

# 4

## Noun Clauses

<i>Noun Clause Derived From:</i>	<i>Introductory Conjunction</i>	<i>Function of Clause</i>	<i>Examples</i>
1. a statement Coffee grows in Brazil.	<b>that</b>	subject subject after it subjective complement object of verb appositive	<b>That coffee grows in Brazil</b> is well known to all. It is well known <b>that coffee grows in Brazil</b> . My understanding is <b>that coffee grows in Brazil</b> . <b>I know that coffee grows in Brazil</b> . His belief <b>that coffee grows in Brazil</b> is correct.
2. a question a. expecting <i>yes</i> or <i>no</i> answer Will he get the money?  b. interrogative word question How will he get the money?	<b>whether (or not)</b> <i>also</i> <b>if</b>  <b>who</b> <b>what</b> <b>which</b> <b>when</b> <b>where</b> <b>why</b> <b>how</b>	subject  subjective complement object of verb  object of preposition  subject subjective complement object of verb object of preposition	<b>Whether (or not) he gets the money</b> doesn't concern me. The question is <b>whether he will get the money</b> .  Do you know <b>whether (or if) he will get the money?</b> We were concerned about <b>whether he would get the money</b> .  <b>How he gets the money</b> is his own affair. The question is <b>how he will get the money</b> .  I don't know <b>how he will get the money</b> . We were concerned about <b>how he would get the money</b> .
3. a request Write the letter soon.	<b>that</b>	object of verb	He suggested <b>that I write the letter soon</b> .
4. an exclamation What a pretty girl she is!	<b>what</b> <b>how</b>	object of verb object of preposition	I hadn't realized <b>what a pretty girl she was</b> . We talked about <b>what a pretty girl she was</b> .

## 4-1

### SEQUENCE OF TENSES IN NOUN CLAUSES (1)

A noun clause consists of a subject and predicate that functions as a noun. One of its most common functions is as the object of a verb, especially of a verb of asserting or mental activity. If such a verb is in the *past tense*, the verb in the noun clause object takes past form also.

#### A. Indirect Speech—Noun Clauses from Statements

<i>Present Main Verb</i> (No Sequence of Tenses)	<i>Past Main Verb</i> (Sequence of Tenses)
<p>He <b>says</b> (that):</p> <p>The train <b>always arrives</b> late.</p> <p>The train <b>is arriving</b>.</p> <p>The train <b>arrived</b> late.</p> <p>The train <b>has just arrived</b>.</p> <p>The train <b>will arrive</b> soon.</p> <p>The train <b>may be arriving</b> soon.</p>	<p>He <b>said</b> (that):</p> <p>The train <b>always arrived</b> late.</p> <p>The train <b>was arriving</b>.</p> <p>The train <b>had arrived</b> late.</p> <p>The train <b>had just arrived</b>.</p> <p>The train <b>would arrive</b> soon.</p> <p>The train <b>might be arriving</b> soon.</p>
<p>That is omitted in informal usage. The present tense may be retained in a that clause object expressing a generalization (He <i>said that the train always arrives late.</i>)</p> <p>No comma precedes or follows a noun clause.</p>	

Change to indirect speech. Observe the sequence of tenses. Make the necessary changes in pronouns.

**EXAMPLE:** He said, "I need more time to get ready."

He said that he needed more time to get ready.

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1. He said, "They have already finished the work."

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2. He said, "Construction on your house will begin as soon as the lumber arrives."

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3. The technician said, "The laboratory has already sent in the report."

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4. The mechanic said, "Your car is repaired and you can pick it up at the garage at any time."

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5. She said, "We are planning a farewell party for our two guests."

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6. He said, "I will meet you at the airport whenever you wish."

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7. Our visitor said, "It rains a great deal in my country."

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8. He said, "The weather is so bad that I won't go out at all."

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9. The gardener said, "The bushes should be trimmed once a month."

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10. She said, "My parents live too far away for me to visit them often."

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11. He said, "I would like to see a good movie but I don't see anything in the paper that interests me."

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**B. Indirect Speech**  
**Noun Clauses from Questions**

Change to indirect speech. Observe the sequence of tenses and make the necessary changes in pronouns. Use a period at the end of the sentence.

**EXAMPLE:** He asked me, "Does the train always arrive late?"  
 He asked me whether (or informal if) the train always arrived late.

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1. He asked me, "Will the report be ready soon?"

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2. He asked me, "Has anyone found the missing dog?"

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3. He asked me, "What is your name?"

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4. He asked me, "What color do you want?"

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5. He asked me, "How much does this umbrella cost?"

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6. He asked me, "Can you cook?"

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7. He asked me, "Would you prefer to see a movie or a play?"

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8. He asked me, "Where is the post office?"

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9. He asked me, "Why didn't you answer when I called you?"

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10. He asked me, "Who was hurt in the accident?"

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11. He asked me, "Can anyone enter the contest?"

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12. He asked me, "When are they leaving for Chicago?"

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13. He asked me, "Is the bus non-stop?"

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14. He asked me, "Have you ever been to New York?"

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15. He asked me, "Which typewriter do you like better?"

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16. He asked me, "Who is that pretty girl?"

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17. He asked me, "What time is it?"

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18. He asked me, "Whose hat is this?"

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19. He asked me, "Whom does this hat belong to?"

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20. He asked me, "How long have you been waiting?"

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21. He asked me, "Which beach did you go to?"

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4-2  
SEQUENCE OF TENSES  
IN NOUN CLAUSES (2)

Change the main verb to the past tense and make the changes in the noun clauses required by the sequence of tenses.

EXAMPLE: a. He denies that he took the money.  
He denied that he had taken the money.

b. I know that I can do the work if he will give me the chance.  
I knew that I could do the work if he would give me the chance.

(Note that sequence of tenses must be observed even in the dependent clauses within the noun clauses.)

1. We believe that he may take the late train home.

2. I assume that the insurance company will pay me for the damage to my car.

3. I think that the baby is crying.

4. We doubt that they have already left.

5. I suppose that they are out to lunch.

6. Our neighbors are threatening that they will call the police if we continue to play such loud music.

7. She is pretending that she hasn't seen him come into the room.

8. I suppose that the secretary who has just been hired will prove to be satisfactory.

9. She is complaining that the doctor is charging too much for the series of treatments he is giving her.

10. He insists that the report he has prepared is based on accurate statistics.

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11. I promise that after the ball game is over I will come straight home.

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12. I feel that I have wasted my time when I go shopping for a suit and can't find anything I like.

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## 4-3

### NOUN CLAUSES OBJECTS FROM STATEMENTS, QUESTIONS, EXCLAMATIONS

Change each type of sentence into a noun clause object. Be careful to observe the sequence of tenses after a past main verb. Use a period at the end of the sentence unless the entire sentence is a question.

EXAMPLE: a. The package has arrived.

He said \_\_\_\_\_ (that) the package had arrived.

b. Can they afford to buy a house?

They wondered \_\_\_\_\_ whether they could afford to buy a house.

c. What time is it?

I don't know \_\_\_\_\_ what time it is.

d. What a terrible cold she has!

Did you notice \_\_\_\_\_ what a terrible cold she had?

1. She can do no wrong.

She believes \_\_\_\_\_

2. Will the tickets be expensive?

He couldn't tell us \_\_\_\_\_

3. Who is playing the piano?

She asked \_\_\_\_\_

4. How noisy this typewriter is!

I hadn't realized \_\_\_\_\_

5. May I see you soon?

Please let me know \_\_\_\_\_

6. Where is the bus stop?

Can you tell me \_\_\_\_\_

7. No one is allowed to enter the building.

The guard explained \_\_\_\_\_

8. How far is the airport from here?

I'll try to find out \_\_\_\_\_

9. What a wonderful hostess she is!

No one can ever forget \_\_\_\_\_

- 10. He doesn't understand the question.  
He pretended \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Is she wearing her diamond ring?  
I didn't notice \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. On which street does he live?  
She asked him \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. How late it is!  
I hadn't realized \_\_\_\_\_

4-4

**NOUN CLAUSES AFTER WISH (1)  
REFERRING TO PRESENT TIME**

After the verb **wish**, a **that** noun clause may refer to present or past time. The introductory **that** is often omitted, especially in informal usage.

Wishes referring to present time are often contrary to fact. The past subjunctive form of the verb is used for such wishes.

Supply the correct form for the following present contrary-to-fact wishes. Omit the introductory **that**.

- EXAMPLE:** a. I'm at home now. I wish (be at the beach).  
I wish I were at the beach. (Only the form **were** is used for the verb **be**)
- b. That's a beautiful picture. I wish (know how to paint).  
I wish I knew how to paint.
- c. Our refrigerator is always breaking down. I wish (can afford to buy a new refrigerator).  
I wish I could afford to buy a new refrigerator.

- 1. I have black hair. I wish (have red hair).  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Our apartment is very noisy. We wish (can move away from here).  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. I'm only a housewife. I have often wished (be a glamorous movie star).  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. They live in a tropical climate now. They wish (can live in a more moderate climate).  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5. We have to work on our income taxes tonight. Don't you wish (can go to a good movie instead)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6. It's very cold outside. I wish (be warmer).  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. She lives in the eastern part of the country. She wishes (live in the West).

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8. It's hard for me to express myself in English. I wish (can speak English well).

---

9. We are sorry you have to leave now. We wish (can stay longer).

---

10. Our television set isn't working. I wish (know how to fix it).

---

11. It's winter now. I wish (be summer).

---

12. It takes me a long time to get to work by bus. I wish (have a car) and (can drive to work).

---

13. The cat isn't eating. I wish (know what the matter is).

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### Wishes with WOULD

Wishes with **would** often represent present-to-future time. **Would** is used for a wish that is possible to realize.

I wish (that) it would stop raining. vs. I wish (that) it weren't raining now.

I wish (that) he would study harder. vs. I wish (that) he studied harder.  
(these are both contrary-to-fact at the present time)

Supply the correct form for the following wishes that are possible to realize. Omit the introductory **that**.

**EXAMPLE:** a. He is a nuisance. I wish (go away).

I wish he would go away.

---

b. The radio is too loud. I wish (turn it down).

I wish you would turn it down.

---

1. His hair is very long. His mother wishes (have it cut).

---

2. The stock market keeps going down. I wish (start to go up again).

---

3. I like a well-kept home. I wish (my neighbors keep their yard clean).

---

<sup>1</sup>This kind of wish represents a polite request.

4. Our television set isn't working. I wish you (have it fixed).

---

5. You're driving too fast. I wish (slow down).

---

6. This letter is carelessly done. I wish you (type more carefully).

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**4-5**

**NOUN CLAUSES AFTER WISH (2)**  
**REFERRING TO PAST TIME**

Wishes referring to past time are not realized. Past perfect forms are used in such wishes.

Supply the correct form for the following past unrealized wishes. Omit the introductory **that**.

**EXAMPLE:** a. I feel very uncomfortable. I wish (not eat so much).  
I wish I had not eaten so much.

---

b. I don't have enough money. I wish (take more money with me when I left the house.)  
I wish I had taken more money with me when I left the house.

---

1. She lives in the city now. She wishes (never leave the country).

---

2. This house is too small. I wish (not buy it).

---

3. We miss our old car. I wish (not be in such a hurry to sell it).

---

4. I can't come to the meeting. I wish (know about it yesterday).

---

5. Everyone at the party is dressed so formally. I wish (put on my new suit).

---

6. I'm catching a cold. I wish (not go out in the rain yesterday).

---

7. The car is out of gas. I wish (think of getting some before we started our trip).

---

8. He has undertaken an impossible task. In a few weeks he will wish (never start it).
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**4-6**  
**NOUN CLAUSES**  
**WITH INFINITIVE ABRIDGMENT**

Abridgment with infinitives occurs most often with noun clause objects that are derived from questions. The agent in an abridged noun clause object is either:

1. the subject of the main verb

*I don't know when to go (= when I should go).*

2. the object of the main verb

*He told me when to go (= when I should go).*

Replace the word **this** with an abridged noun clause based on the *second sentence* in each group of sentences.

**EXAMPLE:** a. We haven't decided *this*.

When should we hold the dance?

We haven't decided when to hold the dance.

---

b. She is showing the children *this*.

How should they draw a tree?

She is showing the children how to draw a tree.

---

1. I can't remember *this*.

How can I start your car?

---

2. We must find out *this*.

Where should we deliver these packages?

---

3. I have forgotten *this*.

Which road should I take to get to the lake?

---

4. I can't decide *this*.

Should I go to the movies or should I stay home and watch television?

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5. Please tell me *this*.  
What should I buy and where should I buy it?
- 
6. The office manager will explain *this* to the new typist.  
Where should she work and what should she do?
- 
7. I don't know *this*.  
Whom should I see about my taxes?
- 
8. The committee must decide *this* soon.  
When should it have its next meeting?
- 
9. I don't know *this*.  
Should I buy the red dress or the blue one?
- 
10. We must decide *this*.  
Where shall we put all the new furniture?
- 
11. We will soon let you know *this*.  
Where should you deliver the merchandise?
- 
12. She asked the doctor *this*.  
When should I change the bandages?
- 
13. They are considering *this*.  
Should they buy a new car?
- 

**4.7**

**THAT CLAUSES  
AFTER VERBS OF URGENCY**

That clauses after verbs like **suggest, request, require, urge, demand** require the simple form of the verb. This simple form is used regardless of the tense of the main verb.

The committee	}	suggests suggested has suggested had suggested will suggest	}	that	}	we hold more meetings. everything <b>be</b> prepared in advance. he not <b>give</b> the report.
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Note that such clauses are made negative by the use of **not** before the verb.

Except in **that** clauses after verbs of strong urgency like **command**, **demand**, less formal usage permits the auxiliary **should** to accompany the verb—**The committee suggests that we should hold more meetings.**

A. Replace the word **this** by a **that** clause made from the *second sentence* in each group. Use the simple form of the verb in the **that** clause. Note which **that** clauses may also be used with **should**.

**EXAMPLE:** The law requires *this*.

Everyone must take a test for a driver's license.

The law requires that everyone take a test for a driver's license.

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1. The lawyer advised *this*.

He should sue his tenant for back payment of rent.

---

2. Her mother insists on *this*. (omit *on*)

She has to be back home by midnight.

---

3. The stockbroker has recommended *this*.

They should not buy that particular stock now.

---

4. Her employer demands *this*.

She must come to work on time.

---

5. The committee proposed *this*.

A lawyer should be consulted regarding their legal rights.

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6. We strongly urge *this*.

You should not interfere in this matter.

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7. May I ask *this* of you?

Do not tell anyone about our plans.

---

8. The city has forbid *this*.

Garbage is dumped in the river.

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9. The doctor has suggested *this*.  
The patient should take a long vacation.
- 
10. I urge *this*.  
Stay in bed until you are over your cold.
- 
11. The students request *this*.  
They should be given less homework.
- 
12. May I beg *this* of you?  
Do not make any decision in this matter until I see you.
- 
13. The general commanded *this*.  
All the men in the post should be prepared for an immediate attack.
- 
14. We desire *this*.  
The tour leader should notify us immediately of any change in plans.
- 

After many of these verbs of urgency, infinitive phrases may provide less formal alternatives for **that** clauses.

The law requires everyone to take a test for a driver's license.

This choice is especially possible for the verbs **advise, ask, beg, command, desire, forbid, request, require, urge**.

B. Go over the sentences you have made in A to see which **that** clauses can have alternate forms with infinitive phrases.

## 4-8 THAT CLAUSES AFTER ADJECTIVES OF URGENCY

The simple form of the verb is used in **that** clauses after adjectives of urgency like **important, necessary, essential, urgent**.

It is important that each student fill out a registration form.

The auxiliary **should** may be contained within the **that** clause after an adjective of urgency—**It is important that each student should fill out a registration form.**

Combine the following groups of sentences so that the second one becomes a **that** clause after anticipatory **it**. Use the simple form of the **verb**.

**EXAMPLE:** a. This is essential.

You should see your dentist at once.

It is essential that you see your dentist at once.

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b. This is imperative.

Do not smoke while you are near the gasoline tanks.

It is imperative that you not smoke while you are near the gasoline tanks.

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1. This is necessary.

You must bring a notebook to class with you every day.

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2. This is urgent.

The police must be notified about those strange phone calls.

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3. This is best.

Cancel your trip at once.

---

4. This is essential.

Do not write checks for more money than you have in your account.

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5. This is important.

No one should say anything to him.

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6. This is advisable.

Do not eat any citrus foods because you are allergic to them.

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7. This is vital.

Do not permit our competitors to know our plans.

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8. This is desirable.

The course in general science should be taken before the chemistry course.

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9. This is imperative.

Get your passport renewed before you leave the country.

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## 4-9

## REVIEW OF NOUN CLAUSES

Replace the word **this** in one sentence with a noun clause formed from the other sentence.

## Noun Clauses from Statements

1. He told me *this*.  
"I'm going to get married soon."
- 

2. Women are inferior to men.  
Her husband believes *this*.
- 

3. We will have peace in the near future.  
*This* seems very doubtful.
- 

4. A broken mirror will bring seven years bad luck.  
*This* is a popular superstition.
- 

5. He doesn't really try.  
*This* seems quite clear.
- 

## Noun Clauses from Questions

Use normal word order for the noun clauses.

## A. From Yes-no Questions

6. "Did you lock the front door?"  
Mr. Jones' wife asked him *this*.
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7. Is he a rich man?  
*This* is not known even to his relatives.
- 

8. Will the audience laugh at the new clown?  
We talked about *this*.
-

**B. From Interrogative Word Questions**

9. Where were you born?  
I would like to know *this*.

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10. Why did you leave your wife?  
*This* will never be understood by your friends.

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11. Whom should we invite to the party?  
We were wondering about *this*.

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**Noun Clauses from Exclamations**

12. How hot it is!  
I'm surprised at *this*.

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13. What a terrible thing hunger is!  
Few people who have not been hungry can realize *this*.

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14. What bad manners he has!  
We remarked about *this*.

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**Noun Clauses from Requests**

15. Our teacher suggested *this*.  
Learn the noun clauses as soon as possible.

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16. The chairman recommended *this*.  
The meeting should not last more than two hours.

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17. Her employer urged *this*.  
Be more careful with your typing.

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18. The general commanded *this*.  
All the men were to remain on their posts until further notice.

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**4-10**  
**CHANGING FAMOUS STATEMENTS**  
**TO INDIRECT SPEECH**

The following are statements by famous men, many of which have already become familiar sayings. Change these statements into indirect speech by making each one the object of **said**. Observe the sequence of tenses after a past verb. (In a few sentences the verbs in the noun clauses do not require a change.)

*EXAMPLE:* a. In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes. (Benjamin Franklin)  
Benjamin Franklin said that in this world nothing was certain but death and taxes.<sup>2</sup>

b. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. (Alexander Pope)  
Alexander Pope said that fools rushed in where angels feared to tread.

1. God helps those that help themselves. (Benjamin Franklin)

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2. There never was a good war or a bad peace. (Benjamin Franklin)

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3. Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime. (Aristotle)

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4. An expert is one who knows more and more about less and less. (Nicholas Murray Butler)

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5. Birds of a feather flock together. (Cervantes)

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6. Every man should look before he leaps. (Cervantes)

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7. Russia is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside of an enigma. (Winston Churchill)

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<sup>2</sup>Since many of the statements in this exercise are general statements, it is possible also to use the present ("timeless") tense in these noun clauses that represent indirect speech.

8. I have ~~nothing~~ to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat. (Winston Churchill)

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9. Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the mid-day sun. (Noel Coward)

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10. An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

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11. To be great is to be misunderstood. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

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12. All mankind loves a lover. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

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13. Strength lies not in defense but in attack. (Adolf Hitler)

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14. The supreme happiness of life is to know that we are loved. (Victor Hugo)

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15. If the nose of Cleopatra had been shorter, the whole face of the earth would have been changed. (Blaise Pascal)

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16. A little learning is a dangerous thing. (Alexander Pope)

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17. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them. (William Shakespeare)

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18. Cowards die many times before their deaths. (William Shakespeare)

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19. Let us cultivate our garden. (Francois M. A. Voltaire) \*

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20. In the faces of men and women I see God. (Walt Whitman)

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