

Unit 12

12.1 Reported speech and thought

- 1 It is usual for the verb in the reported clause to move 'one tense back' if the reporting verb is in the past tense (e.g. *said, told*).

Present → Past

Present Perfect → Past Perfect

Past → Past Perfect

will → *would*

'I'm going.' He said he **was going**.
 'She's passed her test.' He told me she **had passed** her test.
 'My father died when I was six.' She said her father **had died** when she was six.
 'I'll see you later.' She **said she'd** see me later.

The verb also moves 'one tense back' when we are reporting thoughts and feelings.

I didn't know he **was** a teacher. I thought he **worked** in a bank.
 I forgot you **were coming**. Never mind. Come in.
 I didn't realize you **were** here.
 I hoped you **would** call.

- 2 There is no tense change if ...

... the reporting verb is in the present tense (*says*).

'The train will be late.' He says the train **will be** late.
 'I come from Spain.' She says she **comes** from Spain.

... the reported speech is about something that is still true.

'I hate football.' I told him I **hate** football.
 'Rainforests are being destroyed.' She told him that rainforests **are being destroyed**.

- 3 Some modal verbs change.

can → *could* *will* → *would* *may* → *might*

'She can type well.' He told me she **could** type well.
 'I'll help you.' She said she'd help me.
 'I may come.' She said she **might** come.

Other modal verbs don't change.

'You should go to bed.' He told me I **should** go to bed.
 'It might rain.' She said she thought it **might** rain.

Must stays as *must*, or changes to *had to*.

'I **must** go!' He said he **must/had to** go.

12.2 Reporting verbs

- 1 We rarely use *say* with an indirect object.

She said she was going. NOT ~~She said to me ...~~

- 2 *Tell* is always used with an indirect object in reported speech.

She told	me the doctor us her husband	the news.
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- 3 We can use *that* after *say* and *tell*.

He told her (**that**) he would be home late.
 She said (**that**) sales were down from last year.

- 4 Many verbs are more descriptive than *say* and *tell*, for example:

explain promise invite insist admit complain
 warn offer refuse

Sometimes we report the idea, rather than the actual words.

'I'll lend you some money.' He **offered** to lend me some money.
 'I won't help you.' She **refused** to help me.

- 5 There are different verb patterns for reporting ideas.

verb + sb + infinitive

He **told me to go away**.
 They **asked me to teach** them English.
 I **invited her to come**.
 We **encouraged him to apply** for the job.
 She **reminded me to post** her letter.

verb + infinitive

She **promised to help**.
 They **offered to lend** me some money.

verb + that + clause

He **explained that** he would be home late.
 She **complained that** she never had any free time.
 They **admitted that** sales were down that year.
 I **agreed that** it would be best to stop trying.

- 6 We use *tell* for reported statements and reported commands, but the form is different.

Reported statements

He **told me that** he was going.
 She **told them what** had been happening.

Reported commands

He **told me to keep still**. The police **told people to move on**.

- 7 We use *ask* for reported commands and reported questions, but the form is different.

Reported commands

He **asked me to open** my suitcase.
 She **asked me to leave**.

Reported questions

He **asked me what** I did for a living.
 She **asked me why** I had come.

- 8 For negative commands, use *not* before *to*.

He told me **not to tell** anyone.
 The police warned people **not to go out**.

12.3 Reported questions

- 1 The word order in questions is different in reported speech. There is no inversion of subject and auxiliary verb and there is no *do/does/did*.

'Why have you come here?' I asked her **why she had come** here.
 NOT ~~I asked her why had she come.~~

'What time is it?' He wants to know **what time it is**.
 NOT ~~He wants to know what time is it?~~

'Where do you live?' She asked me **where I lived**.
 NOT ~~She asked me where did I live?~~

- 2 If there is no question word (*What, Who, Why, Where, ...*), use *if* or *whether*.

She wants to know **if** she should wear a dress.
 whether

- 3 The rules are the same when we report questions that are thoughts.

I didn't know what was happening.
 I wondered where she'd bought her dress.
 We couldn't understand what they were saying.