



“Da quando” vs “Da quanto tempo”

Da quanto tempo vs da quando

The difference between "da quanto tempo" and da "quando" is the same as the difference of "how long" vs "since when" Let's start by looking at "da quanto tempo"

da quanto tempo

Is to inquire about the duration of time in which something has been happening or has been (how long). The phrase "da quanto tempo" is followed by a verb in the present tense and any objects, etc. Therefore you could express this method as a math equation looking like this

Da quanto temp + present tense verb clause = "How long have?" Here are some examples;

Da quanto tempo aspetti l'autobus? - How long have you been waiting for the bus?

Da quanto tempo ascoltate la musica? - How long have y'all been listening to music?

Da quanto tempo beve il vino? - How long has he been drinking wine?

In addition you can use other words representing units of time in place of the word tempo. You do need to make sure that quanto agrees with whatever you use in place of tempo. Per esempio:

Da quanti anni studiano italiano? - How many years have they been studying Italian?

Da quanti giorni siete in Italia? - How many days have y'all been in Italy?

So how do you respond when somebody asks you "Da quanto tempo....." ? Good question and fortunately the answer is quite simple. We simply use a slightly different formula for the sentence. This time we start with verb clause in the present tense then da and the units of time needed to express "quanto tempo".

Present tense verb clause + da + the units of time needed to express "quanto tempo". Here are some examples;

Aspetto l'autobus da trenta minuti. - I have been waiting for the bus for thirty minutes.

Ascoltiamo la musica da due ore. - We have been listening to music for two hours.

Beve il vino rosso da otto anni. - He has been drinking red wine for 8 years.



da quando

On the other hand is to ask "since when". The phrase "da quando" is followed by a verb in the present tense and any objects, etc. Therefore you could express this method as a math equation looking like this

Da quando + present tense verb clause = "Since when?" Here are some examples;

Da quando suona la chitarra? - Since when has he been playing guitar?

Da quando ti piace la carne? - Since when do you like meat?

Da quando studiano italiano - Since when have they studied Italian?

So how do you respond when somebody asks you "Da quando....." ? Good question and fortunately the answer is quite simple. We simply use a slightly different formula for the sentence. This time we start with verb clause in the present tense then da and when the action or state of being started.

Present tense verb clause + da + the units of time needed to express "quanto tempo". Here are some examples;

Suona la chitarra da tre anni fa. - He has been playing guitar since three years ago

Mi piace la carne dalla prima volta l'ho mangiata. - I have liked meat since the first time I ate it.

Studiano italiano dall'anno scorso. - They have studied Italian since last year.

One final note. All of these phrases have been expressed as "Present Perfect" for example; "Ascoltiamo la musica da due ore" = "we have been listening to music for 2 hours".

To put these in the past conjugate the verb in the imperfect tense for example;

"Ascoltavamo la musica da due ore" = "we had been listening to music for 2 hours".