

## Information Questions

*Resource: A Commonsense Guide to Grammar and Usage, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. (p 366-374).*

## Information Questions

- Being with question words such as *who(m)*, *what*, *where*, *why*, *when*, plus the compound question words *how often*, *whose* + noun, and *which* + noun/pronoun.
- They are always followed by a verb, and sometimes this verb is a helping verb.

## The Seven Helping Verbs:

1. Be (am, is, are, was, were)
2. Have (have, has, had)
3. Can/could
4. May/might
5. Must
6. Shall/should
7. Will/would

## Helping Verbs

- Normally come after the subject of a sentence (*You will study*).
- In a question, the **helping verb** must come after the question word (and thus before the subject).
  - **Example:** We turn the statement *You will order* into a question by moving the helping verb (*will*) to the spot that directly follows the question word (*what*).  
*Statement:* You will order.  
*Question:* What will you order?
- When there is **no helping verb**, a form of the verb (*do*) must be added after the question word.
  - **Example:** The information question *Where did you go?* Is formed y inserting the appropriate form of (*do*) right after the question word.  
*Statement:* You walked.  
*Question:* Where did you walk?

## How to fix this error in your writing:

- Whenever you ask an information question, check to see that there is a verb after the question word. If the question word is not followed by a verb, you must supply one.

- If there is no verb following an information question, supply one by either (1) moving a helping verb or (2) inserting the appropriate form of *do* if there is not helping verb available to be moved.

**Example:** Where we can park?

- *Tip applied:* Where \_\_\_\_\_ we can park?  
Missing verb
- *Correction:* Where can we park?

**Example:** Where he wants to see?

- *Tip applied:* Where \_\_\_\_\_ he wants to see?  
Missing verb
- *Correction:* Where does he want to see?

- Sometimes the question word will be part of a larger group of words such as *how much time, who else, or which one*.
- In these cases, the helping verb or the form of *do* will not immediately follow the question word (how or who) but will follow the question phrase.
  - How much time do we have?
  - Who else is going to the part?
  - Which one are you wearing?