

“QualityTime-ESL” presents...



QT-ESL Podcast No. 49

“Why” Part 1

Hi! I’m Marianne Raynaud, and I’m here to help you improve your level of spoken English. So let’s get started.

“Why” is an interrogative word used to ask a question. Very young children, when they are learning to speak, will often annoy their parents by asking a question with “why?” every time the adult says something. Many of the questions you will be practicing today are not questions you will be asking, because they are often very impolite. But I’m sure you will hear them in the mouths of children or people who just want to annoy you.

First listen and repeat these statements made by a nice adult talking to a child.

You must put on your shoes.
We are going out.
It will do you good to play outside.

We should get some fresh air.
It is better for your health.
You won’t become ill.

Listen and repeat the same statements followed by a question a young child might ask.

You must put on your shoes.
Why must I put on my shoes?
We are going out.
Why are we going out?
It will do you good to play outside.
Why will it do me good to play outside?

We should get some fresh air.
Why should we get some fresh air?
It is better for your health.
Why is it better for my health?
You won’t become ill.
Why won’t I become ill?

Now you are the young child. When you hear one of your parents making a statement, ask the annoying question a young child would ask. Listen to the examples.

*I say: You must put on your shoes.
You say: Why must I put on my shoes?*

*I say: We are going out.
You say: Why we going out?*

Now you go on in the same way. Remember you are the annoying child asking annoying questions that will bother your parents!

You must put on your shoes.
Why must I put on my shoes?
We are going out.
Why are we going out?
It will do you good to play outside.
Why will it do me good to play outside?

We should get some fresh air.
Why should we get some fresh air?
It is better for your health.
Why is it better for my health?
You won’t become ill.
Why won’t I become ill?



QT-ESL Podcast No. 49 “Why?” Part 2 (Cont.)

In the next exercise we will imagine you have a parent, friend or acquaintance, who is always complaining. That person always wants to contradict you—even just in ordinary conversation and keeps asking questions beginning with “Why?” Listen and repeat these questions with “why?”

Why are you writing a letter?
 Why have you been shopping?
 Why are you going to watch a film later?
 Why do you plan to go to a museum?

Why did you go to a concert last night?
 Why were you tidying your desk?
 Why will you wait a week to get your tickets?
 Why should I stop asking questions?

Now you are going to be that annoying person. Listen to the examples.

*I say: I’m writing a letter.
 You say: Why are you writing a letter?*

*I say: I’ve been shopping.
 You say: Why have you been shopping?*

Now you go on in the same way. Start each sentence with “why?” And watch your tenses.

I’m writing a letter.
 Why are you writing a letter?
 I’ve been shopping.
 Why have you been shopping?
 I’m going to watch a film later.
 Why are you going to watch a film later?
 I plan to go to a museum.
 Why do you plan to go to a museum?

I went to a concert last night.
 Why did you go to a concert last night?
 I was tidying my desk.
 Why were you tidying your desk?
 I will wait a week to get my tickets.
 Why will you wait a week to get your tickets?
 You should stop asking questions!
 Why should I stop asking questions?

Most of the sentences that we’ve been practicing have been either annoying or impolite. But we think it is a useful way to practice the use of “why”.

The word “why” can also be used in indirect questions. Listen and repeat.

He asked me why I was writing a letter.
 He asked me why I had been shopping.
 He asked me why I was going to watch a film.

He asked me why I planned to go to a museum.
 He asked me why I went to a concert last night.
 He asked me why I would wait to get my tickets.

Finally just add, “He asked me why...” to the sentences I pronounce. Listen to the examples.

*I say: I was writing a letter
 You say: He asked me why I was writing a letter.*

*I say: I had been shopping.
 You say: He asked me why I had been shopping.*

I was writing a letter.
 He asked me why I was writing a letter.
 I had been shopping.
 He asked me why I had been shopping.

I was going to watch a film.
 He asked me why I was going to watch a film.
 I planned to go to a museum.
 He asked me why I planned to go to a museum.

*To finish just listen and repeat: Now I’m sure I can ask a lot of questions with “why?” I can ask, “**Why** is it better for my health?” or “**Why** will you wait to get your tickets?” I’m quite sure I’m making progress in English! From now on nothing will stop me from asking questions with “why”!*

That’s the end of this podcast. For more practice, check out our other podcast series “Your English” and “5 Minute TOPs”. Bye for now and don’t forget to keep smiling!