

Test your understanding of indirect speech with this grammar exercise.

1. I asked how old you .....

are

were

Either could be used here

Although the reporting verb is in the past tense, a present tense is possible in the reported speech if the original speaker and the reporter are in the same situation.

2. She told me that she ..... to my father.

has just spoken

had just spoken

Either could be used here

The original speaker's present perfect and past tenses are often reported using past perfect tenses.

3. I asked him what .....

was the matter

the matter was

Either could be used here

In reported questions constructed with *who*, *what* or *which*, *be* can go before or after the complement.

4. She asked which .....

her seat was

was her seat

Either could be used here

In reported questions constructed with *who*, *what* or *which*, *be* can go before or after the complement.

5. The ancient Greeks and Romans thought that the sun  
..... around the earth.

goes

went

Either could be used here

The original speaker's simple present is often reported using simple past.

6. I want to know if I ..... be needed tomorrow.

will

would

Either could be used here

When the reporting verb is in the present tense, the original speaker's simple future is reported using simple future.

7. He said that he ..... to go home and left.

wants

wanted

had wanted

When the reporting verb is in the past tense, the verb in the reported speech will also be in the past tense.

8. I asked where ..... staying.

the minister was

was the minister

Either could be used here

In reported questions, the auxiliary verb goes after the subject.

9. I knew how .....

did she feel

she felt

Either could be used here

The auxiliary do is not used in reported questions.

10. He suggested ..... quit.

me to

that I should

Either could be used here

Infinitive structures cannot be used after suggest.

11. The doctor said ..... smoking.

me to quit

that I must quit

quitting

Infinitive structures cannot be used after say.

12. He said that he ..... Maria at the club a few days before.

saw

has seen

had seen

The original speaker's present perfect and past tenses are often reported using past perfect tenses.

PLAY AGAIN !

## Answers

1. I asked how old you are / were.
2. She told me that she had just spoken to my father.
3. I asked him what the matter was / was the matter.
4. She asked which her seat was / was her seat.
5. The ancient Greeks and Romans thought that the sun went around the earth.

6. I want to know if I will be needed tomorrow.
7. He said that he wanted to go home and left.
8. I asked where the minister was staying.
9. I knew how she felt.
10. He suggested that I should quit.
11. The doctor said that I must quit smoking.
12. He said that he had seen Maria at the club a few days before.