

Copula Review

Classification Questions & "From" Structure

These classification copula sentences we've been talking about are fairly simple, easy to understand intellectually. That's why we never drill them enough! We understand how it works, but we need to overwork these so they pop into our conversation appropriately. The temptation to start every "to be" sentence with *At* is very strong.

Question Forms

In English, word order changes with questions:

It is a bird. **Is it** a bird?

In Irish, which leads with the verb, there is no such adjustment:

Is éan é. **An éan é?** **Nach éan é?**

Basically, if you construct the correct classification statement, and then simply replace *is* with *an/nach*, you will end up in the right place.

The only answers to a classification question are '*Sea* and *Ní hea*. Another way to say this is that if the first thing that follows the copula question particle is a noun, the answer is based on *ea*.

I'm From Minnesota

One of the most common copula uses in your first conversation with or about a person is to say where someone comes from. There can be a strong temptation to say something like, *Tá mé ó X*.

The proper structure is:

Is as Minnesota mé.

As you can see, the structure is very similar to classification, in the sense that the "punch line", where I am from, comes right after the copula and before the subject of the sentence. Notice the similarity:

Is múinteoir mé I am a teacher Is as Minnesota mé I'm from Minnesota

Again, this is intellectually simple, but it is anything but automatic to say where we're from, so this needs lots of practice as one of the most frequent uses of the copula.

Homework & Practice

For next time, construct ten sequences like the following, about real (definite) people. They don't have to be famous although that can be fun. Use both affirmative and negative forms.

Nach aisteoir é John Wayne? 'Sea, is aisteoir é. Is as California é.

An aisteoir í Sally Ride? Ní hea, is spásaire í. Is as California í.

Notes:

- ◆ It is good practice to say the English equivalents in Irish word order: Is astronaut she.
- ◆ You only need to bring in ten sentences, but I highly recommend to practice these forms daily, if possible, to get them automatic.