

Reporting what people say using nouns  
and adjectives

## A

## Reporting using nouns

We sometimes report people's words and thoughts using a **noun** in the reporting clause followed by a reported clause beginning with **that**, a **to-infinitive**-, or **wh-word**. Most of these nouns are related to reporting verbs (acknowledgement – acknowledge, statement – state, etc.). Note that when we report using **nouns** and **adjectives** (see C) the exact original words are not necessarily reported. Instead we might use our own words, or report that something was said without reporting *what* was said.

☆ Noun + **that-clause**

- The **claim** is often made *that* smoking causes heart disease.
- The jury came to the **conclusion** *that* the woman was guilty.

**Also: acknowledgement, advice, allegation, announcement, answer, argument, comment, decision, explanation, forecast, guarantee, indication, observation, promise, recommendation, reply, speculation, statement, suggestion, threat, warning**

Note that we don't usually leave out **that** in sentences like this (see Unit 33).

☆ Noun + **to-infinitive clause**

- I accepted Luisa's **invitation** *to visit* her in Rome.
- He gave me every **encouragement** *to take up* painting again.

**Also: decision, instruction, order, promise, recommendation, refusal, threat, warning**

Note that some of these nouns can be followed by a **that-clause**:

- They carried out their **threat** *to dismiss* workers on strike. (*or ... their threat that they would dismiss workers on strike.*)

☆ Noun + **wh-clause**

- Juan raised the **question** *of when* the money would be collected.
- Our previous meeting looked at the **issue** *of how* to increase income.

**Also: explanation, discussion, problem**

We usually use **of** after these nouns in reporting.

## B

After many of the nouns listed in A we can use **as to + wh-clause** or **as to + wh-word + to-infinitive** to introduce the subject of a question or topic discussed or thought about (see also Unit 34F). Note that an alternative preposition can usually be used instead of **as to**:

- She asked my **advice** **as to** *what* subject she should study at university. (*or ... advice on ...*)
- There was some **discussion** **as to** *whether* the price included tax or not. (*or ... discussion of ...*)
- Before we left we gave them strict **instructions** **as to** *how to* cook it. (*or ... about how to ...*)

## C

## Reporting using adjectives

Some adjectives used to report a speaker's feelings or opinion are followed by a **that-clause**:

- The builders are **certain** *that* they'll be finished by the end of next week.

**Also: adamant, agreed, angry, annoyed, grateful, insistent, sure**

Adjectives expressing uncertainty are usually followed by a **wh-clause**:

- Scientists aren't **sure** *where* the remains of the satellite will land.

**Also: doubtful (usually + whether), uncertain, not certain, unsure**

Some adjectives are usually followed by a preposition + noun phrase:

- Today's newspapers are very **critical** *of* the President's decision to appoint Mr Walters.

**Also: apologetic, complimentary, insulting, tactful (+ about); dismissive, scornful (+ of); abusive, sympathetic (+ to / towards)**

## Exercises

38.1 Complete the sentences with the nouns from the box and the notes in brackets. Use a **that-**, **to-infinitive** or **wh-clause**. Suggest alternatives where possible. **A**

announcement    ~~decision~~    encouragement    explanation  
invitation    issue    observation    promise    question    warning

- The turning point in his life came when he took the decision to become an actor. / ... that he would become an actor ... (become – actor)
- He failed to address the ... (who – pay – repairs – building)
- I was delighted to get an ... (spend the holidays – them – Scotland)
- I think it was Aristotle who made the ... (no such thing – bad publicity)
- Amazingly the police accepted Rudi's ... (taken – wallet – mistake)
- On the webinar they debated the ... (assisted suicide – criminal offence)
- The letter from the company gave a final ... (pay – bill by – end of – week)
- The government has broken its ... (reduce – rate – income tax)
- The positive reaction to my work gave me considerable ... (take up photography – career)
- Waiting passengers were angry when they heard the ... (flight – cancelled)

38.2 Complete the rewritten sentences using a noun formed from the italicised verb + **as to** and then a **wh-word**. **B**

- At the end the writers *suggest* when it is appropriate to correct students' grammar mistakes. The writers end with suggestions as to when it is appropriate to correct students' grammar mistakes.
- People have *argued* a great deal about how to define poverty. There has been ...
- For months people have *speculated* about whether President Malik would stand again. There have been months ...
- Scientists might *conclude* something about what their results imply. Scientists might ...
- We have still not *explained* definitely why the dinosaurs disappeared. There is still ...

38.3 Complete each sentence using an adjective from the box with **that**, a **wh-word**, or a **preposition**. **C**

abusive    adamant    agreed    angry    apologetic  
not certain    complimentary    dismissive    ~~doubtful~~    unsure

- The climbers were doubtful whether the clothes would be warm enough at high altitudes.
- My boss is very unsympathetic and was ..... my complaints about the new software.
- The company is ..... the child car seats are safe.
- Mona tried to pick up the rabbit, but was ..... to hold it.
- She was very ..... the window had been broken.
- Rachel is normally very reliable and was extremely ..... turning up late.
- Karim left for New York in September but he was ..... he would return.
- The court heard that Hughes became ..... a police officer and was arrested.
- Judi doesn't normally like spicy food, but was quite ..... my fish curry.
- All the players are ..... the game should go on despite the weather.