



REPORTED SPEECH



- We use direct speech to quote people's exact words. We use inverted commas (“ ”) in direct speech.

“I come from Ireland,” Fiona said.

- We use reported speech to report the exact meaning of what someone said, but not the exact words. We do not use inverted commas in reported speech. Personal pronouns, possessive adjectives and possessive pronouns change according to the meaning of the sentence.

Fiona said that she comes from Ireland.

- We can report someone's words either a long time after they were said (**out-of-date reporting**) or a short time after they were said (**up-to-date reporting**).

Say- Tell- Ask

- **Say** can be used both in direct and reported speech. It is used with or without a personal object. When used with a personal object, it is always followed by the preposition **to** (**said to me**). In reported speech, **say** is not followed by an object pronoun, but it can be followed by **that**.
*She **said**, "I'm happy."* / *She **said to me**, "I'm happy."*
→ *She **said (that)** she was happy.*
- **Tell** can be used both in direct and reported speech. It is always followed by a personal object (**told me**).
*She **told me**, "I'm happy."*
→ *She **told me (that)** she was happy.*
- **Ask** is used in reported questions and requests. It is also used in direct questions.
*"Where is Tom?" he **asked me**.*
→ *He **asked me** where Tom was.*
*"Will you do me a favour?" Mary **said to me**.*
→ *Mary **asked me** to do her a favour.*

Expressions with say, tell and ask

SAY	good morning/ afternoon, etc. something/ noting, etc. a prayer, so, a few words, etc.
TELL	the truth, a lie, s secret, a story, a joke, the time, the difference, sb one's name, sb the way, one from another, one's fortune, sb so, etc.
ASK	a favour, the time, a question, the price, etc.

Reported statements

- Verb tenses and time expressions change in reported speech:
 - a) when the introductory verb is in a past tense.
"I'm buying a new car next month," he said.
→ *He said that he **was buying** a new car **the following month**.*
 - b) in out-of-date reporting.
*(Wednesday 13 October) Tim said "I **have caught** a cold."*
*(Sunday 17 October) Tim said that he **had caught** a cold.*
 - c) when we consider what the speaker says to be untrue.
*"Peter and I **are** business partners," Jill said to me.*
*Jill said that she and Peter **were** business partners. (but Peter had never met her.)*
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The tenses change as follows:

	Direct speech	Reported speech
present simple → past simple	"I play the guitar quite well."	He said (that) he played the guitar quite well.
present continuous → past continuous	"I am learning French."	He said (that) he was learning French.
present perfect → past perfect	"I have already watered the flowers."	He said (that) he had already watered the flowers.
past simple → past simple or past perfect	"I won the chess tournament."	He said (that) he (had) won the chess tournament.
past continuous → past continuous or past perfect continuous	"I was writing a letter at five o'clock."	He said (that) he was writing/had been writing a letter at five o'clock.
future (will) → conditional (would)	"I will do the shopping."	He said (that) he would do the shopping.

Modal verbs

	Direct speech	Reported speech
will → would	"I will study medicine."	He said (that) he would study medicine.
can → could	"I can cook very well."	He said (that) he could cook very well.
can → could/would be able to (future reference)	"I can meet you at noon."	He said (that) he could/would be able to meet me at noon.
may → might	"I may go for a ride."	He said (that) he might go for a ride.
shall → should (asking for advice)	"What shall I tell him?"	He asked what he should tell him.
shall → offer (expressing offers)	" Shall I help you?"	He offered to help me.
must → must/had to (obligation)	"You must write an essay."	He said (that) I must/had to write an essay.
needn't → needn't/didn't need to/didn't have to	"You needn't feed the dog."	I needn't/didn't need to/didn't have to feed the dog.

Remember:

- Would, could, might, should, ought, had better, used to and mustn't do not change. Must does not change when it expresses a logical assumption.

"You could watch a video," he said. → He said that we could watch a video.

"You must be happy," Susan said to Joe. → Susan told Joe (that) he must be happy.

Some words and time expressions change:

now → then, at the time, immediately

today, tonight → that day, that night

yesterday → the day before, the previous day

two days ago → two days before

last month → the month before, the previous month

this week → that week

tomorrow → the next/following day

next month → the month after, the following month

here → there

come → go

Remember:

Tenses **do not change** in reported speech when:

a) the introductory verb (say, tell, etc.) is in the present simple, future or present perfect.

"I live in Tokyo," he says.

→ *He says (that) he **lives** in Tokyo.*

b) the speaker reports something a short time after it was said (up-to-date reporting).

"There is plenty of food in the fridge," Mum said.

→ *Mum said (that) there **is** plenty of food in the fridge.*

c) the reported sentence deals with type 2 or type 3 conditionals.

"If I had the money, I would travel abroad," Kelly said.

→ *Kelly said (that) if she **had** the money, she **would travel** abroad.*

Tenses **can either change or remain the same** in reported speech when the speaker reports a general truth, a law of nature or a permanent state.

"The sun sets in the west," the teacher said.

*The teacher said (that) the sun **sets/set** in the west.*

Reported questions

- Reported questions are usually introduced with the verbs **ask**, **inquire**, **wonder** or the expression **want to know**. The verb is in the affirmative. The question mark and words/expressions such as **please**, **well**, **oh**, etc., are omitted. The verb tenses, pronouns and time expressions change as in statements.
- When the direct question begins with a question word (**who**, **where**, **when**, **why**, **what**, **how old**, **how long**, etc) the reported question is introduced with the same question word. When the direct question begins with an **auxiliary verb** (is, do, have) or a **modal verb** (can, may, etc) then the reported question begins with **if** or **whether**.

"Where are you from?" she asked me. → She asked me where I was from.

"Can you speak Italian?" Tom asked me. → Tom asked me if/whether I could speak Italian.

Reported Commands/Requests/Suggestions

- To report commands, requests, suggestions, instructions, etc., in reported speech we use an appropriate introductory verb (**advise, ask, order, suggest, etc**) and the **to-infinitive, -ing form or that-clause**, depending on the introductory verb (see table of introductory verbs below).

"Be quiet." → *He **ordered us to be** quiet.*

"Will you help me set the table, please?" Susan said. → *Susan **asked me to help** her set the table.*

"Let's go to the shopping centre." → *He **suggested going** to the shopping centre.*

A close-up, low-angle shot of an hourglass. The top bulb is filled with a thick layer of bright green sand. The narrow neck of the hourglass is visible, with a thin stream of sand falling into the bottom bulb. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey. A semi-transparent maroon rectangle with a thin white border is centered over the hourglass, containing the text.

DO THE EXERCISES
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