

## How to use HOW COME in informal questions

by Jane Lawson at DailyStep.com

Thank you to Palitha Jayatilaka in Sri Lanka for requesting this topic. **HOW COME** is such a common expression in English. It's an informal way of asking a question – but not all questions can be asked using this form.

### When do we use HOW COME?

We use **HOW COME** when we want to ask **WHY something happened**. It is used in informal questions. Take a look at these examples:

1. "How come you didn't go to the party last weekend?"

"I didn't go because I was feeling ill."

2. "How come he is going to give a speech at the wedding?"

"Because he is the father of the bride, so it is traditional for him to give a speech."

3. "Your clothes are soaking wet! How come?"

"Because it is raining heavily outside."

4. "How come your English is getting so much better?"

"I've started using English lessons from DailyStep English!"

You can see that **the word order in these sentences is different from the usual question structure**, because the subject and the verb are not inverted.

It is incorrect to say:

How come didn't you go...?

How come is he going to give...?

It is correct to say:

How come you didn't go...?

How come he is going to give...?

But if we start the sentence with **WHY**, instead of with HOW COME, then we need to invert the word order. Look at these examples:

1. Why didn't you go to the party last weekend?
2. Why is he going to give a speech at the wedding?
3. Why are your clothes soaking wet?
4. Why is your English getting so much better?

So, how come we use the phrase HOW COME? What are its origins? **The phrasal verb COME ABOUT in English means HAPPEN** – so the question

“How did it come about that you didn't go to the party?” means the same as  
“How come you didn't go to the party?”

See? It's simple! Now, write some sentences of your own using **HOW COME**. Make sure they are true to your own life if possible, as this will help you to remember them better.

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