

61



James Cameron **invited** Lady Martha Brainstock, President of the Horticultural Society, to do an interview on the 9 o'clock news on TV6.

When she arrived, James **persuaded** her to let the make-up girl put some make-up on her face, and his assistant **asked** her **if** she wanted a drink before the interview. He **advised** her to have a drink of water so her throat would not be too dry during the interview, as the studio was very hot. When she was ready, James **asked** her to sit down in the chair and **told** her to relax and try not to look into the camera.

He **asked** her **if** she was happy about the growth in popularity of the organic movement. Lady Brainstock told him that she was delighted with the enormous increase in knowledge of ecology and in concern with environmental issues among the ordinary people in Europe. Then James **wanted to know if** she had always been interested in plants and **if** she had been a keen gardener as a child. Lady Brainstock said that she was afraid that she had come from a very rich family which had employed a gardener, so she had never been allowed to work in the garden and get her hands dirty. James **wondered why** she had chosen to go into horticulture. She laughed and explained that that was exactly why, because she had not been permitted to work with the earth when she was a girl, so it was what she wanted to do more than anything. She admitted that she liked flowers more than people!

After the interview James thanked her and said goodbye. Then he **asked** his assistant to be sure to find a spare pair of shoes for Lady Brainstock next time she was invited for an interview!

1 reporting questions

When we want to report *someone asking for information now*, we use the present continuous form of **ask**, with **if** or **whether**, and with the rest of the sentence in the present tense. In a reported question we put the **subject** before the verb, and we don't use a question mark:

■ Sheila: 'Are you warm enough?' → Sheila is asking **if you are** warm enough.

We usually use **whether** when we are talking about a *choice of things*:

■ Jonathan: 'Do you want coffee or tea?' → Jonathan is asking **whether** you want coffee or tea.

We also use **whether** when a *choice is implied* but not stated; sometimes we add **or not**:

■ 'Do you take milk?' → He is asking **whether you take** milk (**or not**).

To report *someone asking for information now*, we can also use phrases such as **wants to know**, **would like to know**, or **wonders**. We use these phrases with **if** or **whether**:

■ Paul: 'Has Maria finished the decorating?' → Paul **wonders if** Maria has finished the decorating.

OR → Paul **wants to know whether** Maria has finished the decorating (**or not**).

OR → Paul **would like to know if** Maria has finished the decorating.

We can use a question word (like **what**, **how**, or **why**) after **ask**, **wants to know** etc:

■ Beryl is asking Christopher **what** he plans to do next.

If we want to report *a question someone asked in the past*, we use the past tense in both clauses:

■ Jonathan **asked** whether we **wanted** coffee or tea.

■ Paul **wondered** if Maria **had finished** the decorating.

■ Dana **wanted to know** when the programme **started**.

To report *a question which someone will ask in the future*, we use a future form of **ask** with the rest in the same tense that the speaker will use:

■ Mary **is going to ask** her mother **if** she **needs** any help on Sunday.