Direct and Indirect Speech

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Which line reports the meaning of someone’s words without quoting them directly?
   A. Nadia said that she was ready.
   B. Nadia said, ‘I’m ready.’
   C. ‘I’m ready,’ said Nadia.
   D. ‘I’m ready!’ Nadia called.
   Correct answer: A. Nadia said that she was ready.
   A reported that-clause gives the content without direct quotation marks.

2. Leo said, ‘I am tired.’ What is his friend’s backshifted report of those words?
   A. Leo said that you were tired.
   B. Leo said that I was tired.
   C. Leo said that he was tired.
   D. Leo said that they were tired.
   Correct answer: C. Leo said that he was tired.
   I refers to Leo, so the friend uses he. Am becomes was in the backshifted report.

3. Which verb completes ‘Mina ___ us that the library was shut’?
   A. said
   B. told
   C. told to
   D. said that
   Correct answer: B. told
   Told can take a person as its direct object. Here the listener is us.

4. Amal said, ‘This is my scarf.’ Report her words about that scarf, using standard backshift and reporting her as she.
   A. Amal said that it had been our scarf.
   B. Amal said that it was my scarf.
   C. Amal said that she was its scarf.
   D. Amal said that it was her scarf.
   Correct answer: D. Amal said that it was her scarf.
   My refers to Amal, so it becomes her. Is backshifts to was.

5. On Monday, Jae said, ‘I’ll call tomorrow.’ Which report made on Thursday uses a relative time phrase that still refers to Tuesday?

A. Jae said he would call tomorrow.
B. Jae said he would call the next day.
C. Jae said he would call that day.
D. Jae said he would call the previous day.

Correct answer: B. Jae said he would call the next day.
The next day is anchored to Monday, the day of the original statement.

6. Which sentence reports the question ‘Is the office open?’

A. He asked whether the office was open.
B. He asked that the office was open.
C. He asked was the office open.
D. He asked whether was the office open.

Correct answer: A. He asked whether the office was open.
Whether introduces the reported yes/no question, which uses subject-verb order.

7. Which is the standard backshifted report of ‘Where are my notes?’ asked by Mei?

A. Mei asked that her notes were where.
B. Mei asked where were her notes.
C. Mei asked where my notes were.
D. Mei asked where her notes were.

Correct answer: D. Mei asked where her notes were.
Keep where, replace my with her, and put the subject before were.

8. Elena told the visitors, ‘Wait outside.’ Which sentence reports the instruction?

A. Elena told the visitors waiting outside.
B. Elena told that the visitors wait outside.
C. Elena told the visitors to wait outside.
D. Elena told the visitors that she would wait outside.

Correct answer: C. Elena told the visitors to wait outside.
Tell someone to do something is the pattern for reporting this command.

9. Which sentence uses past-perfect backshift to report ‘What did you buy?’ asked by Luz to the narrator?

A. Luz asked what I had bought.
B. Luz asked what had I bought.
C. Luz asked what she had bought.
D. Luz asked what did I buy.

Correct answer: A. Luz asked what I had bought.
You refers to the narrator. The embedded question has I before had bought.

10. Omar pointed to a shelf and said, ‘Put it here.’ Later, away from the shelf, how does the listener report the instruction?

A. Omar told me that I put it everywhere.
B. Omar told me to put it here.
C. Omar said that he put it here.
D. Omar told me to put it there.

Correct answer: D. Omar told me to put it there.
The listener uses there for the original place and to put for the reported instruction.

11. Choose the report that backshifts ‘I have locked the gate,’ said Tessa.

A. Tessa said that I had locked the gate.
B. Tessa said that she would lock the gate.
C. Tessa said that she had locked the gate.
D. Tessa said that she is locking the gate.

Correct answer: C. Tessa said that she had locked the gate.
The present perfect have locked moves to had locked. I refers to Tessa.

12. A teacher said, ‘Two plus two equals four.’ Which report keeps the statement deliberately in the present because it is still true?

A. The teacher said that two plus two would equal four tomorrow.
B. The teacher said that two plus two equals four.
C. The teacher said that two plus two had equaled four only once.
D. The teacher asked whether two plus two equals four.

Correct answer: B. The teacher said that two plus two equals four.
An unchanged present tense is possible when the reported statement is still true.

13. Which sentence reports the coach’s instruction to me, ‘Don’t move the cones’?

A. The coach said she did not move the cones.
B. The coach told me to not moving the cones.
C. The coach told me to move the cones.
D. The coach told me not to move the cones.

Correct answer: D. The coach told me not to move the cones.
Use not to followed by the base verb to report the negative instruction.

14. The teacher asked ‘Who took the marker?’ Which is the reported version with past-perfect backshift?

A. The teacher asked who had taken the marker.
B. The teacher asked who did take the marker.
C. The teacher asked whether had taken the marker.
D. The teacher asked who the marker had taken.

Correct answer: A. The teacher asked who had taken the marker.
Who is the subject of the question. The changed verb phrase is had taken.

15. At a March meeting Dana said, ‘I can meet here next month.’ Which later report from another city uses backshift and correctly anchors the place and time?

A. Dana said that she can meet here the previous month.
B. Dana said that I could meet here next month.
C. Dana said that she could meet there the following month.
D. Dana said that she could meet there that same month.

Correct answer: C. Dana said that she could meet there the following month.
Can becomes could, here becomes there, and the following month refers to the April after the March meeting.