

The questions people really ask Google

Google already recorded every question someone typed before it showed them your site. One custom regex in Search Console pulls out just those — and that list is a content plan written by your own visitors.

The regex

Paste this into Search Console's Custom (regex) box. It uses RE2, which is the syntax Search Console accepts.

```
(?i)^(who|what|when|where|why|how|which|can|should|does|do|is|are|will)\b
```

`(?i)` makes it case-insensitive. `^` anchors it to the start of the query. `\b` is a word boundary, so “however” and “whoever” are not mistaken for questions.

Five steps

1. **Open Google Search Console.** Go to search.google.com/search-console and sign in with the Google account that owns the site. If the site is not there yet, add it as a property and verify it — DNS or the HTML file both work. Data starts collecting from that day, so do this first even if you do nothing else.
2. **Open the Performance report.** Left sidebar → **Performance** → **Search results**. This is every query that showed your site in Google, with clicks, impressions and average position.
3. **Add the filter.** Click **+ New filter** (older accounts say *Add filter*) → **Query** → open the dropdown and choose **Custom (regex)**. Leave the second dropdown on **Matches regex**.
4. **Paste and apply.** Drop the regex in and press **Apply**.
5. **Read your list.** What is left is only the queries that begin with a question word — the actual sentences people typed before Google showed them your site.

Set the date range to 12 months. The default is three months, and question queries are long-tail — a year of data gives you a far longer list to work from.

What to do with the list

What you see	What it means
High impressions, very few clicks	Google shows you for it, but nothing on the page answers it. This is the best content to write first.
Clicks already coming in	Something is working. Find the page, make the answer clearer and put the question in a heading.
Questions you did not expect	The gap between how you describe your work and how customers describe their problem. Use their words.
Position 8–20	Close. A real answer on the page often moves these up fastest.

A simple routine

1. Take the ten questions with the most impressions and the fewest clicks.
2. Give each one its own heading on a real page, phrased the way the person typed it.
3. Answer it in the first two sentences, then expand underneath.
4. Come back in a month with the same filter and compare. The list moves.

Variations worth keeping

Only the classic question words

```
(?i)^(who|what|when|where|why|how)\b
```

A tighter list when the full pattern returns too much.

A question word anywhere

```
(?i)\b(who|what|when|where|why|how)\b
```

Drop the ^ when a small site returns almost nothing.

Pages instead of queries. Pick **Page** rather than **Query** in the first dropdown and the same Custom (regex) option appears — useful for isolating one section of a site.

If you get almost no results

That is usually normal rather than broken. Small sites have few question queries, and Search Console withholds very low-volume queries for privacy. Widen the date range, then drop the ^ so a question word anywhere in the query counts.