Reported Questions:
If vs Whether, Negative & Embedded Questions

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

1. "Are you coming or not?" → She asked ___ I was coming or not.
   a) if
   b) that
   c) whether
   d) when

2. "Should I take the train or the bus?" → He asked ___ he should take the train or the bus.
   a) whether
   b) if
   c) that
   d) which

3. "Is it worth buying?" → She wasn't sure ___ it was worth buying.
   a) whether
   b) that
   c) what
   d) which

4. "Will you join us for dinner?" → I wondered ___ she would join us for dinner.
   a) whether
   b) that
   c) what
   d) when

5. "Where is the station?" → She ___ where the station was.
   a) said
   b) told me
   c) wanted to know
   d) mentioned

6. "How old are you?" → He ___ how old I was.
   a) told me
   b) said
   c) inquired
   d) informed

7. "Don't you like chocolate?" → She asked me if I ___ like chocolate.
   a) didn't
   b) don't
   c) hadn't
   d) wasn't

8. "Can't you see the sign?" → He asked if I ___ see the sign.
   a) can't
   b) wasn't able to
   c) couldn't
   d) didn't

9. "Why haven't you finished yet?" → She asked why I ___ yet.
   a) haven't finished
   b) didn't finish
   c) wasn't finishing
   d) hadn't finished

10. "Isn't it beautiful here?" → She asked if it ___ beautiful there.
    a) isn't
    b) weren't
    c) hadn't been
    d) wasn't

11. "Should I apply for the job or wait for a better offer?" → He couldn't decide ___ to apply for the job or wait for a better offer.
    a) if
    b) that
    c) what
    d) whether

12. "When should I arrive?" → She asked when she ___.
   a) shall arrive
   b) would arrive
   c) arrived
   d) should arrive

13. "What time does the meeting start?" → I ___ what time the meeting started.
   a) said
   b) told
   c) mentioned
   d) wondered

14. "Will the weather be nice or rainy this weekend?" → She asked ___ the weather would be nice or rainy that weekend.
   a) if
   b) whether
   c) that
   d) how

15. "Why didn't you tell me earlier?" → She asked why I ___ her earlier.
   a) didn't tell
   b) hadn't told
   c) haven't told
   d) wasn't telling

16. "Doesn't he know about the meeting?" → She asked if he ___ about the meeting.
   a) doesn't know
   b) didn't know
   c) hadn't known
   d) wasn't knowing

17. We discussed ___ to accept the offer or decline it.
   a) if
   b) whether
   c) that
   d) what

18. "Won't you stay for dinner?" → She asked if I ___ stay for dinner.
   a) won't
   b) wouldn't
   c) don't
   d) didn't

19. "Is this seat taken or free?" → He asked ___ that seat was taken or free.
   a) that
   b) if
   c) whether
   d) which

20. "Why don't you take a break?" → She ___ why I didn't take a break.
   a) wondered
   b) said
   c) told me
   d) mentioned

Answers

1. c) whether
2. a) whether
3. a) whether
4. a) whether
5. c) wanted to know
6. c) inquired
7. a) didn't
8. c) couldn't
9. d) hadn't finished
10. d) wasn't
11. d) whether
12. d) should arrive
13. d) wondered
14. b) whether
15. b) hadn't told
16. b) didn't know
17. b) whether
18. b) wouldn't
19. c) whether
20. a) wondered

Explanations

1. "whether" (c)

When a reported yes/no question includes 'or not' directly after the connector, 'whether' is strongly preferred over 'if'. 'Whether or not' is standard; 'if or not' (immediately together) sounds unnatural.

2. "whether" (a)

When the question presents two alternatives with 'or', 'whether' is preferred over 'if'. 'Whether' naturally introduces choices between two or more options.

3. "whether" (a)

After expressions like 'wasn't sure', 'couldn't decide', and 'didn't know', 'whether' is preferred over 'if' in formal English. These are indirect ways of reporting the question internally.

4. "whether" (a)

'Wondered' is an alternative reporting verb for questions. Yes/no questions reported with 'wonder' use 'whether' as the conjunction. 'That' cannot introduce a reported question. 'What' and 'when' are question words that don't fit this yes/no question context.

5. "wanted to know" (c)

'Wanted to know' is a common alternative to 'asked' for reported questions. 'Said', 'told me', and 'mentioned' are for reported statements, not questions.

6. "inquired" (c)

'Inquired' is a formal synonym of 'asked' for reported questions. 'Told me', 'said', and 'informed' are for reported statements.

7. "didn't" (a)

When reporting a negative question, the negative element is preserved. 'Don't' (present simple negative) backshifts to 'didn't' (past simple negative). The surprise or emphasis of the original negative question is carried through.

8. "couldn't" (c)

The negative modal 'can't' backshifts to 'couldn't' in reported speech. The negative form is preserved to convey the original speaker's surprise or frustration.

9. "hadn't finished" (d)

Present perfect negative 'haven't finished' backshifts to past perfect negative 'hadn't finished'. The adverb 'yet' stays in the same position.

10. "wasn't" (d)

Negative 'isn't' backshifts to 'wasn't'. The negative is preserved in the reported question. 'Here' changes to 'there'.

11. "whether" (d)

Before an infinitive ('to apply'), only 'whether' is correct — 'if' cannot be used before 'to + verb'. 'Whether to...' is a standard pattern for reporting dilemmas.

12. "should arrive" (d)

'Should' (asking for advice) does not change in reported speech because it is already a past-form modal. 'I' changes to 'she'. Word order: 'when she should arrive'.

13. "wondered" (d)

'Wondered' is used to report a question you asked yourself or thought about internally. 'Said', 'told', and 'mentioned' are for statements, not questions.

14. "whether" (b)

With 'or' presenting alternatives, 'whether' is preferred. 'Will' → 'would' and 'this weekend' → 'that weekend'.

15. "hadn't told" (b)

Remove 'didn't' and backshift: past simple negative becomes past perfect negative. 'Didn't tell' → 'hadn't told'. 'Me' changes to 'her'.

16. "didn't know" (b)

Remove 'doesn't' and form past simple negative: 'doesn't know' becomes 'didn't know'. The negative element is preserved in the reported question.

17. "whether" (b)

'Whether' is required before an infinitive ('to accept'). 'If' cannot be used before 'to + verb'. 'Whether to...' is a standard pattern for reporting dilemmas or choices. Note: 'discuss' is transitive — we say 'discuss something', never 'discuss about something'.

18. "wouldn't" (b)

Negative 'won't' backshifts to 'wouldn't'. The negative is preserved to reflect the original speaker's invitation/surprise tone.

19. "whether" (c)

With 'or' presenting two alternatives ('taken or free'), 'whether' is preferred. 'This' changes to 'that'. 'Is' backshifts to 'was'.

20. "wondered" (a)

'Wondered' works as a reporting verb for questions, especially when the speaker is pondering or suggesting. 'Said', 'told me', and 'mentioned' are for statements.