

Explanations

With tense changes

- **Summary of tense changes**

Tenses move back in time after a past tense reporting verb.

'I agree.' Peter said **he agreed**.

'I'm leaving.' Jane said **she was leaving**.

But the past perfect remains the same.

'No, I hadn't forgotten.' Greg said that **he hadn't forgotten**.

For Modals (*can, may, must, should*) see Lesson 16.

- **Main verb changes**

In complex sentences, only the first verb is changed.

'I was walking home when I saw the accident.'

James said he **had been walking** home when he saw the accident.

- **Reference words**

Some words referring to people, places and time change in

indirect

speech, because the point of reference changes.

*'I'll see **you here tomorrow**, Jack,'* said Mary.

Mary told Jack she would see **him there the next day**.

*'I gave **you this yesterday**.'*

John said he had given **it to her the day before**.

Other words of this kind appear in the Practice section.

Without tense changes change.

- **Present tense reports**

If the reporting verb is in the present tense, **there is no**

Brenda **says** she's arriving at about 6.00.

- **Past tense reports**

If the reported words are 'always true', there is no change.

Harry told me that **he still likes you**.

If a message is being repeated immediately, there is no change.

Mary said **she's too busy to come**.

Questions

- **Reporting questions**

Yes/No questions are reported using *if*. The verb does not have a

question form, but has the form of a normal statement.
There is no question mark.

'Do you like hamburgers?'

Charles asked me if I liked hamburgers.

Wh- questions are reported with the question word. The verb has the form of a normal statement. There is no question mark.

'Where are we going?' I asked Sue where we were going.

- **Reporting polite questions**

We can use a phrase like *Could you tell me* or *Do you know* to ask for information in a polite way. Note the word order.

'Where is the station?' 'Could you tell me where the station is?'

When we report this kind of question we use *ask* and the usual tense change rules.

I asked him where the station was.

Commands and requests

- **Commands are reported with *tell* and the infinitive.**

'Go away!' He told me to go away.

- Requests are reported with *ask* and the infinitive.

'Please help me.' He asked her to help him.

Reporting verbs

- **Say or tell?**

We *say* something and we *tell* somebody.

I said I could meet you this evening, but I'm really busy.

I told you I could meet you this evening, but I'm really busy.

We can use *to* after *say*, but we never use *to* between *tell* and the object.

I said to him that I'd meet him this evening.

- **Other reporting verbs**

Exercises 8 and 9 in the Practice section use some other common reporting verbs. The meaning and grammar of each verb can be found in a good dictionary and should be learned. For example:

She suggested going to the beach. (suggest + -ing form)

She offered to give me a lift. (offer + infinitive)

She reminded me to call my mother. (remind + object + infinitive)

Paraphrase

It is often impossible or unnecessary to report every word spoken.

'Excuse me, do you think you could tell me the time?'

He asked me what the time was.