

MA GRAMMAR / WEEK 08

Tense, mood and reporting

MA Grammar · Week 8
Quirk et al., Chapter 14

Must every report shift into the past?

Constructed alternatives

The tutor said that the seminar starts at nine.

The tutor said that the seminar started at nine.

Today's goals

Explain tense and mood choices.
Track reporting perspective.
Preserve the original commitment.

Subordinate tense follows several conditions

Future time, present form

If the tutor arrives early, we will begin.

The arrival is future despite present arrives.

Contrast with a content clause

We think that the tutor will arrive early.

Will is possible in this complement.

Past forms can mark hypothetical distance

Hypothetical past

If we had more time, we would test another sample.

Hypothetical past perfect

If we had had more time, we would have tested another sample.

Mandative and evaluative meanings differ

Mandative

The committee recommended that every student submit a draft.

Submit is a subjunctive base form.

Putative should

It is surprising that the draft should contain so many errors.

Perfective and since need a timeline

We have revised the scheme since the pilot ended.

The present perfect links a period before now with the present.

The since-clause supplies the starting point.

Compare: It has been two weeks since we submitted the form.

Reporting changes perspective

Direct representation

Rana said, “I will send it here tomorrow.”

One later report

Rana said that she would send it there the next day.

Each change depends on the reporting context.

Transferred negation is not logical identity

Matrix negation

I do not think that the analysis is complete.

Subordinate negation

I think that the analysis is not complete.

Often close in use; different in explicit commitment.

Workshop 1 · Explain the verb choice

1. We will leave when the session ends.
2. They insisted that each student be present.
3. If I knew the answer, I would explain it.
4. It is odd that she should object.

Identify time reference, mood or speaker stance; do not merely name the tense.

Drill key · Form does not equal time

Items 1–2

1: present ends has future reference in a time clause.

2: be is mandative subjunctive after insisted.

Items 3–4

3: knew can express present hypothetical distance.

4: should marks an evaluative reaction to the objection.

Workshop 2 · A classroom question

Student: “When are sections going to start?”

Authentic extract · Yale, Philosophy 181, Lecture 1
Administrative questions near the end of the lecture

Report this question to a classmate later that day.
Then report it one month later.

A report requires a viewpoint

A student asked when sections were going to start.

Later that day, are going to start may remain if the schedule is still prospective.

The embedded question has subject before verb.

Keep the question's uncertainty; do not turn it into an assertion about the start date.

Text laboratory · Committee statements

Constructed teaching data

Setting: Monday, Room 4. The report is written on Thursday elsewhere.

- 1 Chair: “We will review these drafts here tomorrow.”
- 2 Tutor: “I recommend that each student revise the introduction.”
- 3 Student: “Why do we need another version?”
- 4 Chair: “I do not think the instructions are unclear.”

Write a report and a change log

Report all four turns without quotation marks.

Record person, time, place, tense and clause-type decisions.

Preserve the force of the recommendation and the question.

Compare two readings of the chair's final negative statement.

Suggested report decisions

Turns 1–2

The chair said that they would review those drafts in Room 4 on Tuesday.

The tutor recommended that each student revise the introduction.

Turns 3–4

A student asked why they needed another version.

The chair said that they did not think the instructions were unclear.

Challenge · Does reporting prove truth?

Claim: The tutor said that the result was reliable means the result was reliable.

Separate the reporting event from the reported proposition.

Give a continuation that demonstrates the distinction.

Exit response · Protect the commitment

I do not believe that the sample is representative.

Write a report introduced by The researcher said...

Explain why believes the sample is unrepresentative may be too strong.

Portfolio 3 · Report with reasons

Write 500–600 words on reporting choices.

Include two versions suited to different reporting contexts.

Explain one tense decision and one change in commitment to avoid.

Next week: Quirk et al., §§14.37–41.