

# Reported speech

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# Meaning and use

- If we report what another person has said, we usually do not use the speaker's exact words (direct speech), but reported (indirect) speech.
- Therefore, you need to learn how to transform direct speech into reported speech. The structure is a little different depending on whether you want to transform a statement, question or request.

Type	Example
<b>direct speech</b>	"I speak English."
<b>reported speech (no backshift)</b>	He says that he speaks English.
<b>reported speech (backshift)</b>	He said that he spoke English.

# Reporting in the same tense

- If the reporting verb (e.g. *says*) is in the present tense, we use the same tenses as the original speaker:
  - > Amy: “I’ve missed the bus so I’ll be late”
  - > Amy says she’s missed the bus so she’ll be late.
- If the reporting verb (e.g. *said*) is in the past, we sometimes use the same tenses as the original speaker if the situation is still true:
  - > Robert: “I have three sisters”.
  - > Robert said he has three sisters.

# Tense changes in Reported Speech

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
Simple Present	Simple Past
Present Continuous	Past Continuous
Simple Past	Past Perfect Simple
Present Perfect Simple	
Past Perfect Simple	
Past Progressive	Past Perfect Continuous
Present Perfect Continuous	
Past Perfect Continuous	
Future I (going to)	was / were going to
Future I (will)	Conditional I (would)
Conditional I (would)	

- Some modal verbs change, e.g. can>could; may>might; must>had to.
- The verbs *could*, *must* (deduction), *should*, *would*, *might*, *mustn't*, *needn't*, *ought to*, *used to* do not normally change.
  - Example: He said, "She might be right." – He said that she might be right.

# Say and tell

- ◉ If you want to say *who* somebody is talking to, use **tell**:
  - > Sonia told me you were ill.
- ◉ Otherwise use **say**:
  - > Sonia said you were ill.
- ◉ Sometimes you can use **say something to somebody**:
  - > Anne said goodbye to me and left.
- ◉ We also use **tell/ask somebody to do something** in reported speech, especially for orders and requests.
  - > I told Jim not to shout.
- ◉ Alternatively, we can use the following reporting verbs:
  - > Like **Tell**: Assure, convince, inform, notify, persuade, remind
  - > Like **Say**: admit, complain, indicate, remark, announce, shout, confess, mention, reply, state, comment, explain, point out, report, swear, agree, suggest

# Reporting statements

- ◉ We often use *say* to report what somebody said:
  - > He said (that) he was going to win.
- ◉ If there's an object, *say* must be followed by *to*:
  - > He said to me (that) he was going to win.
- ◉ When we use *tell* to report what someone said, it is always followed by an object without *to*:
  - > He told them (that) he was going to win.
- ◉ We often use other reporting verbs instead of *say* and *tell*: *ask*, *reply*, *answer*...

# Reporting questions

- Questions are reported using the word order of a statement rather than a question.
- Questions with question pronouns (*who*, *what...*) keep these words when they're repeated:
  - > “How do you feel” > Rachel asked me how I felt.
  - > “What’s the weather like?” > Rachel asked me what the weather was like.
- Yes/No questions are reported with *if* or *whether*:
  - > “Can you hear me?” > Rachel asked me *whether/if* I could hear her.

# Reporting commands and requests

- To report an imperative or request, use tell or ask + person + infinitive w/o to:
  - > “Go away” > She told/asked him to go away.
  - > “Could you help me?” > I asked the shop assistant to help me.
- To report a negative imperative, use a negative infinitive:
  - > “Don’t worry” > The doctor told me not to worry.
- Please note that you can’t use *said* in these sentences:
  - ~~*She said him to go away*~~



# Reporting offers, advice and promises

- Whenever we come across offers, advice or promises we can either report literally or interpret the intention of the speaker and include a verb + infinitive structure:
  - > “I’ll be the best president”
    - He said he’d be the best president.
    - He promised to be the best president.
  - > “You should vote for me”.
    - He advised us to vote for him.
    - He said we should vote for him.
  - > “We could help you”.
    - They offered to help me.
    - They said they could help me.

# Place and time expressions

- For place and time expressions you have to check whether place and time are the same in direct and reported speech or not.
- Therefore you always have to think which place and time expressions are logical in a certain situation.
- In the following table, you will find ways of transforming place and time expressions into reported speech.

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
today	that day
now	then
yesterday	the day before
... days ago	... days before
last week	the week before
next year	the following year
tomorrow	the next day / the following day
here	there
this	that
these	those

# Exercises on Reported Speech

- **Statements in Reported Speech**
- no backshift – change of pronouns
- no backshift – change of pronouns and places
- with backshift
- with backshift and change of place and time expressions
- **Questions in Reported Speech**
- Exercise 1
- Exercise 2
- **Requests in Reported Speech**
- Exercise 1 – requests (positive)
- Exercise 2 – requests (negative)
- Exercise 3 – requests (mixed)
- **Mixed Exercises on Reported Speech**
- Exercise 1
- Exercise 2
- **Grammar in Texts**
- „The Canterville Ghost“ (highlight direct speech and reported speech)