Grammar: Complete Sequence of Tenses Chart

The focus of this lesson will be on how to choose the tense of a subjunctive verb in a number of complicated constructions. The rules which we have learned about the sequence of tenses in purpose and result clauses still hold true, but that is only half of the story. Let us begin by reviewing two areas with which we are already familiar.

Sequence of Tenses:

Latin verb tenses are divided into two sequences.
   Primary sequence includes present, future, and future perfect verbs.
   Secondary sequence includes perfect, imperfect and pluperfect verbs.

When forming clauses of purpose or result, if the main verb is primary sequence, the subjunctive verb will be present tense. If the main verb is secondary sequence, the subjunctive verb will be imperfect tense.

Let us look at this information in a chart format:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequence of Main Verb</th>
<th>Tense of Subjunctive Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Present Future, Future Perf)</td>
<td>Present Tense Subjunctive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect</td>
<td>Imperfect Tense Subjunctive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluperfect</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

We will be adding more to this chart in a bit, but seeing it in this simple format will help us understand the more complex form to come.

Indirect Statements:

When we studied indirect statements, we learned that there were two verbs involved. The main verb of saying thinking, feeling or perceiving was a regular verb with normal endings, and the tense was chosen “naturally”, that is without any special “calculation”. However, the verb of the indirect statement became an infinitive, and the tense of the infinitive was chosen not by the absolute time when the action occurred, but rather that time relative to the action of the main verb.
Let us go over some examples of that.

**Maria says that she will go to Rome.**
The “going” happens after the “saying”, so go would be future infinitive.

**Maria said that she would go to Rome today.**
The “saying” is in the past, and while the “going” is happening now in real time, since it is happening after she spoke, it will be a future infinitive.

**Maria said she was reading a book.**
The “saying” is in the past, but the “reading”, while also in the past, happened at the same time as the “saying”. Therefore read will be a present tense infinitive.

**Maria will think tomorrow that the summer will be grand.**
The thinking is in the future, but the summer is further in the future, after the thinking, so “be” will be a future infinitive.

So the tense of an infinitive verb in an indirect statement is calculated by the relative time of the action of the infinitive compared to the main verb. If the action of the infinitive is at the same time as the main verb, the infinitive is present. If it happened before the main verb, the infinitive is perfect. It is happens after the main verb, the infinitive is future tense.

Sequence of Tenses

Now we will combine the ideas of relative tenses and sequence of tenses for the grand, complete, final, Sequence of Tenses Chart.

**RELATIVE TIME OF SUBJUNCTIVE VERB TO MAIN VERB**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJUNCTIVE VERB TO MAIN VERB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same time as, or Time after (Purpose or Result Clause)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
So, without the pressure of translating into Latin, let us use the chart to determine the tense of the subjunctive in the following sentences. Note that the example sentences are indirect questions, which is the next major usage of the subjunctive. They will be covered in more detail next week.

He asks whether you might speak.
Main verb: ask, present tense, primary sequence  Top Line of Chart
Subjunctive verb: speak, happens after the asking,  Left Side of Chart
The subjunctive verb “speak” will be present tense.

I wondered if my father had arrived.
Main verb: wondered, perfect tense, secondary sequence  Bottom Line of Chart
Subjunctive verb: arrived, happened before the wondering  Right Side of Chart
The subjunctive verb “arrived” will be pluperfect tense.

He knows who stole the horse.
Main Verb: knows, present tense, primary sequence  Top Line of Chart
Subjunctive Verb: stole, happened before the knowing,  Right side of Chart
The subjunctive verb “Stole” will be perfect tense.

He learned in which house she lived.
Main Verb: learned, perfect tense, secondary sequence Bottom Line of Chart
Subjunctive Verb: live  happens at same time as learning Left Side of Chart
The subjunctive verb “lived” will be imperfect tense.

Exercises:
Determine the tense of the Subjunctive Verb in the following sentences.

1. The mother knew when the children had arrived.  (Pluperfect)
2. I will ask if she enjoyed the games.  (Perfect)
3. The sailors wondered if they would survive the storm.  (Imperfect)
4. The soldiers had known why the battle would be lost.  (Imperfect)
5. I will explain why my chariot will win.  (Present)
6. He was told in which quarter of the city they had found a cobbler.  (Pluperfect)
7. I wonder where I left that book.  (Perfect)
8. You know where we are going.  (Present)
9. You will have wondered how you lived without it.  (Perfect)
10. He asked in order to find out.  (Imperfect)
11. Let us stay here. (Present)
12. We will stay so long that our hosts will wish us gone. (Present)