

KI- questions

1 KI-questions are constructed with **KI table words**. An interrogative (questioning) KI-word represents information that one is seeking.

2 The KI-word is normally placed at the beginning of the question phrase:

3 **Kion** vi volas? — Mi volas **manĝon!** - What do you want? — I want food!

Kian manĝon vi deziras? — Mi deziras **malmultekostan manĝon!** - What kind of food would you like? — I would like inexpensive food!

Kiel vi fartas? — Mi fartas **bone!** - How are you? — I am well! (Note that 'bone' is an adverb. In colloquial English, you might hear "I am good" which is ungrammatical in this context.)

Kiom da pomoj vi havas? — Mi havas **du kilogramojn da pomoj!** - How many apples do you have? — I have two kilos of apples!

Kies estas tiu aŭto? — Ĝi apartenas **al Anno!** Ĝi estas **de Anno!** Ĝi estas **ŝia!** - Whose is this car? — It belongs to Anna! It is Anna's! It is hers!

Kiam do? — **Morgaŭ!** - When then? — Tomorrow!

4 KI-words are also used in **interrogative clauses**: **Ŝi** demandis, **kion** mi volas.

Ĉu questions

5 **Ĉu** questions are constructed with the interrogative word **ĉu**. A **ĉu** question is asking for confirmation of the correctness of the entire sentence. The answer is normally **jes** (yes) or **ne** (no).

6 **Ĉu** is normally placed at the beginning of the sentence with the question:

7 **Ĉu** vi komprenas min? — **Jes, mi komprenas vin!** **Ne, mi ne komprenas vin!** - Do you understand me? — Yes, I understand you! No, I don't understand you!

Ĉu vi estas Kanadano? — **Jes, mi estas Kanadano!** **Ne, mi ne estas Kanadano!** - Are you Canadian? — Yes, I'm Canadian! No, I'm not Canadian!

Ĉu li? — **Jes, li!** - Is it him? — Yes, it's him! (Note: In English "Is it he?" is grammatically correct, using the subject case as in Esperanto.)

Ĉu ĝi estas taŭga? — **Jes, (ĝi) estas!** - Is it suitable? — Yes, it is!

8 **Ĉu** can also be used for a sentence with a multiple choice question. In that case, the answer is normally a choice among the various alternatives presented:

9 **Ĉu** vi volas kafon aŭ teon? — **Mi volas kafon!** **Mi volas teon!** **Mi volas nek kafon, nek teon!** **Mi volas kaj kafon, kaj teon!** - Do you want coffee or tea? — I want coffee! I

want tea! I want neither coffee nor tea! I want both coffee and tea!

Ĉu li aŭ ŝi? — **Ŝi!** Li! Iu ajn el ili! Neniu el ili! **Ambaŭ!** - Is it he or she? — She! He! Either one of them! None of them! Both!

Answering words

To answer **ĉu** questions, a simple sentence (complete or abbreviated) may be said, giving an answer to the question:

Ĉu vi amas min? — **Mi amas vin!** - Do you love me? — I love you!

Kaj **ĉu** vi longe lernis? — **Ho, mi lernis ne malpli ol tri jarojn.** - And did you study for a long time? — Oh, I studied not less than three years.

But normally we use the words **jes** (yes) and **ne** (no) as answers. These answering words, used alone, act as a complete sentence. A complete sentence, or a part of a sentence, is often used after the answer words for additional clarity.

Jes

The answering word **jes** (yes) gives a **positive** answer:

— **Ĉu** vi volas kafon? — **Jes!** (= **Mi volas kafon.**) - — Do you want coffee? — Yes!(=I want coffee.)

— **Ĉu** vi ion deziras? — **Jes!** (= **Mi ion deziras.**) - — Would you like something? — Jes!(=I would like something.)

Ĉu la Universala Kongreso estos en Eŭropo ĉi-jare? — **Mi** pensas, ke **jes!** = **Mi** pensas, ke **ĝi** ja estos en Eŭropo ĉi-jare! - Will the Universal Congress be in Europe this year? — I think so! = I think that it will be in Europe this year!

The responding word **jes** replaces the entire relative clause of the longer answer (except for the introductory **ke**).

Don't use **jes** in the middle of a sentence to emphasize the truth of something. For that we use the particle **ja**. Don't say: ~~Tiu ĉi suko ne estas dolĉa, dum tiu alia **jes** estas.~~
Say: Tiu ĉi suko ne estas dolĉa, dum tiu alia **ja** estas. (This juice is not sweet, while that other one really is.)

Ne

The answer word **ne** gives a **negative** answer:

— **Ĉu** vi volas kafon? — **Ne!** (= **Mi ne volas kafon.**) - Do you want coffee? — No! (=I don't want coffee.)

— **Ĉu** vi ion deziras? — **Ne!** (= **Mi nenion deziras.**) - Would you like something? — No! (I don't want anything.)

Ĉu li estas blondulo aŭ brunulo? — **Ne**, pli kaŝtanhara. = Li estas nek blondulo nek brunulo, li estas pli kaŝtanhara. - Does he have blond hair or brown hair? — No, more chestnut. = He has neither blond nor brown hair, his hair is more chestnut colored.

Ha, ĉu efektive la malgranda Kay mortis? La rozoj estis sub la tero, kaj ili diras, ke **ne!** = ...ili diras, ke li ne mortis. - Oh, did little Kay really die? The roses were under the ground and they said no! = ...they said that he didn't die.

18 It's important to pay attention to the difference between **ne** (not) as a negating word within a sentence, and **ne** (no) as an answer to a question:

29 **Ne venu ĉi tien!** = Mi volas, ke vi ne venu ĉi tien. - Don't come here! = I don't want you to come here.

Ne negates the predicate.

Ne, venu ĉi tien! = **Ne!** Mi ja volas, ke vi venu ĉi tien. - No, come here! = No! I do want you to come here.

Ne is the answer word and is more or less an entire sentence in itself.

20 If a phrase starting with a verb comes directly after the word **ne** (no) used as a response, a clear pause should be used after **ne** when saying the sentence, to avoid misunderstanding.

Jes and ne in negative questions

21 There are two ways of using answering words in negative questions. One system is more common in Western languages, and the other is more common in Eastern languages. Therefore, one may speak of **Western** and **Eastern** usage, but in fact, in many countries and languages, both systems are used in parallel. Both systems are at home in Esperanto as well. Zamenhof used **jes** (yes) and **ne** (no) mainly according to the Western system, but he also used the Eastern system on multiple occasions.

Western system

22 In the **Western** system, **jes** represents a positive answering sentence, and **ne** represents a negative answering sentence. A negative answering sentence is a sentence with a negating word (**ne** (not) or a NENI- word) in the main clause. In the Western system, the meaning of the answering word is independent of the form of the question. If the question is negative, the response is given with the same answering word that would be used if the question lacked the negating word. The important thing is the form of the answering sentence that the answering word represents:

23 Ĉu vi volas kafon? - Do you want coffee?(positive question)

- — **Jes!** (= Mi volas kafon.) - — Yes! (=I want coffee.)
- — **Ne!** (= Mi ne volas kafon.) - — No! (=I don't want coffee.)

Ĉu vi ne volas kafon? - Don't you want coffee?(negative question)

- — **Jes!** (= Mi volas kafon.) - — Yes! (=I want coffee.)
- — **Ne!** (= Mi ne volas kafon.) - — No! (=I don't want coffee.)

Ĉu vi nenion deziras? - Is there nothing that you want?

- — **Jes!** (= Mi ja deziras ion.) - — Yes! (=I do want something.)
- — **Ne!** (= Mi deziras nenion.) - — No! (=I want nothing.)

- — **Ne!** (= *Mi deziras nenion.*) - — No! (=I want nothing.)

24 To answer positively to a negative question (in the Western system) you can also use the emphatic answer **Jes ja!** = **Yes indeed, yes certainly!** (or something similar): **Ĉu vi ne volas trinki la malvarman kafon? — Jes ja!** (= **Jes, mi ja volas trinki ĝin.**) Some use **tamen** instead of **jes ja**.

Eastern system

25 In the **Eastern** system **jes** confirms exactly the contents of the question, and **ne** denies the entire questioning sentence. In this system, **jes** and **ne** exchange roles in negative questions:

26 **Ĉu vi volas kafon?** - Do you want coffee?(positive question)

- — **Jes!** (= *Mi volas kafon.*) - — Yes! (=I want coffee.)
- — **Ne!** (= *Mi ne volas kafon.*) - — No! (=I don't want coffee.)

Ĉu vi ne volas kafon? - Don't you want coffee?(negative question)

- — **Jes!** (= *Mi ne volas kafon.*) - — Yes! (=I don't want coffee.)
- — **Ne!** (= *Mi ja volas kafon.*) - — No! (=I do want coffee.)

Ĉu vi nenion deziras? - Is there nothing that you want?

- — **Jes, mi nenion deziras.** - — Yes, I want nothing.
- — **Ne, mi ja deziras ion.** - — No, I do want something.

Two logical systems

27 Both systems answer negative questions and are logical, but in different ways. It would be opportune if only one system existed in Esperanto. In principle, the Western system may be recommended, because it is currently the most frequently used, and also clearly most commonly used by Zamenhof. But it seems that it may not be possible to reach a completely unified use of only one system. Both usages are at home in the language. It is worth being careful in answering negative questions. It is helpful to use a clear sentence as an answer, so not to risk misunderstanding.