

30 The passive voice

302 Form

A The passive of an active tense is formed by putting the verb to be into the same tense as the active verb and adding the past participle of the active verb. The subject of the active verb becomes the 'agent' of the passive verb. The agent is very often not mentioned. When it is mentioned it is preceded by *by* and placed at the end of the clause:

This tree was planted by my grandfather.

B Examples of present, past and perfect passive tenses:

Active We keep the butter here.

Passive The butter is kept here.

Active They broke the window.

Passive The window was broken.

Active People have seen wolves in the streets.

Passive Wolves have been seen in the streets.

C The passive of continuous tenses requires the present continuous forms of to be, which are not otherwise much used:

Active They are repairing the bridge.

Passive The bridge is being repaired.

Active They were carrying the injured player off the field.

Passive The injured player was being carried off the field.

Other continuous tenses are exceedingly rarely used in the passive, so that sentences such as:

They have/had been repairing the road and

They will/would be repairing the road are not normally put into the passive,

D Auxiliary + infinitive combinations are made passive by using a passive infinitive:

Active You must/should shut these doors.

Passive These doors must/should be shut.

Active They should/ought to have told him.

(perfect infinitive active)

Passive He should/ought to have been told.

(perfect infinitive passive)

E Other infinitive combinations

Verbs of liking/loving/wanting/wishing etc. + object + infinitive form their passive with the passive infinitive:

Active He wants someone to take photographs.

Passive He wants photographs to be taken.

With verbs of command/request/advice/invitation + indirect object + infinitive we form the passive by using the passive form of the main verb:

Active He invited me to go.

Passive I was invited to go.

But with advise/beg/order/recommend/urge + indirect object + infinitive + object we can form the passive in two ways: by making the main verb passive, as above, or by advise etc. + that, should + passive infinitive:

Active He urged the Council to reduce the rates.

Passive The Council was/were urged to reduce the rates or

He urged that the rates should be reduced.

agree/be anxious/arrange/be determined/determine/decide/demand + infinitive + object are usually expressed in the passive by that. . . should, as above:

Active He decided to sell the house.

Passive He decided that the house should be sold.

(See also 235.)

F Gerund combinations

advise/insist/propose/recommend/suggest + gerund + object are usually expressed in the passive by that. . . should, as above:

Active He recommended using bullet-proof glass.

Passive He recommended that bullet-proof glass should be used.

(See 235.)

it/they + need + gerund can also be expressed by it/they + need + passive infinitive. Both forms are passive in meaning.

Other gerund combinations are expressed in the passive by the passive gerund:

Active I remember them taking me to the Zoo.

Passive / remember being taken to the Zoo.

303 Active tenses and their passive equivalents

Tense/Verb form	Active voice	Passive voice
Simple present	keeps	is kept
Present continuous	is keeping	is being kept
Simple past	kept	was kept
Past continuous	was keeping	was being kept
Present perfect	has kept	has been kept
Past perfect	had kept	had been kept
Future	will keep	will be kept
Conditional	would keep	would be kept
Perfect conditional	would have kept	would have been kept
Present infinitive	to keep	to be kept
Perfect infinitive	In have kept	to have been kept
Present participle/gerund	keeping	being kept
Perfect participle	having kept	having been kept

B In colloquial speech get is sometimes used instead of be:

The eggs got (= were) broken. You 'll get (= be) sacked if you take any more time off.

C Note that in theory a sentence containing a direct and an indirect object, such as *Someone gave her a bulldog*, could have two passive forms:

She was given a bulldog. A bulldog was given to her.

The first of these is much the more usual, i.e. the indirect object usually becomes the subject of the passive verb. (See also 302 E,F.)

D Questions about the identity of the subject of an active verb are usually expressed by an affirmative (see 55);

What delayed you?

Which leant won?

Questions about the subject of a passive verb are also expressed by an affirmative:

Something was done. ~ What was done?

One of them was sold. ~ Which of them was sold?

Interrogative verbs in active questions may become affirmative verbs in passive questions:

What did they steal? (interrogative)

What was stolen? (affirmative)

Note, however that, when the question refers to the agent, an interrogative verb is necessary:

Who painted it? (affirmative)

Who was it painted by? (interrogative)

304 Uses of the passive

The passive is used:

A When it is not necessary to mention the doer of the action as it is obvious who he is/was/will be:

The rubbish hasn't been collected. The streets are swept every day. Your hand will be X-rayed.

B When we don't know, or don't know exactly, or have forgotten who did the action:

The minister was murdered. My car has been moved! You'll be met at the station. I've been told that. . .

C When the subject of the active verb would be 'people':

He is suspected of receiving stolen goods. (People suspect him of . . .) They are supposed to be living in New York. (People suppose that they are living . . .) (See 245, 306 for infinitive constructions with passive verbs.)

D When the subject of the active sentence would be the indefinite pronoun one: One sees this sort of advertisement everywhere would usually be expressed:

This sort of advertisement is seen everywhere. In colloquial speech we can use the indefinite pronoun you (see 68) and an active verb:

You see this sort of advertisement everywhere. But more formal English requires one + active verb or the more usual passive form.

E When we are more interested in the action than the person who does it:

The house next door has been bought (by a Mr Jones). If, however, we know Mr Jones, we would use the active;

Your/other's friend, Mr Jones, has bought the house next door. Similarly:

A new public library is being built (by our local council) though in more informal English we could use the indefinite pronoun they (see 68) and an active verb:

They are building a new public library while a member of the Council will of course say:

We are/The council is building etc.

F The passive may be used to avoid an awkward or ungrammatical sentence. This is usually done by avoiding a change of subject:

When he arrived home a detective arrested him would be better expressed:

When he arrived home he was arrested (by a detective).

When their mother was ill neighbours looked after the children would be better expressed:

When their mother was ill the children were looked after by neighbours.

The passive is sometimes preferred for psychological reasons. A speaker may use it to disclaim responsibility for disagreeable announcements:

EMPLOYER: Overtime rates are being reduced/will have to be reduced. The active will, of course, be used for agreeable announcements:

I/We are going to increase overtime rates. The speaker may know who performed the action but wish to avoid giving the name. Tom, who suspects Bill of opening his letters, may say tactfully:

This letter has been opened!, instead of *You've opened this letter!*

For the **have** + object + past participle construction, *I had the car resprayed*, see 119.

305 Prepositions with passive verbs

As already noted, the agent, when mentioned, is preceded by by;

Active Dufy painted this picture. Passive This picture was painted by Dufy. Active What

makes these holes? Passive What are these holes made by?

Note, however, that the passive form of such sentences as:

Smoke filled the room. Paint covered the lock. will be:

The room was filled with smoke. The lock was covered with paint. We are dealing here with materials used, not with the agents.

, When a verb + preposition 4- object combination is put into the passive, the preposition will remain immediately after the verb;

Active We must write to him.

Passive He must be written to.

Active You can play with these cubs quite safely.

Passive These cubs can be played with quite safely.

Similarly with verb + preposition/adverb combinations:

Active They threw away the old newspapers.

Passive The old newspapers were thrown away.

Active He looked after the children well.

Passive The children were well looked after.

306 Infinitive constructions after passive verbs

After acknowledge, assume, believe, claim, consider, estimate, feel, find, know, presume, report, say, think, understand etc. (see also 245)

Sentences of the type People consider/know/think etc. that he is . . . have two possible passive forms:

It is considered/known/thought etc. that he is . . .

He is considered/known/thought etc. to be . . . Similarly:

People said that he was jealous of her =

It was said that he was or He was said to be jealous of her. The infinitive construction is the neater of the two. It is chiefly used with to be though other infinitives can sometimes be used: He is thought to have information which will be useful to the police. When the thought concerns a previous action we use the perfect infinitive so that:

People believed that he was ==

It was believed that he was or He was believed to have been . . .

People know that he was =

It is known that he was or He is known to have been . . . This construction can be used with the perfect infinitive of any verb.

B After suppose

1 suppose in the passive can be followed by the present infinitive of any verb but this construction usually conveys an idea of duty and is not therefore the normal equivalent of suppose in the active:

You are supposed to know how to drive = It is your duty to know/Vim should know how to drive though He is supposed to be in Paris could mean either 'He ought to be there' or 'People suppose he is there'-

2 suppose in the passive can similarly be followed by the perfect infinitive of any verb. This construction may convey an idea of duty but very often does not:

You are supposed to have finished = You should have finished but He is supposed to have escaped disguised as a woman = People suppose that he escaped etc.

C Infinitives placed after passive verbs are normally full infinitives:

Active We saw them go out. He made us work. Passive They were seen to go out. We were made to work.

let, however, is used without to:

Active They let us go. Passive We were let go.

D The continuous infinitive can be used after the passive of believe, know, report, say, suppose, think, understand:

He is believed/know/said/supposed/thought to be living abroad = People believe/know/say/suppose/think that he is living abroad. You are supposed to be working = You should be working. The perfect form of the continuous infinitive is also possible:

He is believed to have been waiting for a message = People believed that he was waiting for a message. You are supposed to have been working = You should have been working.

31 Indirect speech

307 Direct and indirect (or reported) speech

There are two ways of relating what a person has said: direct and indirect.

In direct speech we repeat the original speaker's exact words:

He said, 'I have lost my umbrella.'

Remarks thus repeated are placed between inverted commas, and a ' comma or colon is placed immediately before the remark. Direct speech is found in conversations in books, in plays, and in quotations.

In indirect speech we give the exact meaning of a remark or a speech, without necessarily using the speaker's exact words:

He said (that) he had lost his umbrella.

There is no comma after **say** in indirect speech. **that** can usually be omitted after say and tell + object. But it should be kept after other verbs: **complain, explain, object, point out, protest** etc. Indirect speech is normally used when conversation is reported verbally, though direct speech is sometimes employed here to give a more dramatic effect.

When we turn direct speech into indirect, some changes are usually necessary. These are most easily studied by considering statements, questions, and commands separately.

308 Statements in indirect speech: tense changes necessary

A Indirect speech can be introduced by a verb in a present tense: He says that. . . This is usual when we are:

- (a) reporting a conversation that is still going on
- (b) reading a letter and reporting what it says
- (c) reading instructions and reporting them
- (d) reporting a statement that someone makes very often, e.g. Tom says that he'll never get married.

When the introductory verb is in a present, present perfect or future tense we can report the direct speech without any change of tense:

PAUL (phoning from the station): I'm trying to get a taxi.

ANN (to Mary, who is standing beside her): Paul says he is trying to get a taxi.

B But indirect speech is usually introduced by a verb in the past tense. Verbs in the direct speech have then to be changed into a corresponding past tense. The changes are shown in the following table. (The that has been omitted in the last five examples.)

Direct speech	Indirect speech
Simple present	Simple past
'I never ml meat.' he explained	= He explained that he never ate meat.
Present continuous	Past continuous
'I'm waiting/or Ann.' he said	= He said (thai) he was waiting for Ann.
Present perfect	Past perfect
I have found a flat,' he said	= He said (that) he had found a flat.
Present perfect continuous	Past perfect continuous
Hesaid, 'I've been waiting forages'	= He said he had been waiting for ages.
Simple past	Past perfect
I took it home with me,' she said	= She said she had taken it home with her.
Future	Conditional
He said, I will/shall be in Paris m Monday'	= He said he would be in Paris cm Monday.
Future continuous	Conditional continuous
'I will/shall be using the car myself on the 24th,' she said	= She said she'd be using the car herself on the 24th.
But note,	
Conditional	Conditional
I said, 7 would/should like to see it'	= I said I would/should like to see it. (No tense change. See also 227.)

C Note on I/we shall/should

'I/we shall' normally becomes he/she/they would in indirect speech:

I shall be 21 tomorrow,' said Bill = Bill said he would be 21 the following day. But if the sentence is reported by the original speaker, 'I/we shall' can become either I/we should or I/we would, would is the more common.

Similarly 'I/we should' usually becomes he/she/they would in indirect speech:

'If I had the instruction manual I should/would know what to do,'

said Bill =

Bill said that if he had the instructions he would know what to do. But if the sentence is reported by the original speaker 'I/we should' can either remain unchanged or be reported by would- See last example in B above.

309 Past tenses sometimes remain unchanged

A In theory the past tense changes to the past perfect, but in spoken English it is often left unchanged, provided this can be done without causing confusion about the relative times of the actions. For example, He said. 'I loved her' must become He said he had loved her as otherwise there would be a change of meaning. But He said, 'Ann arrived on Monday' could be reported He said Ann arrived/had arrived on Monday.

B The past continuous tense in theory changes to the past perfect continuous but in practice usually remains unchanged except when it refers to a completed action:

She said, 'We were thinking of selling the house but we have decided

not to' =

She said that they had been thinking of selling the house but had decided not to. But He said, 'When I saw them they were playing tennis' = He said that when he saw them they were playing tennis.

C In written English past tenses usually do change to past perfect but there are the following exceptions:

1 Past/Past continuous tenses in time clauses do not normally change:

He said, 'When we were living/lived in Paris . . . ' =

He said that when they were living in Paris . . . The main verb of such sentences can either remain unchanged or become the past perfect:

He said, 'When we were living/lived in Paris we often saw Paul' =

He said that when they were living/lived in Paris they often saw/had often seen Paul.

2 A past tense used to describe a state of affairs which still exists when the speech is reported remains unchanged:

She said, 'I decided not to buy the house because it was on a main road' = She said that she had decided not to buy the house because it was on a main road.

310 Unreal past tenses (subjunctives) in indirect speech

A Unreal past tenses after wish, would rather/sooner and it is time do not change:

'We wish we didn't have to take exams.' said the children = *The children said they wished they didn't have to take exams.*

'Bill wants to go alone,' said Ann, *'but I'd rather he went with a group'* = *Ann said that Bill wanted to go alone but that she 'd rather he went with a group.*

'It's time we began planning our holidays,' he said = *He said that it was time they began planning their holidays.*

B **I/he/she/we/they had better** remains unchanged, **you had better** can remain unchanged or be reported by advise + object + infinitive (see 120):

'The children had better go to bed early,' said Tom = *Tom said that the children had better go to bed early.*

'You'd better not drink the water,' she said = She advised/warned us not to drink the water.

C Conditional sentences types 2 and 3 remain unchanged (see 229):

'If my children were older I would emigrate,' he said = He said that if his children were older he would emigrate.

311 might, ought to, should, would, used to in indirect statements

A might remains unchanged except when used as a request form:

He said, 'Ann might ring today' = He said that Ann might ring (that day).

But 'You might post these for me' he said = He asked me to post them for him. (See 285 for requests.)

B ought to/should for obligation or assumption remains unchanged:

'They ought to/should widen this road,' I said = I said that they ought to/should widen the road. I said,

'I should be back by six' (I assume I will be) = I said I should be back by six.

C But you ought to/you should, if used to express advice rather than obligation, can be reported by advise + object + infinitive, you must can also express advice and be reported similarly.

'You ought to/should/must read the instructions,' said Ann = Ann advised/urged/warned me to read the instructions.

D The advice form 'If I were you I should/would . . .' is normally reported by advise + object + infinitive:

'If I were you I'd wait,' I said = I advised him to wait,

E The request form 'I should/would be (very) grateful if you would . . .' is normally reported by ask + object + infinitive:

'I'd be very grateful if you 'd keep me informed,' he said = He asked me to keep him informed.

F **would** in statements doesn't change. But see 284 for **would** in requests etc.

G **used to** doesn't change:

'I know the place well because I used to live here,' he explained = He explained that he knew the place well because he used to live there.

(For **could**, see 312; for **must**, see 325.)

312 **could in indirect statements**

(For **could** interrogative, see 283-4.)

A **could** for ability

1 **could** for present ability does not change:

'I can't/couldn't stand on my head.' he said = He said he *couldn't stand on his head.*

2 **could** for future ability can remain unchanged or be reported by **would be able**:

He said, *'I could do it tomorrow'* = He said he *could do it/would be able to do it the next day.*

could in type 2 conditional sentences is reported similarly:

'If I had the tools I could mend it,' he said = He said that if he had the tools he *could/would be able to mend it. would be able here implies that the supposition may be fulfilled.* (Perhaps he'll be able to borrow tools.)

could in type 3 conditional sentences is reported unchanged.

could for past ability can remain unchanged or be reported by **had been able**:

'I could read when I was three.' she boasted = She boasted that she *could/had been able to read when she was three.*

B **could** for permission

In type 2 conditional sentences **could** can remain unchanged or be reported by **would be allowed to**:

'If I paid my fine I could walk out of prison today,' he said = He said that if he paid his fine he *could/would be allowed to walk etc.*

could in the past can remain unchanged or be reported by **was/were allowed to** or **had been allowed to**:

He said, 'When I was a boy I could stay up as long as I liked' = He said that when he was a boy he *could/was allowed to stay up* or He said that as a boy he *was/had been allowed etc.*

313 **Indirect speech: pronoun and adjective**

Pronouns and possessive adjectives usually change from first or second to third person except when the speaker is reporting his own words:

He said, *'I've forgotten the combination of my safe'* = He said that he had forgotten the combination of his safe.

I said, *'I like my new house'* = I said that I liked my new house, (speaker reporting his own words)

Sometimes a noun must be inserted to avoid ambiguity: Tom said. 'He came in through the window' would not normally be reported Tom said he had come in through the window as this might imply that Tom himself had come in this way; but if we use a noun there can be no confusion:

Tom said that the man/burglar/cat etc, had come in . . .

Pronoun changes may affect the verb:

He says. 'I know her' = He says he knows her.

He says, 'I shall be there' = He says that he will be there.

B **this** and **these**

this used in time expressions usually becomes **that**:

He said, 'She is coming this week' =

He said that she was coming that week. Otherwise **this** and **that** used as adjectives usually change to **the**:

He said, 'I bought this pearl/these pearls for my mother' =

He said that he had bought the pearl/pearls for his mother. **this**, **these** used as pronouns can become **it**, **they/them**:

He showed me two bullets. 'I found these embedded in the panelling,'

he said =

He said he had found them embedded in the panelling.

He said, 'We will discuss this tomorrow' = He said that they would discuss it/the waiter the next day. this, these (adjectives or pronouns), used to indicate choice or to distinguish some things from others, can become the one(s) near him etc., or the statement can be reworded:

'I'll have this (one),' he said to me = He said he would have the one near him or

He pointed to/touched/showed me the one he wanted.

314 Expressions of time and place in indirect speech

A Adverbs and adverbial phrases of time change as follows:

Direct	Indirect
<i>today</i>	<i>that day</i>
<i>yesterday</i>	<i>the day before</i>
<i>the day before yesterday</i>	<i>two days before</i>
<i>tomorrow</i>	<i>the next day/the following day</i>
<i>the day after tomorrow</i>	<i>in two days' time</i>
<i>next week/year etc.</i>	<i>the following week/year etc.</i>
<i>last week/year etc.</i>	<i>the previous week/year etc.</i>
<i>a year etc. ago</i>	<i>a year before/the previous year</i>

'I saw her the day before yesterday,' he said = He said he'd seen her two days before.

'I'll do it tomorrow,' he promised = He promised that he would do it the next day.

'I'm starting the day after tomorrow, mother.' he said = He told his mother that he was starting in two days' time.

She said, 'My father died a year ago' = She said that her father had died a year before/the previous year.

B But if the speech is made and reported on the same day these time changes are not necessary:

At breakfast this morning he said. 'I'll be very busy today' = At breakfast this morning he said that he would be very busy today.

C Logical adjustments are of course necessary if a speech is reported one/two days after it is made. On Monday Jack said to Tom:

I'm leaving the day after tomorrow.

If Tom reports this speech on the next day (Tuesday) he will probably say:

Jack said he was leaving tomorrow.

If he reports it on Wednesday, he will probably say:

Jack said he was leaving today.

D **here** can become **there** but only when it is clear what place is meant:

At the station he said, 'I'll be here again tomorrow' = He said that he 'd be there again the next day.

*Usually **here** has to be replaced by some phrase:*

She said, 'You can sit here, Tom' = She told Tom that he could sit beside her etc. But

He said, 'Come here, boys' would normally be reported:

He called the boys.

315 Infinitive and gerund constructions in indirect speech

A **agree/refuse/offer/promise/threaten** + infinitive can sometimes be used instead of say (that):

ANN: Would you wait half an hour? TOM: All right = Tom agreed to wait or Tom said he would wait.

ANN: Would you lend me another £50?

TOM: No. I won't lend you any more money = Tom refused to lend her any more money or Tom said that he wouldn't lend etc.

PAUL: I'll help you if you like, Ann = Paul offered to help her or

Paul said that he'd help her. (See also shall I?, 318.)

ANN: I'll pay you back next week. Really I will. = Ann promised to pay him back the following week or

Ann said that she would pay him back or

Ann assured him that she would pay him back.

KIDNAPPERS: If you don't pay the ransom at once we'll kill your daughter = The kidnappers threatened to kill his daughter if he didn't pay the ransom at once or The kidnappers said that they would kill etc:

(For object + infinitive constructions, see 320.)

B **accuse . . . of/admit/apologize for/deny/insist on** + gerund can sometimes be used instead of say (that):

TOM took the money!' might be reported

He accused me of taking the money.

'I stole/didn't steal it' might be reported

I admitted/denied stealing it.

'I'm sorry I'm late,' he said might be reported

He apologized for being late or

He said, he was sorry he was late.

BILL: Let me pay/or myself.

TOM: Certainly not! I'll pay! might be reported

Tom insisted on paying.

316 **say, tell and alternative introductory verbs**

A say and tell with direct speech

1 say can introduce a statement or follow it:

Tom said, 'I've just heard the news' or 'I've just heard the news,' Tom said. Inversion of say and noun subject is possible when say follows the statement:

'I've just heard the news,' said Tom. say + to + person addressed is possible, but this phrase must follow the direct statement; it cannot introduce it:

'I'm leaving at once,' Tom said to me. Inversion is not possible here.

2 tell requires the person addressed:

Tell me. He told us. I'll tell Tom. except with tell lies/stories/the truth, when the person addressed need not be mentioned:

He told (me) lies. I'll tell (you) a story. tell used with direct speech must be placed after the direct statement:

'I'm leaving at once,' Tom told me.

Inversion is not possible with tell.

B **say** and **tell** with indirect speech

Indirect statements are normally introduced by say, or tell + object. say 4- to + object is possible but much less usual than tell + object:

He said he'd just heard the news.

He told me that he'd just heard the news.

Note also **tell . . . how/about**:

He told us how he had crossed the mountains.

He told us about crossing the mountains.

He told us about his journeys.

(For say and tell with indirect commands, see 320-1.)

Other useful verbs are:

add*	complain*	point out
admit*	deny*	promise*
answer*	explain*	protest*
argue*	grumble*	remark*
assure + object	object*	remind + object
boast*	observe*	reply*

These can be used with direct or indirect speech. With direct speech they follow direct statements;

'It won't cost more,' Tom assured us.

Starred verbs can be inverted, provided the subject is a noun:

'But it will take longer,' Bill objected/objected Bill.

'It'll cost too much,' Jack grumbled/grumbled Jack. They can all introduce indirect statements that should be placed after the verb:

Tom assured us that it wouldn't cost more. But Bill objected/pointed out that it would take longer.

D **murmur, mutter, shout, stammer, whisper** can precede or follow direct statements or questions. With noun subjects the verb can be inverted as shown above:

'You're late,' whispered Tom/Tom whispered.

They can introduce indirect statements, that is usually necessary:

Tom whispered that we were late.

There are, of course, a lot of other verbs describing the voice or the tone of voice, e.g. *bark, growl, roar, scream, shriek, snarl, sneer, yell*. But these are more common with direct than indirect speech.

317 Questions in indirect speech

Direct question: *He said, 'Where is she going?'*

Indirect question: *He asked where she was going.*

When we turn direct questions into indirect speech, the following changes are necessary.

Tenses, pronouns and possessive adjectives, and adverbs of time and place change as in statements.

The interrogative form of the verb changes to the affirmative form. The question mark (?) is therefore omitted in indirect questions:

He said, 'Where does she live?' = He asked where she lived.

With affirmative verb questions (see 55) this change is obviously not necessary:

'Who lives next door?' he said = He asked who lived next door.

'What happened?' she said = She asked what had happened.

If the introductory verb is *.say*, it must be changed to *avert of inquiry*, e.g. *ask, inquire, wonder, want to know* etc.:

He said, 'Where is the station?' = He asked where the station was.

ask, inquire, wonder can also be used in direct speech. They are then usually placed at the end of the sentence:

'Where is the station?' he inquired.

C *ask* can be followed by the person addressed (indirect object):

He asked, 'What have you got in your bag?' =

He asked (me) what I had got in my bag. But *inquire, wonder, want to know* cannot take an indirect object, so if we wish to report a question where the person addressed is mentioned, we must use *ask*:

He said. 'Mary, when is the next train?' =

He asked Mary when the next train was. If we use *inquire, wonder* or *want to know* we must omit Mary.

D If the direct question begins with a question word (when, where, who, how, why etc.) the question word is repeated in the indirect question:

He said, 'Why didn't you put on the brake?' =

He asked (her) why she hadn't put on the brake.

She said, 'What do you want?' =

She asked (them) what they wanted.

E If there is no question word, *if* or *whether* must be used:

'Is anyone there?' he asked = He asked if/whether anyone was there.

1 Normally we can use either *if* and *whether*, *if* is the more usual:

'Do you know Bill?' he said =

He asked if/whether I knew Bill.

'Did you see the accident?' the policeman asked =

The policeman asked if/whether I had seen the accident.

2 *whether* can emphasize that a choice has to be made:

'Do you want to go by air or sea?' the travel agent asked = The travel agent asked whether I wanted to go by air or by sea. Note whether or not:

'Do you want to insure your luggage or not?' he asked == He asked whether or not I wanted to insure my luggage or He asked if I wanted to insure my luggage or not.

3 whether + infinitive is possible after wonder, want to know:

'Shall/Should I wait for them or go on?' he wondered =

He wondered whether to wait for them or go on or

He wondered whether he should wait for them or go on.

inquire + whether + infinitive is possible but less usual.

(For whether + infinitive, see also 242 B.)

4 whether is neater if the question contains a conditional clause as otherwise there would be two ifs:

'If you get the job will you move to York?' Bill asked = Bill asked whether, if I got the job, I'd move to York.

Questions beginning shall I/we? in indirect speech Questions beginning shall I/we? can be of four kinds.

Speculations or requests for information about a future event:

'Shall I ever see them again?' he wondered. 'When shall I know the result of the test?' she asked.

These follow the ordinary rule about shall/will. Speculations are usually introduced by wonder:

He wondered if he would ever see them again. She asked when she would know the result of the test.

Requests for instructions or advice:

'What shall I do with it?' = 'Tell me what to do with it.' These are expressed in indirect speech by ask, inquire etc., with should or the be + infinitive construction. Requests for advice are normally reported by should:

'Shall we post it, sir?' he said =

He asked the customer if they were to post/if they should post it.

'What shall I say, mother?' she said =

She asked her mother what she should say. (request for advice) When a choice is required we normally use whether in indirect speech. whether + infinitive is sometimes possible (see also 317 E):

'Shall I lock the car or leave it unlocked?' he said =

He asked whether he should/was to lock the car or leave it unlocked or He asked whether to lock the car etc.

Offers:

'Shall I bring you some tea?' could be reported

He offered to bring me some tea.

Note that 'Would you like me to bring you some tea?' and 'I'll bring you some tea if you like' could also be reported by offer.

Suggestions:

'Shall we meet at the theatre?' could be reported He suggested meeting at the theatre.

Questions beginning will you/would you/could you?

These may be ordinary questions, but may also be requests, invitations, or, very occasionally, commands (see 284, 286, 320):

He said. 'Will you be there tomorrow?' (ordinary question) =

He asked if she would be there the next day.

'Will you stand still!' he shouted = He shouted at me to stand still!"^!

He told/ordered me to stand still.

'Would you like to live in New York?' he asked =

He asked if I would like to live in New York.

'Will you file these letters, please?' he said =

He asked/told me to/lie the letters.

'Would you like a lift?' said Ann = Ann offered me a lift. 'Would you like to come round/Could you come round for a drink?'

he said =

He invited me (to come) round for a drink.

'Could you live on £25 a week?' he asked =

He asked if I could live on £25 a week.

'Could/Would you give me a hand?' she said =

She asked us to give her a hand.

'Could/Would you show me the photos?' she said =

She asked me to show her the photos or She asked to see the photos. (For can/could/may/might + I/we?, see 283. For requests for permission, see 131.)

320 Commands, requests, advice in indirect speech

Direct command: He said, 'Lie down, Tom.'

Indirect command: He told Tom to lie down.

Indirect commands, requests, advice are usually expressed by a verb of command/request/advice + object + infinitive (= the object -i- infinitive construction).

A The following verbs can be used: advise, ask, beg, command, encourage, entreat, forbid, implore, invite, order, recommend, remind, request, tell, urge, warn.

(Note that say is not included in this list. For indirect commands/requests reported by say, see 321.)

He said, 'Get your coat, Tom!' = He told Tom to get his coat. 'You had better hurry, Bill!' she said = She advised Bill to hurry.

B Negative commands, requests etc. are usually reported by not + infinitive:

'Don't swim out too far, boys,' I said =

I warned/told the boys not to swim out too far. forbid can also be used for prohibitions, but is more common in the passive than in the active.

C Verbs in A above require object + infinitive, i.e. they must be followed directly by the person addressed without preposition (see also 89). The person addressed is often not mentioned in direct commands, requests

etc.: He said, 'Go away!' When reporting such commands/requests therefore we must add a noun

or pronoun:

He told me/him/her/us/them/the children to go away. ask diners from the other verbs in A in that it can also be followed directly by the infinitive of certain verbs, e.g. see, speak to, talk to:

He said, 'Could I see Tom, please?' =

He asked to see Tom. (See also 283.) But this is quite different from the ask + object + infinitive type of request.

Both ask and beg can be followed by the passive infinitive:

'Do, please, send me to a warm climate,' he asked/begged = He asked/begged us to send him to a warm climate or He asked/begged to be sent to a warm climate.

Examples of indirect commands, requests, advice Note that direct commands are usually expressed by the imperative, but that requests and advice can be expressed in a variety of ways (see 283-7):

'If I were you, I'd stop taking tranquillizers,' I said =

I advised him to stop taking tranquillizers. (See 311 D.)

'Why don't you take off your coat?' he said =

He advised me to take off my coat. (See also 287.)

'Would/Could you show me your passport, please?' he said =

He asked me to show him my passport or

He asked me for/He asked to see my passport.

'You might post some letters for me,' said my boss =

My boss asked me to post some letters for him.

'If you'd just sign the register,' said the receptionist =

The receptionist asked him to sign the register.

'Do sit down,' said my hostess =

My hostess asked/invited me to sit down.

'Please, please don't take any risks,' said his wife =

His wife begged/implored him not to take any risks.

'Forget all about this young man,' said her parents: 'don't see him again or answer his letters' =

Her parents ordered her to forget all about the young man and told her not to see him again or answer his letters or

She was ordered to forget all about the young man and forbidden to see him again or answer his letters, (passive construction)

'Don't forget to order the wine,' said Mrs Pitt =

Mrs Pitt reminded her husband to order the wine.

'Try again,' said Ann's friends encouragingly =
 Ann's friends encouraged her to fry again.
 'Go on, apply for the job,' said Jack =
 Jack urged/encouraged me to apply for the job.
 'You had better not leave your car unlocked,' said my friends;
 'there's been a lot of stealing from cars' = ' My friends warned me not to leave my car
 unlocked as there had been a lot of stealing from cars.
 will you . . . sentences are normally treated as requests and reported by ask:
*'Will all persons not travelling please go ashore,' he said = He asked at! persons not
 travelling to go ashore. But if a will you sentence is spoken sharply or irritably, and the '
 please is omitted, it might be reported by tell or order;*
'Will you be quiet!/Be quiet, will you!' he said = He told/ordered us to be quiet.

321 Other ways of expressing indirect commands

A say/tell + subject + be + infinitive:
 He said/told me that I was to wait. This is a possible alternative to the tell + infinitive
 construction, so that:
 He said, 'Don't open the door' could be reported
 He told me not to open the door or
 he said that I wasn't to open the door. The be + infinitive construction is particularly useful in
 the following cases:
 1 When the command is introduced by a verb in the present tense:
 He says, 'Meet me at the station' = He says that we are to meet him at the station. (He tells
 us to meet him would be much less likely.)
 2 When the command is preceded by a clause (usually of time or condition):
 He said, 'If she leaves the house follow her' could be reported He said that if she left the
 house I was to follow her. He told me to follow her if she left the house would be equally
 possible here but note that if we use the tell + infinitive construction we must change the
 order of the sentence so as to put the command first. Sometimes this would result in a rather
 confusing sentence. For example, the request If you see Ann tell her to ring me would
 become He told me to tell Ann to ring him if I saw her. Such requests can only be reported by
 the be + infinitive construction:
 He said that if I saw Ann I was to tell her to ring him.
 B say/tell (+ that) + subject + should
 1 say or tell with a should construction normally indicates advice rather than command:
 He said, 'If your brakes are bad don't drive so fast' =
 He said/told me that if my brakes were bad I shouldn't drive so fast
 or
 He advised me not to drive so fast if my brakes were bad. (Note
 change of order here, as with tell + infinitive above.)
 2 Advice can also be expressed by advise, recommend and urge + that. . . should. This is
 particularly useful in the passive (see 302 E):
 'I advise cancelling the meeting,' he said s He advised that the meeting should be cancelled.
 3 command and order can also be used with should or a passive infinitive;
 'Evacuate the area!' ordered the superintendent =
 The superintendent ordered that everyone should leave the area or
 ordered that the area should be evacuated or
 ordered the area to be evacuated.
 4 Note that when an indirect command is expressed by an object + infinitive construction, as
 in 320, there is normally the idea that the
 person who is to obey the command is addressed directly. But when the command is
 expressed by the be + infinitive construction (A above) or by a should construction (B3 above)
 the recipient of the command need not necessarily be addressed directly. The command may
 be conveyed to him by a third person.

322 let's, let us, let him/them in indirect speech

let's
 let's usually expresses a suggestion and is reported by suggest in

indirect speech:

He said, 'Let's leave the case at the station'

would be reported:

He suggested leaving the case at the station or He suggested that they/we should leave the case at the station.

(See 289 for constructions with suggest.) He said, 'Let's stop now and finish it later'

would be reported:

He suggested stopping then and finishing it later or He suggested that they/we should stop then and finish it later.

Similarly in the negative:

He said, 'Let's not say anything about it till we hear the facts' = He suggested not saying anything/saying nothing about it till they heard the facts or He suggested that they shouldn't say anything till they heard the facts.

But let's not used alone in answer to an affirmative suggestion is often reported by some phrase such as opposed the idea/was against it/objected. So that we could report:

'Let's sell the house,' said Tom. 'Lei's not,' said Ann by Tom suggested selling the house hut Ann was against it.

(For other suggestion forms, see 289.) ; let's/let us sometimes expresses a call to action. It is then usually

reported by urge/advise + object + infinitive (see also 320):

The strike leader said, 'Let's show the bosses that we are united' = The strike leader urged the workers to show the bosses that they were united.

323 let him/them

In theory let him/them expresses a command. But very often the speaker has no authority over the person who is to obey the command;

7('s not my business,' said the postman. 'Let the government do something about it.'

Here, the speaker is not issuing a command but expressing an obligation. Sentences of this type are therefore normally reported by ought/should:

He said that it wasn't his business and that the government ought to/should do something about it.

2 Sometimes, however, let him/them does express a command. It is then usually reported by say + be + infinitive (see 321):

'Let the boys clear up this mess,' said the headmaster -= The headmaster said that the boys were to clear up the mess. 'Let the guards be armed,' he ordered = He ordered that the guards should be armed.

3 Sometimes let him/them is more a suggestion than a command. In such cases it is usually reported by suggest, or say + should (see 289):

She said, 'Let them go to their consul. He'll be able to help them' = She suggested their/them going to their consul etc. or She suggested that they should go to their consul or She said that they should go to their consul.

4 let him/them can also indicate the speaker's indifference:

'The neighbours will complain,' said Ann.

'Let them (complain),' said Tom = Tom expressed indifference or

Tom said he didn't mind (if they complained).

C let there be

Here the speaker could be ordering, advising, urging or begging:

'Let there be no reprisals,' said the widow of the murdered man = The widow urged/begged that there should be no reprisals.

D let is also an ordinary verb meaning allow/permit:

'Let him come with us, mother; I'll take care of him,' I said =

I asked my mother to let him come with us and promised to take care of him.

323 Exclamations and yes and no

A Exclamations usually become statements in indirect speech. The exclamation mark disappears.

1 Exclamations beginning What <a>. . . or How ... can be reported

(a) by exclaim/say that:

He said, 'What a dreadful idea!' or 'How dreadful.' = He exclaimed that it was a dreadful idea/was dreadful

or (b) by give an exclamation of delight/disgust/horror/relief/surprise etc-

Alternatively, if the exclamation is followed by an action we can use the construction (c) with an exclamation of delight/disgust etc. + he/she etc. + verb.

2 Other types of exclamation, such as Good! Marvellous! Splendid! Heavens! Oh! Ugh! etc. can be reported as in (b) or (c) above:

'Good!' he exclaimed =

He gave an exclamation of pleasure/satisfaction.

'Ugh!' she exclaimed, and turned the programme off =

With an exclamation of disgust she turned the programme off.

Note also:

He said, 'Thank you!' = He thanked me. ;' He said, 'Curse this fog.' = He cursed the fog.

He said, 'Good luck!' = He wished me luck.

He said, 'Happy Christmas.' = He wished me a happy Christmas.

He said, 'Congratulations'⁹ = He congratulated me.

He said, 'Liar!' = He called me a liar.

He said, 'Damn!' etc. = He swore.

The notice said: WELCOME TO WALES.' = '• The notice welcomed visitors to Wales.

ri

yes and no are expressed in indirect speech by subject + appropriate ' auxiliary verb:

He said, 'Can you swim?' and I said 'No' = He asked (me) if I could swim and I said I couldn't.

He said, 'Will you have time to do it?' and I said 'Yes' = He asked if I would have time to do it and I said that I would.

324 Indirect speech: mixed types

Direct speech may consist of statement + question, question + command, command + statement, or all three together.

Normally each requires its own introductory verb:

'I don't know the way. Do you?' he asked . = ; He said he didn't know the way and asked her if she did/if she knew it.

'Someone's coming,' he said. 'Get behind the screen' =

He said that someone was coming and told me to get behind the screen.

'I'm going shopping. Can I get you anything?' she said = " She said she was going shopping and asked if she could get me ; anything.

'I can hardly hear the radio,' he said. 'Could you turn it up?' =

He said he could hardly hear the radio and asked her to turn it up.

But sometimes, when the first clause is a statement which helps to explain the first, we can use as instead of a second introductory verb:

'You'd better wear a coat. it's very cold out.' he said = . He advised me to wear a coat as it was very cold out. 'You'd better not walk across the park alone. People have been mugged there,' he said =

He warned her not to walk across the park alone as people had been mugged there.

Sometimes the second introductory verb can be a participle:

'Please, please, don't drink too much! Remember that you've got to drive home,' she said = She begged him not to drink too much, reminding him that he'd have to drive home.

'Let's shop on Friday. The supermarket will be very crowded on Saturday,' she said =

She suggested shopping on Friday, pointing out that the supermarket would be very crowded on Saturday. (as could be used in both these examples.)

325 must and needn't

A must used for deductions, permanent commands/prohibitions and to express intention remains unchanged. (For must, expressing advice, see 287 A.)

1 Deductions:

She said, 'I'm always running into him; he must live near here!' a She said that. . . he must live in the area.

2 Permanent command:

He said, 'This door must be kept locked' =-He said that the door must be kept locked.

3 must used casually to express intention:

He said, 'We must have a party to celebrate this' = He said that they must have a party to celebrate it.

B must used for obligation can remain unchanged. Alternatively it can be reported by would have to or had to.

1 I/we must reported by would have to

would have to is used when the obligation depends on some future action, or when the fulfilment of the obligation appears remote or uncertain, i.e. when must is clearly replaceable by will have to:

'If the floods get worse we must (will have to) leave the house,' he said =

If e said that if the floods got worse they would have to leave the house.

'When it stops snowing we must start digging ourselves out,'

I said =

I said that when it stopped snowing we would have to start digging ourselves out.

'We must mend the roof properly next year,' he said =

He said that they would have to mend the roof properly the following year.

7 have just received a letter,' he said. 'I must go home' =

He said that he had just received a letter and would have to go home- (But had to would be more usual here if he went at once, i.e. had to would imply that he went at once.)

2 I/we must reported by had to

had to is the usual form for obligations where times for fulfilment have been fixed, or plans made, or when the obligation is fulfilled fairly promptly, or at least by the time the speech is reported:

He said, 'I must wash my hands' (and presumably did so) =

He said that he had to wash his hands.

Tom said, 'I must be there by nine tomorrow' = { Tom said that he had to be there by nine the next day. ^would have to would be possible here also but would imply that the ^obligation was self-imposed and that no outside authority was involved, ; had to could express either an outside authority (i.e. that someone had ; told him to be there) or a self-imposed obligation.

HAH difficulties about had to/would have to can of course be avoided ;jby keeping must unchanged. In both the above examples must could ""have been used instead of had to/would have to.

you/he/they must is reported similarly:

He said. 'You must start at once' =

He said that she must/had to/would have to start at once. But note that would have to removes the idea of the speaker's authority:

Tom said. 'I/you want to stay on here you must work harder' =

Tw'n said that if she wanted to stay on she must/would have to work harder.

must implies that Tom himself insists on her working harder, would have to merely implies that this will be necessary.

must I/you/he? can change similarly but as must in the interrogative usually concerns the present or immediate future it usually becomes had to:

'Must you go so soon?' I said = I asked him if he had to go so soon.

gfaust not

must not usually remains unchanged, you/he must not remains

.pichanged or is expressed as a negative command (see 320-1):

He said, 'You mustn't tell anyone' = f.- He said that she mustn 't ell/wasn 't to tell anyone
or

He told her not to tell anyone. ',,

needn't

needn't can remain unchanged and usually does. Alternatively it can i,change to didn't have
to/wouldn't have to just as must changes to

•had to/would have to:

He said. 'You needn't wait' = He said that I needn't wait.

I said, 'If you can lend me the money I needn 't go to the bank = i; / said that if he could lend
me the money I needn 't/wouldn 't have to

go to the bank.

He said, 'I needn't be in the office till ten tomorrow morning' •=

He said that he needn't/didn't have to be in the office till ten the next ! morning.

"need I/you/he? behaves exactly in the same ways as must I/you/he? ; i.e. it normally
becomes had to:

'Need I finish my pudding?' asked the small boy = ^ The small boy asked if he had to
finish his pudding.