

INDIRECT QUESTION

Indirect questions follow the syntax of the finite construction of indirect statement (cf. pages 761–62). The original question may contain an indicative, [potential optative, or subjunctive (in a deliberative or anticipatory question)]. In primary sequence, all original moods and tenses remain unchanged. In secondary sequence, an indicative [or subjunctive] may be changed to the corresponding tense of the optative or be retained unchanged for emphasis.

The negative of the original question [and the particle *ἄν*] remain unchanged in indirect question.

Indirect questions are introduced by indirect interrogatives (e.g., *ὅστις, ὅπου*). Sometimes the direct interrogative (e.g., *τίς, ποῦ*) is retained:

οἶδα ὅστις τοῦτο ποιεῖ.

I know **who is doing** this.

I know the answer to the question “*τίς τοῦτο ποιεῖ;*”

(The original present indicative remains unchanged in primary sequence after the perfect indicative οἶδα. The direct interrogative has been changed to the indirect interrogative.)

ἤδη ὅστις τοῦτο ποιοίη.

I knew **who was doing** this.

I knew the answer to the question “*τίς τοῦτο ποιεῖ;*”

(The original present indicative has been changed to a present optative in secondary sequence after the pluperfect indicative ἤδη. The direct interrogative has been changed to the indirect interrogative.)

ἤδη τίς τοῦτο ποιεῖ.

I knew **who was doing** this.

(The original present indicative, and the direct interrogative, have been retained for emphasis in secondary sequence after the pluperfect indicative ἤδη.)

οἶδα ὅστις τοῦτο ποιήσειεν ἄν.

I know **who may do** this.

I know the answer to the question “*τίς τοῦτο ποιήσειεν ἄν;*”

The original potential optative, with aorist tense showing simple aspect, remains unchanged.)

[οὐκ οἶδα ὅτι εἶπω.

I do not know **what I am to say**.

I do not know the answer to the question “*τί εἶπω;*”

The original subjunctive in a deliberative question, with aorist tense showing simple aspect, remains unchanged in primary sequence after the perfect indicative οἶδα.)

[οὐκ ἤδη **ὄτι εἶποιμι**.

I did not know **what I said/had said**.

I did not know **what I was to say**.

I did not know the answer to the question “τί εἶπον;” or “τί εἶπω;”

(*The aorist optative represents an original aorist indicative of a question of fact or an aorist subjunctive showing simple aspect in a deliberative question. Context determines meaning.*)]

[Subordinate clauses in indirect questions are treated like subordinate clauses in indirect statement:

οὐκ οἶδα ὅτι ποιήσει **ἐάν ἔλθῃ** εἰς τὴν πόλιν.

I do not know what he will do **if he goes** to the city.

I do not know the answer to the question “τί ποιήσει ἐάν ἔλθῃ εἰς τὴν πόλιν;”

(*The original aorist subjunctive of the protasis of a future more vivid conditional sentence remains unchanged in primary sequence after the perfect indicative οἶδα.*)

οὐκ ἤδη ὅτι ποιήσοι **εἰ ἔλθοι** εἰς τὴν πόλιν.

I did not know what he would do **if he went** to the city.

I did not know the answer to the question “τί ποιήσοι ἐάν ἔλθῃ εἰς τὴν πόλιν;”

(*The original aorist subjunctive of the protasis of a future more vivid conditional sentence has been changed to an aorist optative, and the particle ἐάν has become εἰ, in secondary sequence after the pluperfect indicative ἤδη.*)]

[IMPLIED INDIRECT STATEMENT

In certain kinds of subordinate clauses, after a secondary main verb the optative is used in *IMPLIED INDIRECT STATEMENT*, even though the main clause is not in indirect statement. Contrast the following sets of sentences:

1. τοὺς στρατιώτῃς οὐκ ἐτίμων οἱ πολῖται ὅτι οὐκ **ἠθέλησαν** μαχέσασθαι.
The citizens were not honoring the soldiers because they **refused** to fight.
(*Here the indicative is the normal construction in a causal clause introduced by ὅτι, “because.”*)

τοὺς στρατιώτῃς οὐκ ἐτίμων οἱ πολῖται ὅτι οὐκ **ἐθέλοιν** μαχέσασθαι.
The citizens were not honoring the soldiers because, **as the citizens said**, they **refused** to fight.

(*In this sentence the present optative is in implied indirect statement in secondary sequence and stands for the present indicative of the cause as it appeared to the citizens. Their original thought was “ὅτι οὐκ ἐθέλουσι μαχέσασθαι.”*)