

English tenses

Verb to be - present simple

I am a bit disappointed. - I'm a bit disappointed.
You are not seriously ill. - You aren't seriously ill.
Is he not at school? - Isn't he at school?

You can use the verb to be in full forms and short forms. But the use of these forms is not the same.

Differences between full forms and short forms

The full forms (or long forms) are always used in formal English, especially in written texts. But they are sometimes used in speech, too.

The short forms (or contracted forms) are more common in spoken English. You should never use the short forms, however, in formal emails, letters, essays or reports. In some cases, they could even sound impolite.

Affirmative forms

I am from Great Britain.
You are my best friend.
He is in the office.
She is a pretty girl.
It is very good.

We are ready to go.
You are our neighbours.
They are on their holiday.

Short forms

I'm from Great Britain.
You're my best friend.
He's in the office.
She's a pretty girl.
It's very good.

We're ready to go.
You're our neighbours.
They're on their holiday.

The short form of 'is' can also be used with names, animals or things.

Jack's the tallest boy in our class.
Mrs. Clark's over there.
Our dog's sleeping under the tree.
My car's out of order.

Negative forms

We make negative forms of the verb to be in the present simple by adding 'not' after it. The negative short forms, however, are more complicated than the affirmative forms.

*I am not hungry anymore.
You are not in danger.
He is not happy about it.
She is not at home now.
It is not our house.*

*We are not at school.
You are not our enemies.
They are not retired.*

Short forms in negative sentences

We can make short negative forms of 'are not' and 'is not' in two ways: *You aren't funny.* *You're not funny.* The second example emphasizes the negative and is stressed in speech.

*I'm not hungry anymore.
You aren't in danger. - You're not in danger.
He isn't happy about it. - He's not happy about it.
She isn't at home now. - She's not at home now.
It isn't our house. - It's not our house.*

*We aren't at school. - We're not at school.
You aren't our enemies. - You're not our enemies.
They aren't retired. - They're not retired.*

Questions

We just change the word order of a statement to make a positive question.

Positive questions:

*I am ill. - Am I ill?
You are in Denver. - Are you in Denver?
He is talented. - Is he talented?
She is overworked. - Is she overworked?
It is our dog. - Is it our dog?*

*We are the champions. - Are we the champions?
You are sportsmen. - Are you sportsmen?
They are clever. - Are they clever?*

Negative questions:

The negative questions usually express a surprise. The word order is different for full forms and short forms.

*Am I not ill?
Are you not in Denver? Aren't you in Denver?
Is he not talented? Isn't he talented?
Is she not overworked? Isn't she overworked?
Is it not our dog? - Isn't it our dog?*

*Are we not the champions? - Aren't we the champions?
Are you not sportsmen? - Aren't you sportsmen?
Are they not clever? - Aren't they clever?*