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Grammar Reference

1 The sequence of tenses

The **sequence of tenses** is constructed as follows:

- in **indirect speech**: when the verb of the **main clause** is a verb expressing opinion or a declaration (to think, to say, to tell...). In the **simple present** or in the **preterite**, the verb of the dependent clause is conjugated as follows:

Main	Dependent
present	present <i>or</i> future <i>or</i> present perfect
preterite	preterite <i>or</i> conditional <i>or</i> past perfect

Example:

Main	Dependent	Dependent - clause tense
He says	it doesn't matter.	present
He said	it didn't matter.	preterite
I think	it will be fun.	future
We thought	it would rain.	conditional
I know	you've tried .	present perfect
I knew	you had tried .	past perfect

- with **dependent clauses** introduced by **that** or a **relative pronoun**: when the **main clause** is in the **preterite**, the verb of the dependent clause is conjugated normally in the **preterite**.

Example:

We **were** the ones **who did** it.
 It **was** on Saturday **that** it **happened** to him.

Note. When **that** is used in **indirect speech**, the dependent verb **follows the rule** of **agreement** of indirect speech (it doesn't necessarily have to be in the preterite).

2 'That' and dependent clauses

- **Verbs** of knowledge, perception, opinion, agreement, affirmation, assumption, remembrance, forgetting, hope, surprise, and fear may **precede dependent clauses introduced** by 'that.' 'That' is often **omitted**.

Example: Do you **think** (**that**) Japan can outmatch the United States?
They're **saying** (**that**) the sea's going to be very rough for three days.

Note. Such **dependent clauses** can be **elliptical**.

Example: I don't like dogs.
I know you **don't**.

- Main verbs expressing assumptions, suggestions, and requests necessitate use of the **subjunctive mood** in the explanatory **dependent clauses (introduced** by 'that') that follow them.

Example: He insists **that** she **come**.

- Following a verb like 'to tell,' 'to remind,' or 'to inform,' a '**that**' clause can be **preceded by the object** of the main verb.

Example: He told **me** **that** she was ill.

Note. When the verb in such a case is 'to explain,' 'to' precedes the indirect **object**.

Example: I explained **to them** **that** it would be a good idea to go to Spain.

3 'Kind of' followed by a noun

'**Kind of**' + **noun** may be used with or without an **indefinite article**. '**Kind of a / an**' + noun carries a **general**, vaguer meaning.

Example: What **kind of a man** is he?
What **kind of** aircraft are we flying in?

You can use '**kind of a / an**' + **noun** to **ask** for a **more precise definition** or **description** of something.

Example: What **kind of service** do you offer?
What **kind of an office plan** do you have? Open space or individual offices?
What **kind of experience** does the position require?
What **kind of a problem** are you experiencing?

To **compare something to another** in an **approximate** or **partial** way, you can use the expression '**kind of like a / an' + noun**. Often, this expression is followed by a '**but' clause**.

Example: What is that? It looks **kind of like an agenda**, but is much bigger.

The new briefcase is **kind of like a traditional one**, but has more modern features.

You can use the expressions **sort of** and **type of** in much the same way as **kind of**.

Example: What **sort of investment** do you want to make?

What **type of a consultant** do you plan to hire?

It's **sort of an issue**, but there's no need to worry.

'**Kind of a / an' + noun** may also be used to **describe or define something** in an **approximate**, rather than a **precise**, way.

Example: I have a copy of the report ready, but it's **kind of a semi-final version**.

Negotiating is **kind of a challenge**, but I enjoy it.

Note. When referring to something **plural**, kind of, sort of, and type of become **kinds of**, **sorts of**, and **types of**.

Example: What **kinds of clients** do you generally work with?

Other expressions useful for **describing or defining something** in an **approximate** way are:

'**a kind of a / an**' + **noun**

'**a sort of a / an**' + **noun**

'**a type of a / an**' + **noun**

'**some kind of a / an**' + **noun**

'**some type of a / an**' + **noun**

'**some sort of a / an**' + **noun**.

Example: I think Deborah is carrying **some kind of an office chair**.

The new company restaurant has **a type of a patio** where employees can eat outside.

Gabriel is working on **some type of presentation**.

The technical team is having **some sort of a problem**. I don't know the details, though.