

Simple Past: Subject and Object Questions

English is what we call an SVO language. This means that in a simple sentence the subject comes first, then the verb, then the object. For example:

John shot Jane.

'John' is the subject – the one who did the shooting. 'Jane' is the object – the one who got shot.

So when we make the question:

Who shot Jane?

our question word **WHO** is the subject.

So this is a **subject question** and we do not need 'to do'.

When we take a sentence like

John met Yoko Ono in an art gallery

'John' is the subject and 'Yoko Ono' is the object – following our SVO order.

So when we make the question:

Who did John meet in an art gallery?

'John' is still the subject and now our question word **WHO** is the object.

So this is an **object question** and we need 'to do'.

Now let's take a sentence like

Brian Epstein died in 1969.

'Brian Epstein' is the subject and '1969' is the object (it's called a 'prepositional object' here because it's introduced by the preposition 'in') – following our SVO order.

So when we make the question:

Who died in 1969?

our question word **WHO** is the subject.

So this is a **subject question** and we do not need 'to do'.

