

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 thought she was married, but she isn't.
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.

'Rain forests are being destroyed.'
She told him that rain forests are being destroyed.
 'I hate football.'
I told him I hate football.

- 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. |
|----------|---------------------------------------|-----------|

- 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.

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.*

'What time is it?' *He wants to know what time it is.*

'Where do you live?' *She asked me where I lived.*

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

She wants to know

| | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| if | whether |
| she should wear a dress. | |

- 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.