



- "The sun rises in the east." The geography teacher told us that the sun ____ in the east.
a) had risen b) rises
c) has risen d) was rising
- "Water freezes at zero degrees Celsius." She said that water ____ at zero degrees Celsius.
a) freezes b) will freeze
c) had frozen d) was freezing
- "Whales are mammals, not fish." The marine biologist explained that whales ____ mammals, not fish.
a) have been b) had been
c) are d) would be
- "Light travels faster than sound." My physics teacher said that light ____ faster than sound.
a) had travelled b) was travelling
c) will travel d) travels
- "I live in Paris." (She still lives in Paris now.) She said she ____ in Paris.
a) had lived b) lives
c) was living d) would live
- "I am allergic to peanuts." (He is still allergic.) He told me he ____ allergic to peanuts.
a) had been b) would be
c) was being d) is
- "I work at a hospital." (She still works there.) She said she ____ at a hospital.
a) works b) had worked
c) was working d) would work
- "My sister loves chocolate." (Her sister still loves it.) She told me that her sister ____ chocolate.
a) had loved b) was loving
c) loves d) would love
- "I had already eaten dinner before you called." He said he ____ already eaten dinner before I called.
a) has b) had
c) would have d) have
- "We had never visited Japan before last year." They told us they ____ never visited Japan before the previous year.
a) have b) didn't have
c) would have d) had

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Answers

1. b) rises
2. a) freezes
3. c) are
4. d) travels
5. b) lives
6. d) is
7. a) works
8. c) loves
9. b) had
10. d) had
11. a) had
12. c) would
13. d) might
14. b) should
15. a) will be
16. c) need
17. d) opens
18. b) had finished
19. a) is
20. c) could



Explanations

1. “rises” (b)

This is a general truth that is always true. When reporting permanent facts, we do not need to backshift the tense. 'Rises' (present simple) is the correct answer because the fact remains unchanged.

2. “freezes” (a)

This is a scientific fact. Water still freezes at 0°C, so backshift is not needed. 'Freezes' (present simple) is the correct answer for reporting permanent scientific facts.

3. “are” (c)

This is a permanent biological fact. Whales are still mammals, so 'are' (present simple) is the correct answer for reporting unchanging scientific facts.

4. “travels” (d)

This is a scientific law that remains permanently true. No backshift is needed for general truths. 'Travels' (present simple) is the correct answer to reflect this unchanging fact.

5. “lives” (b)

Because the statement is still true at the time of reporting (she still lives in Paris), we keep the present tense. 'Lives' is the correct answer to show the situation has not changed. 'Had lived' suggests she no longer lives there, 'was living' suggests temporary residence, and 'would live' is a future conditional.

6. “is” (d)

The allergy is a permanent personal condition that is still true. When reporting something still true at the time of speaking, we keep the present tense. 'Is' is the correct answer. 'Had been' suggests the allergy is no longer present, 'would be' is conditional future, and 'was being' implies temporary behaviour.

7. “works” (a)

The situation is still true — she still works at a hospital. When the reported fact has not changed, we keep the present tense. 'Works' is the correct answer. 'Had worked' suggests she no longer works there, 'was working' implies temporary employment, and 'would work' is conditional future.

8. “loves” (c)

This is a still-true statement. Her sister's love of chocolate has not changed, so we keep the present tense. 'Loves' is the correct answer. 'Had loved' suggests she no longer loves chocolate, 'was loving' is unnatural because 'love' is a stative verb rarely used in continuous form, and 'would love' is conditional.

9. “had” (b)

Past perfect ('had eaten') does not change in reported speech because there is no further backshift possible. Past perfect stays as past perfect. 'Had already eaten' remains 'had already eaten'.

10. “had” (d)

Past perfect cannot be backshifted further. 'Had never visited' in direct speech stays as 'had never visited' in reported speech. The time expression 'last year' changes to 'the previous year', but the tense stays the same.

11. “had” (a)

Past perfect continuous ('had been waiting') does not change in reported speech. There is no tense further back than past perfect, so it stays the same. 'Had been waiting' remains 'had been waiting'.

12. “would” (c)

'Would' is already a past-form modal and does not change further in reported speech. 'Would love' stays as 'would love'. This applies to all past modals: would, could, might, should.

13. “might” (d)

'Might' does not change in reported speech because it is already a past form. Note that 'may' can sometimes change to 'might', but 'might' never changes further. 'She said she might take a holiday' is correct.

14. “should” (b)

'Should' does not change in reported speech. It is already a past-form modal (like would, could, might). 'He told me I should see a doctor' is correct. 'Must' and 'had to' change the meaning.

15. “will be” (a)

When the reporting verb is in the present tense ('says'), no backshift is needed. The original tense is kept. 'Says... will be' is correct. We only backshift when the reporting verb is past tense (said, told, etc.).

16. “need” (c)

The reporting verb 'says' is present tense, so no backshift is required. 'My doctor says I need more exercise' keeps the original tense. If the doctor 'said' (past), then 'needed' would be correct.

17. “opens” (d)

Two reasons for no backshift here: (1) the reporting verb 'says' is present tense, and (2) this is a general fact about the museum's schedule. 'Opens' is clearly the correct answer.

18. “had finished” (b)

Be careful — this is NOT a special case! Normal backshift applies here. 'Finished' (past simple) backshifts to 'had finished' (past perfect) because this is a completed action in the past, not a general truth or still-true statement. The time expression 'yesterday' also changes to 'the day before'.

19. “is” (a)

This is a proverb — a general truth that remains always valid. Even though the reporting verb is past tense ('said'), we do not need to backshift general truths and well-known sayings. 'Is' (present simple) is the correct answer because the wisdom still holds true.

20. “could” (c)

'Could' is already a past-form modal and does not change further in reported speech. 'He said he could speak three languages' is correct. While 'was able to' can sometimes replace 'could', it is not the standard backshift — 'could' simply stays as 'could'.