

Unit 10 WNYN Lexicals – Script Application

1. To tell you the truth
2. How was sth
3. go over sth
4. kind of
5. sound like
6. be quite sth
7. I don't see WH-
8. For one thing
9. full-fledged
10. be strictly confidential
11. suggest smn not do sth
12. I'd sure like to
13. get back to sth
14. I'm not sure WH-
15. sth go on
16. get sth done
17. WH-ever clause
18. V (type, eat, finish, etc.) up
19. WH- do you suppose...?
20. have no idea

1. When Margaret asked Peggy if everything was all right, Peggy told her that, to tell the truth, she wasn't sure.
2. When Margaret returned from a meeting that she had attended, Peggy asked her how the meeting was. (*Why "had attended" in the first clause but "was" in the second clause? Once the relationship between the two verbs has been established, we don't need to use past perfect again. In fact, in this context it would be confusing if past perfect were used again.*)
3. Peggy wasn't so sure that Margaret would be able to figure out her notes, so she suggested going over them together. (*OR: suggested going over. NOT suggested to go over.*)
4. When Peggy asked Margaret how the meeting was, Margaret told her it was kind of boring. (*Past perfect isn't used here because the reader/listener of the reported speech already knows that the meeting happened before Peggy and Margaret spoke, and because that meeting doesn't serve as background for anything.*)
5. Margaret told Grace that it sounded like it had been pretty busy around the office that afternoon. (*"It's been pretty busy" means that it was still busy at the time that they spoke, but the context tells us that the busy activity finished; she probably used present perfect because the activity had some influence on the present, e.g., the effect of the activity was still being felt.*)
6. When Margaret told Grace it sounded like it had been pretty busy there, Grace told Margaret it was quite an afternoon. (*The context implies that the busy activity finished before they spoke, so we used past perfect here. Simple past tense is used in "was quite an afternoon" because the past perfect setting has already been established; once the setting is established for the listener (or reader), we don't use past perfect again for that same setting. This is the same principle of establishing the relationship between the verbs, mentioned in #2 above.*)
7. Peggy told Margaret how busy it had been that afternoon around the office, and that she couldn't see how she handled it (*being so busy*) by herself.
8. When Margaret asked Grace what had been going on in the office, Grace told her that, for one thing, David got a promotion. (*Past perfect because it's the background to what Peggy had told her previous to Margaret and Grace's conversation. Simple past, in this context of indirect speech, would mean that something was still going on at the time of speaking.*)
9. David got a promotion and is now a full-fledged reporter. OR: Grace told Margaret that David got a promotion and was a full-fledged reporter. (*In indirect speech "now" is deleted because it no longer has any meaning.*)
10. Grace told Margaret that the painful decision that they had to make that day was strictly confidential. (*Here, past perfect is optional; simple past is used because it the chronological relationship between telling and making the decision seems quite clear.*)
11. Grace suggested that Margaret not discuss the painful decision with anyone. (*Or Grace suggested to Margaret that she not discuss...*)
12. Peggy told Margaret that she sure would like to know what had been going on in Mr. Russo's office. (*If we use simple past here, the reader/listener might think the activity is still going on. Context tells us differently.*)
13. After Peggy and Margaret talked about what had been going on in the office, Margaret suggested they get back to the phone messages. (*Or "suggested getting."*)
14. Peggy suggested Margaret go over the phone messages with her because she wasn't sure she'd be able to figure out her notes.
15. Peggy told Margaret that she wondered what had been going on in Mr. Russo's office.
16. (For 16, 17, 18) Peggy heard Barbara tell Mr. Russo that she'd get whatever it was typed up right away. (*The example in the Lexicals Exercise shows a different usage of wh-ever. Sorry!*)
19. Peggy asked Margaret why she supposed Mr. Russo had had Barbara come up to his office.
20. When Peggy asked Margaret why she thought Mr. Russo had had Barbara come up, Margaret told her she had no idea.

Simple past and past perfect in reported speech: Some of you have come to Mr. H's office with your questions about these two tenses. (Keep coming – it's always nice to see you!) You may have noticed that sometimes Mr. H tells you one thing in the office, and then tells you differently a few days later. That's because of two characteristics that are inherent in the nature of present perfect: present perfect is used not only when something is still happening but also when it's finished but is still influencing the situation. In our decision whether to use simple past or past perfect, we have to know what present perfect is telling us about its verb. In the ordinary speech of native speakers, simple past is often mistakenly used when past perfect should be used, and past perfect is sometimes used when simple past would be sufficient. That's probably because in the middle of a conversation we don't have a lot of time to decide which tense we should use, and because it sometimes doesn't matter what verb tense is used because the context is enough. In good writing, however, native speakers are more careful about using the correct tense.