





# **THE SEQUENCE OF TENSES & THE REPORTED SPEECH**

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- The sequence of tenses is a dependence of the tense form of the predicate in a subordinate clause on the tense form of the predicate in its principal clause.

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- The rules mainly concern object clauses depending on principal clauses with the predicate verb in one of the past tenses, though it holds true also for some other subordinate clauses (such as subject, predicative and appositive ones).
  - The rules are as follows:

**a present (or future) tense in the principal clause  
may be followed by any tense in the subordinate  
object clause:**

I know  
I say  
I am just saying  
I have always  
known  
I've just been  
telling her  
I shall tell her

(t  
hat)

he plays tennis well.  
he is playing tennis in the park.  
he has played two games today.  
he has been playing tennis since morning.

he played tennis yesterday.  
he was playing tennis when the storm began.  
he had played two games before the storm  
began.  
he had been playing tennis for some time  
when the storm began.


he will play tennis in summer.  
he will be playing tennis all day long.  
he will have played some games before you  
return.  
he will have been playing tennis for some  
time before you come.

2) a past tense in the principal clause is followed  
by a past tense in the subordinate object clause.

I knew	(
I said	
I was just	
saying	
I had	
never known	
She had	tha
been telling	
	t)

he played tennis well.
he was playing tennis in the park.
he had played two games that day.
he had been playing tennis since morning.
he had played tennis the day before.
he had been playing when the storm began.
he had played two games before the storm.
he had been playing tennis for some time before
the storm.
he would play tennis in summer.
he would be playing tennis all day long.
he would have played some games by the time
you returned.
he would have been playing tennis for more than
an hour before you came.

- **The rules of the sequence of tenses concern subordinate clauses dependent not only on the predicate of the principal clause but also on any part expressed by a verb or verbal:**
- I received from her a letter *saying* that she *was passing* through Paris and *would like to have a chat* with me.
- She smiled again, *sure* that I *should come up*.
- She turned her head slightly, well *aware* that he *was watching* her.

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- **In complex sentences containing more than two subordinate clauses the choice of the tense form for each of them depends on the tense form of the clause to which it is subordinated:**
  - I guess you *told* him where they *had come* from and why they *were hiding*.
  - As far as I *can see* he *did not realize* that very soon all *would be over*.
  - **Besides the complex sentences described above the rules of the sequence of tenses are also found in all types of clauses and simple sentences reproducing inner speech (conventional direct speech).**




# The rules of the sequence of tenses are not observed in the following cases

- 1) when the subordinate clause describes the so-called general truth, or something which the speaker thinks to be one.
- Up to then Roy never realized that our Solar system *is* but a tiny speck in the infinite Universe.
- The other day I read in a book that everything alive *consists* mostly of water.
- She was very young and - and ignorant of what life really *is*.



- 2) when the subordinate clause describes actions referring to the actual present, future, or past time, which usually occurs in dialogues or in newspaper, radio, or TV reports.
- Margaret, I was saying to you - and I beg you to listen to me – that as far as I *have known* Mrs. Erlynne, she *has conducted* herself well.
- “Before the flier crashed,” the operator said ten minutes later, “he gave me information. He told me there *are* still a few men alive in these mountains.”
- I did not know he *will be* here tomorrow.

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- 3) when the predicate verb of the subordinate clause is one of the modal verbs having no past tense forms.
  - She said I *must come* at once.
  - I thought you *should come* too.

# REPORTED SPEECH

- We use the indirect (reported speech) when we are telling someone what other person says or said.
- The tense of the reporting verb ( say, tell, ask...) often affects the tense of the reported statement:

e.g. He says: “The campaign is a great success”. D

He says (that) the campaign is a great success. I

e.g. He said: “The campaign is a great success”. D

He said (that) the campaign was a great success. I

# The change of tenses

- When the reporting verb is in a past tense, the following changes may occur in the reported sentence:

Direct speech		Indirect speech
<i>I. Present Tenses</i>		
Present Simple	→	Past Simple
Present Progressive	→	Past Progressive
Present Perfect	→	Past Perfect
Present Perfect Progressive	→	Past Perfect Progressive
<i>II. Past Tenses</i>		
Past Simple	→	Past Perfect
Past Progressive	→	Past Perfect Progressive
Past Perfect	→	Past Perfect
<i>III. Future Simple</i>		
Future Simple	→	Future-in-the-Past
Future Perfect	→	Future-in-the-Past Perfect

# People, places, times and things

**People** I → he/she

you → me

my → his/her

your → mine

**Place** here → there

**Times** now → then, at the time

today → that day, on Monday

yesterday → the day before, the previous day

tomorrow → the next day, the following day

this afternoon → that afternoon

last week → the week before, the previous week

next week → the week after, the following week

a few days ago → a few days before

**Things** this project → that project

# Modal verbs

**Will** → **Would**  
**Can** → **Could**  
**May** → **Might**  
**Must** → **Must or had to**

**Could have done** →

**Might have done** →

**Should have done** →

**Need't have done** →

**Do not change**



# ***CHANGES OF ADVERBIALS, DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS AND SOME OTHER WORDS***

today, tonight	→ that day, that night
here	→ there
now	→ then/at that time/right away/at the moment/ immediately
this, these	→ that, those
tonight/this evening	→ that night/evening
yesterday	→ the day before/the previous day
the day before yesterday	→ 2 days before/previously
ago	→ before
2 years ago	→ 2 years before/previously
last night, week, month, etc.	→ the night, week, etc., before/the previous night, week
tomorrow	→ the following/the next day/the day after
the day after tomorrow	→ in two days' time
next week/year, etc.	→ the following/the next week/year, etc.



# Time and place changes

<i>Here</i>	→	<i>there</i>
<i>This</i>	→	<i>that</i>
<i>These</i>	→	<i>those</i>
<i>Now</i>	→	<i>then / at that moment</i>
<i>Today</i>	→	<i>that day</i>
<i>Yesterday</i>	→	<i>the day before / the previous day</i>
<i>A year ago</i>	→	<i>a year before</i>
<i>Last night</i>	→	<i>the previous night</i>
<i>Tonight</i>	→	<i>that night</i>

*Adverb changes depend on the context. It is not always necessary to make these changes, especially in spoken Indirect Speech.*

# Exception!

We do not change tense if the information is still true.

*e.g. He said that the sky is blue.*

*He said that the sun rises in the east.*

*He said there is always a period of uncertainty after a merger.*

# Say or Tell

- We say something and we tell somebody  
*e.g. John said he was satisfied with the project.*  
*John told me he was satisfied with the project.*
- Never use TO between tell and object

## Other Reporting Verbs

Verb + -ing    **admit, deny, mention, propose, suggest...**

Verb + to infinitive    **agree, ask, demand, decide, offer...**

Verb + that clause    **admit, claim, promise, confirm...**

*e.g. He said: "I didn't do that."*

*He denied doing that.*

# Reporting Questions

Mind the word order!

## 1. WH-questions:

reporting verb + WH-word + subject + main verb

e.g. *Where **is it?***

*He asked me where **it was.***

*When **will** the goods **arrive?***

*They asked me **when** the goods **would arrive.***

*What time **does** the train **leave?***

*They wanted to know when the train **left.***

# Reporting Questions

Mind the word order!

## 2. Yes/ No Questions

reporting verb + **IF/ WHETHER** + subject  
+ main  
verb

e.g. ***Do you speak French?***

*She asked me **if I spoke French.***

***Are you going to pay in cash?***

*He asked me **whether I was going to pay in cash.***

# Reporting Commands and Requests

Reporting verb + subject + to/ not to + infinitive

e.g. *Take us to the airport.*

*She **told** the driver **to take** us to the airport.*

e.g. *Please don't wait for me, I'll come along later.'*

*He **asked** us **not to wait**.*

# Reporting Statements:

- 1 'I have something to show you,' I said to her.
- 2 'Nothing grows in my garden. It never gets any sun,' she said.
- 3 'I'm going away tomorrow, mother,' he said.
- 4 'I've been in London for a month but so far I haven't had time to visit the Tower,' said Rupert.
- 5 'It isn't so foggy today as it was yesterday,' I remarked.
- 6 'We have a lift but very often it doesn't work,' they said.
- 7 'I've no idea what the time is but I'll dial 8081 and find out,' said his daughter.
- 8 He said, 'My wife has just been made a judge.'
- 9 'I'll come with you as soon as I am ready,' she replied.
- 10 'If you let the iron get too hot you will scorch your clothes,' I warned her.



# Reporting questions

- 1 'Why are you looking through the keyhole?' I said.
- 2 'Who put salt in my coffee?' he asked.
- 3 'Which of you knows how to make Irish stew?' said the chief cook
- 4 'Why did you travel first class?' I asked him.
- 5 'How can I run in high-heeled shoes?' she enquired.
- 6 'Who owns this revolver?' said the detective.
- 7 'Have you done this sort of work before?' said his new employer
- 8 'Do you see what I see, Mary?' said the young man.
- 9 'Are you leaving today or tomorrow morning?' said his secretary.
- 10 'Will you go on strike when the others do?' the shop steward asked him.

# Reporting Commands and Requests

- 1 'Open the safe!' the raiders ordered the bank clerk .
- 2 'Please do as I say,' he begged me.
- 3 'Don't miss your train,' she warned them.
- 4 'Make a list of what you want,' she told us.
- 5 'Look at the paper,' he said to her.
- 6 'Have confidence in me,' urged the doctor.
- 7 'Wait for me at the bridge,' said the young man.
- 8 'Don't go near the water, children,' she said.
- 9 'Search the house,' said the police sergeant.
- 10 'Don't make mountains out of molehills,' he said