

THE INTERROGATIVE FORM WITH OÙ (WHERE)

Goal: In the previous lesson, we learn how to ask questions in French with QUAND, which refers to when an action was done. In this lesson, you will learn how to request information about places by using the interrogative pronoun “Où” (Where) in French.

First of all, it is important to always remember to add the accent on the letter “u” → ù. Without this accent, “ou” = or, NOT where. For those of you who use PCs, you can obtain ù by doing Alt + 0249 on your keyboard.

a) Formula # 1 (With Inversion of Verb)

Formula = Où + Verb + Subject + rest of sentence

[Don't forget the dash between verb and subject if subject is personal pronoun]

Examples:

1-) Where do you go / where are you going? → *Où allez--vous?*

2-) Where will she spend her vacations? → *Où passera-t-elle ses vacances?*

3-) Where does Tom buy new tires? → *Où Tom achète-t-il de nouveaux pneus ?* [when using this formula of inversion, if the subject is a real name (Tom), don't forget to place it BEFORE the verb, then add the equivalent personal pronoun (il) AFTER the verb. This is also applicable to questions asked with quand]

b) Formula # 2 involving “est-ce que” (Without Inversion of Verb)

Formula = Où + est-ce que + Subject + Verb + Rest of sentence

Examples:

1-) Where do you go / where are you going? → *Où est-ce que vous allez?*

2-) Where will she spend her vacations? → *Où est-ce qu'elle passera ses vacances?*

3-) Where does Tom buy new tires? → *Où est-ce que Tom achète de nouveaux pneus ?*

[Again, it always helps to remind everybody that questions involving “est-ce que” do not require the inversion of the verb.]

c) Questions with Where...from? = D'où

Here is a question very common in English that you may also want to know in French.

Where do you come from? → *D'où viens-tu ?* (inversion) / *D'où est-ce que tu viens?* (no inversion)

The preposition from = de in French. But because De ends in a vowel (e) and où begins with the vowel, (o), we remove the E in De and place an apostrophe, which gives D'où. It is not unusual

to start a question with a preposition in French. So the literal translation for “**D**’où viens-tu?” is “**From** where do you come?”