Questions are relatively easy to spot, but can be missed and are surprisingly difficult to translate well. First you should identify which of the three following types any question is. Leading questions require a little extra thought to translate well.

1. **Question-word questions**: introduced by question words like *what, how,* or *why*.

   What are you doing at the weekend?

2. **Yes/No questions**: introduced without a question word (in English), expecting the answer *yes* or *no*.
   Questions of this type are often **leading** questions, expressed and translateable in a variety of different ways.

   Are you hungry?

3. **A/B questions**: introduced without a question word (in English), expecting a choice between the different options presented.

   Would you like coffee or tea?

Question-word questions

In Greek the question word typically occurs early, in fact normally first place in the sentence. For example:

Ἄδικος Λόγος: ποῦ ψυχρὰ δῆτα πώποτ' εἶδες Ἡράκλεια λουτρά;
Unjust argument: Where did you ever see cold Heraclean baths then?
(Aristophanes Clouds 1051)

However, as per the usual rules of word order, words that are emphasised in the sentence can move to first place, which has the effect of pushing the question word further back in the sentence.

For example:

τῶν τοῦ Διὸς παίδων τίν' ἄνδρ' ἄριστον

ψυχὴν νομίζεις, εἰπέ, καὶ πλείστους πόνους πονῆσαι.

When it comes to the sons of Zeus, which do you consider

to be the best in spirit, tell me, and which undertook the most labours?

(Aristophanes Clouds 1048-9)

Question words in English have a clear correlate in Greek. For example:

English	**Greek**
when	πότε
how	πώς
who	τίς

NB: question words in Greek usually start with π- (for example πώς, πότε). (See relatives for related words and their meanings.)

2. Yes/no questions

In English, yes/no questions start with the verb 'do' unless there is an auxiliary verb, which comes first:

Do you like coffee?

Have you rung Rebecca?

Alternatively (more colloquially), a statement can be used with a rise in tone at the end, marked by a question mark when written:

You like coffee?

In Greek, too, questions can be marked by nothing more than a question mark at the end.

For example:

κοὐκ αἰσχυνοῦμαι δῆτ', ἐὰν δή τις λέγῃ·
"Τί δεῦρ' ἀφίκεσθ' ἱκεσίοισι σὺν κλάδοις
αὐτοὶ φιλοψυχοῦντες; ἔξιτε χθονός·"
Will I not be ashamed if someone says
"Why have you come here with your suppliant branches
you cowards? Leave this land!"?
(Euripides Children of Heracles 517-19)

More usually, there is some introducing word. The particular word used depends on the feelings of the speaker when posing the question. The most **neutral** word is ἆρα. We might compare this to the ¿ in Spanish: used at the beginning of a question to mark that it is going to have a ? at the end.

NB You need to make a careful distinction between the **neutral** question-word ἆρα (which occurs in the first place of the sentence) and the particle ἄρα (which will usually be found in the second position of the sentence, adding a tone of surprise to the sentence). For more see particles.

Leading questions

Yes/no questions may be **leading** in form, where the speakers have an expectation or hope about the answer. In English, we often use **tag questions** in leading questions. For example, the following expects the answer 'yes'...

You like coffee, don't you?

...whereas the following expects the answer 'no':

You don't like coffee, do you?

However, there is not a simple distinction between these two types of leading question: the 'expected' answer to any question will often depend on subtle differences in the

speaker's hopes and wishes. For example, the speaker of the following question hopes that the answer is no but fears that the answer might be yes:

He's not ill, is he? (Answer: no, he's not, don't worry OR actually, I'm afraid he is)

The speaker of the following question also hopes that the answer is no, but has a rather different opinion about the proposition:

Surely he's not going to come tomorrow? (Answer: no, don't worry OR well, actually, I think he might).

The opposite set of expectations may lead to the following:

Surely he's going to help us? (Answer: yes, of course OR well, actually, I don't think he is.)

The following question would also lead to the answer 'yes' but in a rather different scenario. Here the speaker wants the addressee to agree with him (and implies that the evidence leading to such a conclusion is obvious):

Isn't it the case that helping other people is a virtue? (Answer: absolutely, you're right.)

So, there are many different ways of forming questions and their answers in English. Importantly, there is no one-to-one mapping between the forms and the implications. For example, even if I expect the answer 'yes' I can just ask the neutral question 'do you like coffee?'. Choosing the correct form of both the question and the accompanying answer in a translation will therefore depend on a careful reading of the speakers' hopes, fears and attitudes towards the question.

In Greek, 'non-neutral' questions can be introduced by ἆρ' οὐ, μῶν or οὔκουν.

ἆρ' οὐ introduces questions which lead the answer towards a 'yes':

τῆς δὲ γυναικός, εἰ μὲν διδασκομένη ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς τἀγαθὰ κακοποιεῖ, ἴσως δικαίως ἂν ἡ γυνὴ τὴν αἰτίαν ἔχοι· εἰ δὲ μὴ διδάσκων τὰ καλὰ κἀγαθὰ ἀνεπιστήμονι τούτων χρῷτο, ἆρ' οὐ δικαίως ἂν ὁ ἀνὴρ τὴν αἰτίαν ἔχοι;
When it comes to a woman, then, if she does wrong when her husband has taught her how to do right, perhaps it would be right for the woman to carry the blame. But if her husband keeps her ignorant of that and doesn't teach her what's right, surely the man should carry the blame?
(Xenophon Economics 3.11)

μῶν hopes that the answer is 'no' (but fears it will be 'yes'):

Εὐκλείδης: ζῶντι καὶ μάλα μόλις· χαλεπῶς μὲν γὰρ ἔχει καὶ ὑπὸ τραυμάτων τινῶν, μᾶλλον μὴν αὐτὸν αἱρεῖ τὸ γεγονὸς νόσημα ἐν τῷ στρατεύματι.
Τερψίων: μῶν ἡ δυσεντερία;
Εὐκλείδης: ναί.
Eucleides: Alive but only just. He is suffering badly from some injuries, but even more worryingly he has been struck by the illness that has broken out in the army.
Terpsion: I hope you don't mean dysentery?
Eucleides: Well, actually, yes
(Plato Theaetetus 142b)

οὔκουν leads the answer to a 'yes', and is particularly favoured in Plato where Socrates is leading his interlocutor towards a conclusion, often well translated by 'isn't it the case that'.

οὔκουν τόδ' αἰσχρόν, εἰ βλέποντι μὲν φίλῳ
χρώμεσθ', ἐπεὶ δ' ὄλωλε, μὴ χρώμεσθ' ἔτι;
Is it not shameful, to treat him as a friend while he lives,
but no longer treat him as such when he's dead.
(Euripides Hecuba 311-312)

NB: οὔκουν must be distinguished from οὐκοῦν. A possible mnemonic is that, when the

accent is on the οὔκ- it has a negative meaning (cf οὐ and see negatives), whereas when the accent is on the -οῦν it has a consequential meaning (cf οὖν and see particles). Both of them are rather leading in nature:

Ἠλέκτρα: σκοποὺς ἔπεμψε τούσδε τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν.

Αὐτουργός: οὐκοῦν τὰ μὲν λεύσσουσι, τὰ δὲ σύ που λέγεις.

Electra: He has sent these men to find out about my difficulties.

Peasant: So they will see part of it and you will tell them the rest, I suppose.

(Euripides Electra 355)

3. A/B questions

A/B questions in English are not marked any differently from yes/no questions until the second option is reached, where the second option is marked by 'or'. So:

Do you like coffee or tea?

In Greek on the other hand, these questions are marked from the outset as having two options, by using πότερον (or πότερα) rather than ἆρα:

πότερον οὖν κάλλιστον ἐν γραμματιστοῦ τὰ ὅμοια γράμματα γράφειν ταχὺ ἢ ἡσυχῇ;

So when you're with your writing teacher is it best to write out the same letters quickly or quietly?

(Plato Charmides 159c)

We may note, then, that there is no particular word in English used to translate πότερον: rather the translator must just bear in mind that there will be two options given. These two options may be in different sentences:

πότερον ὅτι τοῖς μὲν λαμβάνουσιν ἀργύριον ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστιν ἀπεργάζεσθαι τοῦτο ἐφ' ᾧ ἂν μισθὸν λάβωσιν, ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ λαμβάνοντι οὐκ ἀνάγκη διαλέγεσθαι ᾧ ἂν μὴ βούλωμαι; ἢ τὴν δίαιτάν μου φαυλίζεις ὡς ἧττον μὲν ὑγιεινὰ ἐσθίοντος ἐμοῦ ἢ σοῦ, ἧττον δὲ ἰσχὺν παρέχοντα; ἢ ὡς χαλεπώτερα πορίσασθαι τὰ ἐμὰ διαιτήματα τῶν σῶν διὰ τὸ σπανιώτερά τε καὶ πολυτελέστερα εἶναι;

Is it that those who get paid have to work at the job they are paid to do, whereas I, who don't get

paid, don't have to talk to anyone I don't want to? Or do you think my food poor because it is less wholesome than yours or less nourishing?

(Xenophon Memorabilia 1.6)