

Reporting statements: **that-clauses**

Reminder → G1–G7

A

When we report statements, we often use a **that-clause** in the *reported clause* (see Unit 32):

- He **said (that)** he was enjoying his work.
- The members of the Security Council **warned that** further action may be taken.

After the more common reporting verbs such as **agree, mention, notice, promise, say, and think**, we often leave out **that**, particularly in informal speech. However, it is not usually left out –

- ☆ after less common reporting verbs such as **complain, confide, deny, grumble, speculate, warn** (and after the common reporting verbs **answer, argue, and reply**)
- ☆ in formal writing
- ☆ if the **that-clause** doesn't immediately follow the verb:
 - She **agreed with her parents and brothers that** it would be safer to buy a car than a motorbike. (*rather than ... and brothers it would be safer ...*)

B

Some reporting verbs which are followed by a **that-clause** have an alternative with an **object + to-infinitive** (often **to be**), although the alternatives are often rather formal. Compare:

- I **felt that the results** were satisfactory. *and*
I **felt the results to be** satisfactory.

Also: acknowledge, assume, believe, consider, declare, expect, find, presume, report, think, understand

C

If we use a **that-clause** after an active form of some verbs, we must include an object between the verb and the **that-clause**. This object can't be a prepositional object (see D below):

- I **notified the bank that** I had changed my address. (*but not* I notified that I ... / I notified to the bank that I ...)

Also: assure, convince, inform, persuade, reassure, remind, tell

However, after some other verbs an object before a **that-clause** is not always necessary:

- They **promised (me) that** they would come to the party.

Also: advise, show, teach, warn

D

After some verbs we can use a **that-clause** with or without a personal object before the **that-clause**. However, if we *do* include an object, we put a preposition before it.

☆ After some verbs we use **to**:

- She **admitted (to me) that** she was seriously ill.
- I **pointed out (to the driver) that** he had parked across the entrance.

Also: announce, complain, confess, explain, indicate, mention, propose, recommend, report, say, suggest

☆ After some verbs we use **with**:

- We **agreed (with Ella) that** the information should go no further.

Also: argue, check, disagree, joke

☆ After the verbs **ask, demand** and **require** we use **of**:

- The club **asks (of its members) that** they pay their fees by 31st December.
- The company **demands (of its staff) that** they should be at work by 8:30.

This pattern is usually used in formal contexts. Less formally we can use a **to-infinitive clause** after **ask** and **require** (e.g. The club asks its members to pay their fees by 31st December). However, we can't use a **to-infinitive clause** after **demand** (*not* The company demands its staff to ...).

Exercises

33.1 Underline the correct verb. If both are possible, underline them both. C

- The doctors *advised / persuaded* that I should rest for three months.
- The police *assured / promised* residents that everything possible was being done to catch the thieves.
- A spokesperson for the company *reminded / warned* that there may be delays on the railways this summer due to major engineering work.
- We should *inform / teach* children that diet is of vital importance to health.
- Russian scientists *have shown / have convinced* that honey can prevent the growth of bacteria.
- The company *has reassured / has advised* customers that cars ordered before 1st August would be delivered by the end of the month.
- Katarina *told / promised* that she would be home before midnight.

33.2 If possible, rewrite these sentences in a more formal way with a **to-infinitive clause**. If not, write X. B

- Two days after the launch Houston reported that the satellite was missing.
Two days after the launch Houston reported the satellite to be missing.
- The employees argued that the reduction in wages was unlawful.
- The judge thought that his explanation was unconvincing.
- I expected that her plans would fail.
- She stressed that her stories were aimed primarily at children.
- Lucas acknowledged that his chances of winning the race were slim.
- We found that the rugby supporters were very well behaved.
- The president's spokesman commented that the election result was a victory for democracy.

33.3 Complete each sentence with an appropriate form of a verb from the box + **to, with, or of**. More than one verb may be possible, but use each verb at least once. D

announce complain disagree joke mention require

- Martina the shop assistant that the laptop she'd bought there was faulty.
- She her neighbours that their dog was keeping her awake at night.
- He his friends that he'd won the lottery and was going to Barbados.
- The minister shocked journalists that she was to resign immediately.
- The college its students that they attend all classes.
- I Mr Jacobs that the students were lazy. I thought they were very enthusiastic.
- I forgot to Chris that I'd be home late.

33.4 Suggest corrections to the italicised words in this news article. A, C & D

PIK TO CUT WORKFORCE

PIK, the toy manufacturer, (1) *has warned they* are to make over 100 employees redundant over the next month. Managing Director Beth Edwards yesterday (2) *explained employees* that a national fall in demand for traditional toys is to blame. She (3) *confessed her audience* that management had been surprised by the downturn, but she (4) *denied management* had been incompetent. When asked whether staff would receive redundancy pay, Ms Edwards (5) *replied an announcement* would be made within a few days, but (6) *reassured that* they would receive financial compensation. She (7) *went on to complain government help* for small businesses was insufficient and (8) *demande*d ministers that they provide more support. She (9) *asked staff that* they continue to work as normal until details of the redundancies were given. She (10) *reassured that* the company would not close completely.