

Reporting statements: **that-clauses**

A

When we report statements, we often use a **that-clause** in the *reported clause* (see Unit 32):

Reminder → G1– G7

- He **said (that)** he was enjoying his work.
- The members of the Security Council **warned that** further action may be taken.

After the more common reporting verbs such as **agree, mention, notice, promise, say, and think**, we often leave out **that**, particularly in informal speech. However, it is not usually left out –

☆ after less common reporting verbs such as **complain, confide, deny, grumble, speculate, warn** (and after the common reporting verbs **answer, argue, and reply**)

☆ in formal writing

☆ if the **that-clause** doesn't immediately follow the verb:

- She **agreed with her parents and brothers that** it would be safer to buy a car than a motorbike. (*rather than ... and brothers it would be safer ...*)

B

Some reporting verbs which are followed by a **that-clause** have an alternative with an **object + to-infinitive** (often **to be**), although the alternatives are often rather formal. Compare:

- I **felt that the results** were satisfactory. *and*
I **felt the results to be** satisfactory.

Also: acknowledge, assume, believe, consider, declare, expect, find, presume, report, think, understand

C

If we use a **that-clause** after an active form of some verbs, we must include an object between the verb and the **that-clause**. This object can't be a prepositional object (see **D** below):

- I **notified the bank that** I had changed my address. (*but not* I notified that I ... / I notified to the bank that I ...)

Also: assure, convince, inform, persuade, reassure, remind, tell

However, after some other verbs an object before a **that-clause** is not always necessary:

- They **promised (me) that** they would come to the party.

Also: advise, show, teach, warn

D

After some verbs we can use a **that-clause** with or without a personal object before the **that-clause**. However, if we *do* include an object, we put a preposition before it.

☆ After some verbs we use **to**:

- She **admitted (to me) that** she was seriously ill.
- I **pointed out (to the driver) that** he had parked across the entrance.

Also: announce, complain, confess, explain, indicate, mention, propose, recommend, report, say, suggest

☆ After some verbs we use **with**:

- We **agreed (with Ella) that** the information should go no further.

Also: argue, check, disagree, joke

☆ After the verbs **ask, demand** and **require** we use **of**:

- The club **asks (of its members) that** they pay their fees by 31st December.
- The company **demand(s) (of its staff) that** they should be at work by 8:30.

This pattern is usually used in formal contexts. Less formally we can use a **to-infinitive clause** after **ask** and **require** (e.g. The club asks its members to pay their fees by 31st December). However, we can't use a **to-infinitive clause** after **demand** (*not* The company demands its staff to ...).

Exercises

33.1 Underline the correct verb. If both are possible, underline them both. **C**

- 1 The doctors *advised / persuaded* that I should rest for three months.
- 2 The police *assured / promised* residents that everything possible was being done to catch the thieves.
- 3 A spokesperson for the company *reminded / warned* that there may be delays on the railways this summer due to major engineering work.
- 4 We should *inform / teach* children that diet is of vital importance to health.
- 5 Russian scientists *have shown / have convinced* that honey can prevent the growth of bacteria.
- 6 The company *has reassured / has advised* customers that cars ordered before 1st August would be delivered by the end of the month.
- 7 Katarina *told / promised* that she would be home before midnight.

33.2 If possible, rewrite these sentences in a more formal way with a **to-infinitive clause**. If not, write *X*. **B**

- 1 Two days after the launch Houston reported that the satellite was missing.
Two days after the launch Houston reported the satellite to be missing.
- 2 The employees argued that the reduction in wages was unlawful.
- 3 The judge thought that his explanation was unconvincing.
- 4 I expected that her plans would fail.
- 5 She stressed that her stories were aimed primarily at children.
- 6 Lucas acknowledged that his chances of winning the race were slim.
- 7 We found that the rugby supporters were very well behaved.
- 8 The president's spokesman commented that the election result was a victory for democracy.

33.3 Complete each sentence with an appropriate form of a verb from the box + **to**, **with**, or **of**. More than one verb may be possible, but use each verb at least once. **D**

announce complain disagree joke mention require

- 1 Martina _____ the shop assistant that the laptop she'd bought there was faulty.
- 2 She _____ her neighbours that their dog was keeping her awake at night.
- 3 He _____ his friends that he'd won the lottery and was going to Barbados.
- 4 The minister _____ shocked journalists that she was to resign immediately.
- 5 The college _____ its students that they attend all classes.
- 6 I _____ Mr Jacobs that the students were lazy. I thought they were very enthusiastic.
- 7 I forgot to _____ Chris that I'd be home late.

33.4 Suggest corrections to the italicised words in this news article. **A, C & D**

PIK TO CUT WORKFORCE

PIK, the toy manufacturer, (1) *has warned they* are to make over 100 employees redundant over the next month. Managing Director Beth Edwards yesterday (2) *explained employees* that a national fall in demand for traditional toys is to blame. She (3) *confessed her audience* that management had been surprised by the downturn, but she (4) *denied management* had been incompetent. When asked whether staff would receive redundancy pay, Ms Edwards (5) *replied an announcement* would be made within a few days, but (6) *reassured that* they would receive financial compensation. She (7) *went on to complain government help* for small businesses was insufficient and (8) *demandd ministers* that they provide more support. She (9) *asked staff that* they continue to work as normal until details of the redundancies were given. She (10) *reassured that* the company would not close completely.

A

Some verbs can be followed by a clause beginning with a **wh**-word (**how, what, when, where, which, who, or why**):

- That might **explain** *why* he's unhappy.
- I couldn't **decide** *which* train to catch.
- Let's **consider** *how* we can solve the problem.

Many of these verbs can also be followed by –

☆ a **that**-clause (see Unit 33):

- I **decided** *that* I ought to leave.

☆ a **wh**-clause (except 'why') + **to**-infinitive:

- Did** you **find out** *where* to go?

Note that if we add a subject in the **wh**-clause we don't use a **to**-infinitive:

- I can't imagine what **he** likes about jazz.

Also: arrange, calculate, check, choose, debate, determine, discover, discuss, establish, find out, forget, guess, imagine, know, learn, notice, plan, realise, remember, say, see, talk about, think (about), understand, wonder

B

Some verbs must have an object before the **wh**-clause:

- She **reminded** **me** *what* (I had) to do.
- I **told** **Linda** *how* to get to my house.

Also: advise, inform, instruct, teach, warn

The verbs **ask** and **show** often have an object before a **wh**-clause, but not always:

- I **asked** (**him**) *how* I could get to the station, and he told me.

These verbs can also be followed by **object** + **wh**-word + **to**-infinitive:

- She **taught** **me** *how* to play chess.
- I **showed** **her** *where* to put her coat.

C

We can often use **the way** instead of **how** referring to either the route or the means:

- Go back **the way** (that / by which) you came. (*or informally* Go back **how** you came.)
- Have you noticed **the way** (that / in which) he spins the ball? (*or ... noticed how* he spins ...?)

Note that we don't use 'the way how'. (e.g. *not* Go back the way how you came.)

D

Whether

We can use **whether** as the **wh**-word in a **wh**-clause when we want to show possible choices.

Whether has a similar meaning to 'if' (see Unit 86):

- He couldn't remember **whether** / **if** he had turned the computer off.

Some verbs can be followed by **whether** + **to**-infinitive to talk about the choice between two or more possibilities. Note that 'if' is never used before a **to**-infinitive:

- You have 14 days to **decide whether** to keep it or not. (*not ... to decide if* to keep it or not.)

Also: choose, consider, debate, determine, discuss, know (in questions and negatives), **think about, wonder** (= 'talking' or 'thinking about choices' verbs)

Some other 'talking' and 'thinking about choices' verbs are *not* used with **whether** + **to**-infinitive, including **ask, conclude, explain, imagine, realise, speculate, think**.

E

Note the difference between these sentences. The first has a **wh**-clause with **whether** and the second has a **that**-clause (see Unit 33):

- I didn't know **whether** the shop was shut. (= if the shop was shut or not)
- I didn't know **that** the shop was shut. (suggests that the shop was shut)

F

In rather formal contexts, particularly in writing, we can use **as to** with a meaning similar to 'about' or 'concerning' before a **wh**-clause. This is most common before **whether**:

- Opinion was divided **as to whether** the findings from the study were representative of the population as a whole. (*or less formally ... divided whether ...*)

Exercises

34.1 Match sentence beginnings 1–10 to endings a–j and choose an appropriate **wh-word** to connect them. If necessary, add an appropriate object. **A & B**

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Before the meeting finished they arranged ... | a ... to fit the parts back together. |
| 2 He took my hands and showed ... | b ... she went after that. |
| 3 I explained carefully so that the students understood ... | c ... to put their coats. |
| 4 Anna was new in the office and I had to keep reminding ... | d ... to meet next. |
| 5 I saw Sarah leave the building, but I didn't notice ... | e ... Helen wasn't with him. |
| 6 When I saw Hugo alone at the party I wondered ... | f ... many sweets were in the jar. |
| 7 As we walked over the hills the guide warned ... | g ... they had to do in the test. |
| 8 After I'd dismantled the motor I couldn't remember ... | h ... the path was dangerous. |
| 9 To win a prize you had to guess ... | i ... everyone was. |
| 10 As the guests came in Diego told ... | j ... to hold the golf club properly. |

1 + d Before the meeting finished they arranged when / where to meet next.

34.2 Underline the correct or more appropriate verb. **D**

- 1 She was *thinking* / *debating* whether to invite Jeremy over for dinner.
- 2 The council is meeting this morning to *discuss* / *ask* whether to increase local taxes.
- 3 Apparently Louis and Eva are *considering* / *speculating* whether to emigrate to Australia.
- 4 I have to *imagine* / *choose* whether to get a job or apply to go to college.
- 5 Scientists will have to *decide* / *conclude* soon whether to start testing the new drugs on people.

34.3 Zak Miles has written a book about mountain climbing in the Andes. Correct any mistakes in these extracts. **A–F**

The villagers warned ^{me} ~~me~~ what the conditions were like at higher altitudes, and advised to take enough food for a week. There was some discussion through the day as whether the snow would arrive before my descent from the mountain, but I never imagined how hard the conditions would be. In the morning they showed me the way how to get to the track up the mountain.

When the snow started falling it was very light, and I couldn't decide if to carry on or go back down. Soon, however, I couldn't see where to go.

I wondered if to retrace my steps and try to find the track again, but by the time I decided whether I should go back, the track had disappeared.

As the snow got heavier I began to realise whether my life was in danger. Fortunately, my years in the Andes had taught what to do in extreme conditions. I knew that there was a shepherd's hut somewhere on this side of the mountain that I could shelter in, but I didn't know that it was nearby or miles away.

If I were you ...; imagine he were to win

A

In *unreal* conditional sentences we can use **were** after any subject in the **if-clause**, including singular first and third person subjects (e.g. **I / she / he / it**). This use of **were** is sometimes called the *past subjunctive*, and is generally preferred only in formal contexts. Note that although the verb has a past form, reference is to the imagined present or future:

- If your mother were** here, I'm sure she wouldn't let you eat all those chocolates.
- My job would not exist **if it were not for** government funding.

Was can be used instead of **were** with the same meaning ('If your mother was here ...', etc.). However, we prefer **were** rather than **was** when we give advice with **If I were you ...**:

- If I were you**, I'd take it back to the shop. It's got a hole in it. (*rather than* If I was you ...)

Reminder → M13–M17

B

Were is used in this way in other patterns when we talk about *imaginary situations* –

(i) when we use **were + subject + to-infinitive** or **were + subject** as a more formal alternative to **if + subject + was / were** (see also Unit 84A):

- Were the election to be** held today, the Liberals would win easily. (*or* **If the election was / were** held today ...)
- Were I not** in my seventies and rather unfit, I might consider taking up squash. (*or* **If I wasn't / weren't** in my seventies and rather unfit ...)

(ii) after **wish**:

- I enjoy my job enormously, but I *wish* **it were** closer to home. (*or* ... I *wish* **it was** ...)
- Of course I'm pleased that Jan has been given the award. I only *wish* **he weren't** so boastful about it. (*or* ... I only *wish* **he wasn't** ...)

(iii) after **if only** when we express our regret that a situation isn't different:

- 'If your job is so bad, why don't you leave?' '*If only* **it were** that simple.' (*or* *If only* **it was** ...)
- I'd really like to do accounting. *If only* **I weren't** so poor at maths. (*or* *If only* **I wasn't** ...)

(iv) after **would ('d) rather** and **would ('d) sooner** when we talk about preferences:

- I feel embarrassed about what happened and *would rather* **the event were** forgotten. (*or* ... **was** forgotten.)
- 'I've arranged a meeting for the end of July.' '*I'd sooner* **it were** earlier, if possible. (*or* ... **it was** earlier.)

(v) in sentences or clauses beginning with **suppose**, **supposing** and **imagine**:

- Suppose* **I were** to lower the price by £100. Would you consider buying the car then? (*or* *Suppose* **I was** to lower ...)
- I know it looks rather dirty now, but *imagine* **the house were** (to be) repainted. It would look a lot more attractive. (*or* ... *imagine* **the house was** (to be) repainted.)

And in *comparisons* we can use **were** –

(vi) after **as if** and **as though** (see Unit 84D) and **even if**:

- I remember stepping off the boat in New York *as if* **it were** yesterday.
- Despite losing the election, she continues to act *as though* **she were** prime minister.
- It's too late to start the work this year *even if* **it were** possible to find the money for it.

Exercises

85.1 Match an item from (i) with an ending from (ii) to form a sentence. Begin **Were ... (not)**. **Bi**

- | | |
|--|--|
| (i) | (i) |
| 1 ... found guilty of libel ... | a the glass would certainly break |
| 2 ... government to increase university fees ... | b you would be horrified |
| 3 ... anyone to lean against the window ... | c I would gladly accept your invitation |
| 4 ... not already busy in August ... | d there would be an outcry from students |
| 5 ... to see the conditions in which the refugees are living ... | e the newspaper would face huge legal costs |

1 + e *Were it to be found guilty of libel, the newspaper would face huge legal costs.*

85.2 Expand the notes to write a sentence to go before each question below. Use **Suppose**, **Supposing**, or **Imagine**, followed by a pronoun, noun or noun phrase and then **were**. **Bv**

- (miss / last train) *Supposing we were to miss the last train.* How would we get home?
- (inherit / million dollars)
How would it change your life?
- (parents / tell you / emigrating to Canada)
How do you think you would react?
- (Spain / win / World Cup)
How would you celebrate?
- (population of Britain / all Buddhist)
How would its society be different?

85.3 Complete the sentences with either **as if** or **even if** followed by an appropriate pronoun and then **were**. **Bvi**

- Muller spoke slowly *as if it were* a great physical effort.
- Every day Mrs Demir would walk around the park snowing.
- She knew she wouldn't be able to eat rabbit meat starving.
- Theo completely ignored me not standing next to him.
- He picked Natasha up no heavier than a two-year-old.
- I don't think I would have got the job better qualified.
- When Martina saw that I was stuck she laughed out loud a joke.
- I wouldn't accept the job to offer it to me.

85.4 Complete the sentences using one of the phrases in (i) with expanded notes from (ii). **A & B**

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (i) | (ii) |
| if it were not for | forgotten ... classmates |
| wish he were | going ... friends |
| 'd rather it were | not so critical ... employees |
| if I were you | long nights ... winter |
| if only it were | as easy ... that |
| 'd sooner she were | breakfast before ... leave |

- I would be happy to live in the north of Sweden *if it were not for the long nights in winter*.
- I'm not happy about Jess going to Thailand alone. I
- A: If you're unhappy with your new car, why don't you ask for your money back?
B: Well,
- I know you haven't got much time, but
- Wearing odd shoes to school was embarrassing and I
- I'm very fond of Paul, but I

If ... not and unless; if and whether; etc.

A

If ... not and unless

Unless is used in conditional sentences with the meaning 'except if':

- You can't travel on this train **unless you have** a reservation.

With **unless** we use present tenses when we talk about the future:

- Unless it rains**, I'll pick you up at six. (*not Unless it will rain ...*)

B

In *real* conditional sentences, we can often use either **unless** or **if ... not** with a similar meaning:

- Unless** the theatre is able to raise £100,000, it will have to close. (*or If the theatre isn't able to ...; implies 'it will have to close only if it can't raise the money'*)

However, we use **if ... not** but not **unless** –

☆ when we say in the main clause that an event or action in the **if**-clause is unexpected:

- I'll be amazed **if** Christie doesn't win.

☆ usually in questions:

- If you don't** pass the test, what will you do?

☆ when the 'only if' implication does not apply:

- If it wasn't** the best performance of *Hamlet* I've seen, it was certainly the strangest.

We usually use **if ... not** rather than **unless** in *unreal* conditional sentences:

- If I weren't** so tired, I'd give you a hand.

However, **unless** can be used in *unreal* conditional sentences when the main clause is negative:

- She wouldn't have gone to university **unless** her parents had insisted.

C

If and whether

We can use **if** or **whether** to say that two possibilities have been talked or thought about, or to say that people are not sure about something:

- They couldn't decide **if / whether** it was worth resitting the exam.
 Do you know **if / whether** Ben's at home?

Whether can usually be followed immediately by **or not**. Compare:

- I didn't know **if** Aya was coming **or not**. (*not ... if or not Aya was coming.*) *and*
 I didn't know **whether or not** Aya was coming. (*or ... whether Tom was coming or not ...*)

D

We use **whether** rather than **if** –

☆ after a **preposition** (although **if** is sometimes used informally) and before a **to-infinitive**:

- We argued *about* **whether** butter or margarine was better for you. (*informally ... if ...*)
 I couldn't decide **whether to buy** apples or bananas.

☆ in the pattern **noun / adjective + as to whether** to mean 'about' or 'concerning':

- There was some *disagreement as to whether* he was eligible to play for France.

Also: conflict, confusion, debate, discussion, doubt, question, speculation, uncertainty; concerned, indifferent, uncertain, undecided, unsure

and we prefer **whether** rather than **if** –

☆ after the verbs **advise, choose, consider, depend on, discuss, talk about, and think about**:

- You should *consider* **whether** the car you are interested in is good value.

☆ in a clause acting as a subject or complement:

- Whether the minister will quit over the issue** remains to be seen.
 The first issue is **whether he knew he was committing a crime**.

Exercises

86.1 Match the sentence halves and write a new sentence with the same meaning, beginning each one with **Unless ...** . **A**

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 We'll never get to the meeting ... | a ... or the farmers will lose their crops. |
| 2 Alternative sources of funding must be found ... | b ... if the train doesn't leave within five minutes. |
| 3 If the roads haven't changed in that part of town ... | c ... I'm sure I'll be able to find my way there. |
| 4 The weather must start improving soon ... | d ... or the research will not be able to continue. |
| 5 If it isn't ridiculously expensive ... | e ... I think I'll buy that painting. |
| 6 You are only entitled to state benefit ... | f ... if you have been unemployed for six months. |

1 + b *Unless the train leaves within five minutes, we'll never get to the meeting.*

86.2 If necessary, correct the italicised phrase using **if ... not**. **B**

- Unless she had gone* to university, she would have gone into the army. *If she hadn't gone*
- Unless the infection is treated* urgently, there is a real danger that she will die.
- Unless he was* so clumsy, he'd be the best person to do the work.
- You won't be allowed into the country *unless you have* a visa.
- It'll be surprising *unless Anya passes* her piano exam.
- Unless you get* a loan from the bank, how will you pay for the house?
- They'll go on strike *unless they get* a pay rise.
- Where will you stay *unless Louise is* at home?
- The police can't prosecute me *unless they can prove* I intended to steal the ring.
- She'd be a really good teacher *unless she was* so disorganised.

86.3 Write **whether** or **if / whether** (if both are possible) in these sentences. **C & D**

- I was wondering _____ you'd had your exam results yet.
- She was undecided as to _____ to fly or go by train.
- Police have refused to confirm _____ or not they have arrested anyone for the theft.
- It is unclear _____ the new regulations will affect all buildings or just new ones.
- A: How much will the laptop cost?
B: That depends on _____ I get one with a 15 or 17-inch screen.
- Danny said that he was leaving home, but I didn't know _____ to believe him.
- Have you any idea _____ Steve will be at the meeting?
- Can you remember _____ the door was open or closed when you got to the house?
- There was considerable debate as to _____ chess was a game or a sport.
- I don't know _____ Andrea's going to wait for us or not.
- The government is considering _____ to hold an enquiry into the accident.
- Everyone in the village was very friendly. It didn't matter _____ you'd lived there for a short or a long time.

