up.*

appositive: *My original question, why he did it at all, has not been answered.*

adjectival complementation: *I wasn't certain whose house I was in.*

Prepositional Complement: *No one was consulted on who should have the prize.*

Are there any similarities between Wh-Interrogative clauses and Wh-Questions?

The answer for this question is definitely, yes. These similarities are both semantic and grammatical. Semantically speaking both leave a gap of unknown information represented by the wh/element. Grammatically speaking, they are similar in the following respects:

- *The wh-element is placed first.*
- *If the wh-clause is prepositional complement, we have the same choices for the wh-element in wh-questions, which means that we have the choice to place the preposition before the wh-element or we delay it to the end of the clause.*

Consider the following examples:

- *I asked them for which candidate they voted.*
- *I asked them which candidate they voted for.*

Notes:

1. An infinitive *wh*-clause (with an obligational sense) can be formed with all *wh*-words except (*why*).

 - I don't know ***what to say to comfort them.***
 - You must explain to them ***how to operate the machine.***
2. Although the *wh*-subordinate clause usually does not have subject-operator inversion, such inversion may occur, particularly when the clause functions as ***complement*** and the main verb is a ***form of the verb (be)***, or when it functions as ***appositive***.

 - The problem is ***who (can we/we can) get to replace her.***
 - Your original question, ***why (did he not/he did not) reported to the police earlier,*** has not yet been answered.
3. Prepositions are optionally omitted before *wh*-clauses in certain circumstances.

 - We solved the problem ***(of) who*** was at fault.