ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Reported Speech Test 1

English Grammar Tests · 20 questions · Online test and questions PDF:
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Explanations

1. "Don't throw the paper on the floor."

The shopkeeper told the boy _____ on the floor.
✔ **C) not to throw the paper**
A negative command is reported with **tell + person + not to + verb**: **told the boy not to throw**. The **that** options turn the order into a statement, which changes its meaning.

2. "I can't understand why the lawyer hasn't sent in his report."

The director said he _____ in his report.
✔ **D) couldn't understand why the lawyer hadn't sent**
After a past reporting verb such as **said**, tenses usually move back: **can't** becomes **couldn't**, and the present perfect **hasn't sent** becomes the past perfect **hadn't sent**. The part after **why** keeps statement word order: **why the lawyer hadn't sent**. Not **didn't send**, because the present perfect normally shifts to the past perfect, and not **why hadn't the lawyer sent**, because a reported question does not use question word order.

3. "Why are you so late? What is your excuse?"

The officer wanted to know _____.
✔ **B) why I was so late and what my excuse was**
Reported questions use statement word order and move back one tense: **are you** becomes **I was**, and **is your excuse** becomes **my excuse was**. The question word **why** stays. The pronouns change too: **you** becomes **I**, and **your** becomes **my**.

4. "Do you want me to turn off the radio?"

I asked my sister _____ me to turn off the radio.
✔ **E) if she wanted**
A yes/no question is reported with **if/whether**. The present tense moves back to the past: **Do you want** becomes **she wanted**. Not **whether you wanted**, because the pronoun must change to **she**.

5. "The manager will be in his office all afternoon."

The secretary told me that the manager _____ in his office all afternoon.
✔ **C) would be**
In reported speech after **told**, **will** usually becomes **would**: **will be** becomes **would be**. Not **would have been**, because that refers to an unreal past, not a future plan.

6. "Don't drive so fast."

The policeman told me _____.
✔ **B) not to drive so fast**
A negative order is reported with **told + person + not to + verb**: **told me not to drive so fast**. **That I don't drive** is wrong, because a statement after **told me that** cannot express an order.

7. "Will Jane be preparing the dinner during the afternoon?"

Robert asked me _____ the dinner during the afternoon.
✔ **E) if Jane would be preparing**
A yes/no question is reported with **if/whether**. The future continuous **will be preparing** becomes **would be preparing**. Not **would prepare**, because it loses the continuous meaning of the original.

8. "Are all the carpets made by hand?"

The tourist wanted to know _____.
✔ **E) whether all the carpets were made by hand**
A yes/no question is reported with **whether/if** and statement word order. The present simple passive **are made** becomes the past simple passive **were made**. Not **had been made**, because the present simple moves back only to the past simple.

9. "Please wait for me in front of the museum."

The young woman asked her friend _____.
✔ **D) to wait for her in front of the museum**
A polite request with **Please** is reported with **asked + person + to + verb**: **asked her friend to wait for her**. The pronoun **me** becomes **her**, because the woman is the speaker.

10. "We don't want to go without you."

The girls told us that _____.
✔ **E) they didn't want to go without us**
The present **don't want** moves back to **didn't want**. The girls were speaking to us, so **you** becomes **us**. Not **without you**, because the pronoun must change.

11. "Guard the bridge."

The officer ordered the soldiers _____.
✔ **C) to guard the bridge**
An order is reported with **ordered + person + to + verb**: **ordered the soldiers to guard the bridge**. Not **guard the bridge**, because the verb **ordered** needs **to** before the next verb.

12. Henry said Jane couldn't remember where she had put the hammer.

Which is the direct form?
✓ D) "Jane can't remember where she put the hammer."
To return to direct speech, move the tenses forward: **couldn't** becomes **can't**, and **had put** becomes **put**. Henry is talking about Jane, so she stays **Jane** and **she**. Not **I can't remember**, because Henry, not Jane, is speaking.

13. "Don't go near the water! It's dangerous."

The policeman warned us _____ dangerous.
✓ A) not to go near the water because it was
A warning is reported with **warned + person + not to + verb**. The reason is joined with **because**, and **is** moves back to **was**: **not to go near the water because it was dangerous**.

14. "I used to read many novels in my free time when I was younger."

Sally told me that _____.
✓ B) she would read many novels in her free time when she was younger
Used to for a past habit does not change in reported speech, and **would** can also express a past habit: **she would read**. All the pronouns change to **she/her**. Not the option with **when I was younger**, because it means the listener was younger.

15. "Why don't we meet at the school cafeteria for lunch tomorrow?"

Tom asked me _____.
✓ B) if I would meet with him in the school cafeteria for lunch the next day
The suggestion **Why don't we meet…?** is reported as a question with **if** and statement word order: **if I would meet with him**. Time words also change: **tomorrow** becomes **the next day**.

16. "Why don't you believe me when I say I didn't do it?"

She asked him why he didn't believe her _____.
✓ C) when she said she hadn't done it
Every part of the sentence moves back. **When I say** becomes **when she said**, and **I didn't do it** becomes the past perfect **she hadn't done it**. Not **as she said she had done it**, because it reverses the meaning.

17. "We have decided to have the wedding in June."

I heard Janet telling Mary that _____.
✓ A) they had decided to have their wedding in June
After a past reporting verb, the present perfect **have decided** becomes the past perfect **had decided**. The pronoun **we** becomes **they**. Not **had been deciding**, because a decision is a finished action, not a continuous one.

18. "The students started a campaign to clean up the neighbourhood around our school."

The headmaster explained to the journalists that _____ the neighbourhood around their school.
✓ D) the students had started a campaign to clean up
After **explained**, the past simple **started** moves back to the past perfect **had started**: **the students had started a campaign to clean up**. Not **were campaigning**, because it changes both the tense and the meaning.

19. "Don't overcook the pudding or it might burn."

My mother warned me _____ or it would burn.
✓ E) not to overcook the pudding
A warning is reported with **warned + person + not to + verb**: **warned me not to overcook the pudding**. Not **not to undercook**, because that is the opposite meaning.

20. "I would have gone with you but I really didn't feel up to it at the moment."

Harry told us that _____.
✓ D) he would have come with us but he wasn't feeling up to it at that time
Would have does not change in reported speech. **Gone with you** becomes **come with us**, because the speaker was talking to us. **At the moment** becomes **at that time**, and **feel up to it** means feel well or strong enough to do it. Not **didn't feel right**, because that changes the meaning.

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