Indirect reports of statements consist of a reporting clause and a *that*-clause. We often omit *that*, especially in informal situations:

*The pilot commented****that****the weather had been extremely bad as the plane came in to land.* (The pilot’s words were: *‘The weather was extremely bad as the plane came in to land.’*)

*I told my wife I didn’t want a party on my 50th birthday.* (*that*-clause without *that*) (or *I told my wife that I didn’t want a party on my 50th birthday*.)

**Indirect speech: reporting questions**

Reporting *yes-no* questions and alternative questions

Indirect reports of *yes-no* questions and questions with *or* consist of a reporting clause and a reported clause introduced by *if* or *whether*. *If* is more common than *whether*. The reported clause is in statement form (subject + verb), not question form:

*She asked****if***[S] [V]*I was Scottish.* (original *yes-no* question: *‘Are you Scottish?’*)

*The waiter asked****whether***[S]*we*[V]*wanted a table near the window.* (original *yes-no* question: *‘Do you want a table near the window?*)

*He asked me****if***[S] [V]*I had come by train or by bus.* (original alternative question: *‘Did you come by train or by bus?’*)

**See also:**

* [Questions: *yes-no* questions (*Are you feeling cold?*)](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/questions-yes-no-questions-are-you-feeling-cold)
* [*Whether*](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/whether)

Reporting *wh*-questions

Indirect reports of *wh*-questions consist of a reporting clause, and a reported clause beginning with a *wh*-word (*who, what, when, where, why, how*). We don’t use a question mark:

*He asked me****what****I wanted.*

Not: ~~He asked me what I wanted?~~

The reported clause is in statement form (subject + verb), not question form:

*She wanted to know who*[S]***we***[V]***had****invited to the party.*

Not: … ~~who had we invited~~ …

*Who*, *whom* and *what*

In indirect questions with *who, whom* and *what*, the *wh-*word may be the subject or the object of the reported clause:

*I asked them****who****came to meet them at the airport.* (*who* is the subject of *came*; original question: *‘Who came to meet you at the airport?’*)

*He wondered****what****the repairs would cost.* (*what* is the object of *cost*; original question: *‘What will the repairs cost?’*)

The reported clause is in statement form (subject + verb), not question form:

*She asked us****what***[S]***we***[V]***were doing****.* (original question: *‘What are you doing?’*)

Not: ~~She asked us what were we doing?~~

**See also:**

* [*Whom*](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/who-whom#who-whom__24)

*When*, *where*, *why* and *how*

We also use statement word order (subject + verb) with *when*, *where, why* and *how*:

*I asked her****when***[S]***it***[V]***had happened*** (original question: *‘When did it happen?’*).

Not: ~~I asked her when had it happened?~~

*I asked her****where***[S]***the bus station***[V]***was****.* (original question: *‘Where is the bus station?’*)

Not: ~~I asked her where was the bus station?~~

*The teacher asked them****how***[S]***they***[V]***wanted******to do the activity****.* (original question: *‘How do you want to do the activity?’*)

Not: ~~The teacher asked them how did they want to do the activity?~~

**See also:**

* [Questions: *wh-*questions](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/questions-wh-questions)

**Indirect speech: reporting commands**

Indirect reports of commands consist of a reporting clause, and a reported clause beginning with a *to*-infinitive:

*The General ordered the troops****to advance****.* (original command: *‘Advance!’*)

*The chairperson told him****to sit down****and****to stop interrupting****.* (original command: *‘Sit down and stop interrupting!’*)

We also use a *to*-infinitive clause in indirect reports with other verbs that mean wanting or getting people to do something, for example, *advise, encourage, warn*:

*They advised me****to wait****till the following day.* (original statement: *‘You should wait till the following day.’*)

*The guard warned us****not to enter****the area.* (original statement: *‘You must not enter the area.’*)

**See also:**

* [Verbs followed by a *to*-infinitive](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/verb-patterns-verb-infinitive-or-verb-ing#verb-patterns-verb-infinitive-or-verb-ing__3)

**Indirect speech: present simple reporting verb**

We can use the reporting verb in the present simple in indirect speech if the original words are still true or relevant at the time of reporting, or if the report is of something someone often says or repeats:

*Sheila****says****they’re closing the motorway tomorrow for repairs.*

*Henry****tells****me he’s thinking of getting married next year.*

*Rupert****says****dogs shouldn’t be allowed on the beach.* (Rupert probably often repeats this statement.