

# Basic English Grammar



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# **Reported Speech**

Week 11 – Lecture 11

# **Reported Speech**

The words that people say are called direct speech. Reported speech is often used to describe what someone said at an earlier point in time.

Types:

**Statement**

**Wh- questions**

**Yes/no questions**

**Imperative**

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**Yes/no questions**

**Imperative**

# STATEMENT

The main verb in reported speech is usually “said”.

The reported verb is usually in a different tense from the direct speech.



**Tom**

Direct speech uses the present simple.

**I feel sick.**

**Tom said that he felt sick. I hope he's OK.**

“That” is usually added after “said” in reported speech.

Reported speech uses the past simple for the reported verb.

## Further examples:

Your house **is** really beautiful.

She **said** our house **was** really beautiful.

Your suit **looks** great.

He **said** that my suit **looked** great.

# “TELL” IN REPORTED SPEECH

In reported speech, “tell” can also be used as the main verb. It must be followed by an object, which shows who someone is talking to.

**I want to learn to drive.**

“Say” doesn’t need to be followed by an object.

He { **said**  
**told me** } **that he wanted to learn to drive.**

“Tell” must be followed by an object.

## Further examples:

- She **told me** that she **was** at the party.
- He **told us** he **arrived** late to the meeting.
- I **told her** that I **went** abroad last year.
- She **told me** that she **had** a very stressful job.
- They **told us** they **bought** a new house.
- We **told them** that we **didn't want** it.

# Common mistakes “say” and “tell” in reported speech.

He **said** that he had a fast car.



He said me that he had a fast car.



He **told me** that he had a fast car.



He told that he had a fast car.



# Tenses in Reported Speech

# Tenses in reported speech

In reported speech, the reported verb usually “goes back” a tense. Time and place references and pronouns sometimes also change.

<b>am/is</b>	<b>was</b>
<b>are</b>	<b>were</b>
<b>do/does</b>	<b>did</b>
<b>have/has</b>	<b>had</b>
<b>will</b>	<b>would</b>
<b>can</b>	<b>could</b>

# Tenses in reported speech

The tense used in reported speech usually one tense back in time from the tense in direct speech.

**I'm working** in Indonesia.



She said **she was working**  
in Indonesia.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS



PAST CONTINUOUS

# Tenses in reported speech

The tense used in reported speech usually one tense back in time from the tense in direct speech.

**I've been** to China twice.



He said that **he'd been** to China twice.

PRESENT PERFECT



PAST PERFECT

# Tenses in reported speech

The tense used in reported speech usually one tense back in time from the tense in direct speech.

**I will call** you soon.



He said **he would call** them  
soon.

FUTURE WITH "WILL"



MODAL VERB "WOULD"

# Tenses in reported speech

The tense used in reported speech usually one tense back in time from the tense in direct speech.

**We can speak** Japanese.



They said that **they could speak** Japanese.

MODAL VERB "CAN"



MODAL VERB "COULD"

# Exercise!

You met Jenny. Here are some of the things she said to you in direct speech:

“My parents **are** fine.”  
“I **am** going to learn to drive.”  
“I **want** to buy a car.”  
“John **has quit** his job.”  
“I **can’t** come to the party on Friday.”  
“I **don’t** have much free time.”  
“I’**m** going away for a few days. I’ll call you when I **get** back.”



Later you tell somebody what Jenny said. You use reported speech:

- Jenny said that her parents **were** fine.
- She said that she **was** going to learn to drive.
- She said that she **wanted** to buy a car.
- She said that John **had quit** his job.
- She said that she **couldn’t** come to the party on Friday.
- She said that she **didn’t** have much free time.
- She said that she **was** going away for a few days and **would** call me when she **got** back.

# TIME AND PLACE REFERENCES

If speech is reported some time after it was said, words used to talk about times and places may need to change.

The time reference is  
"yesterday" in direct speech.

I went to work **yesterday**.

She said she'd been to  
work **the day before**.

The time reference is "the day  
before" in reported speech.

# Further examples:

I will call you **tomorrow**.



He said he would call me **the following day**.

The weather is nice **here**.



She told me the weather was nice **there**.

We'll have a party **this weekend**.



They said they'd have a party **that weekend**.

I saw you **last week**.



She said she had seen me **the week before**.

I'm starting a new job **today**.



You told her you were starting a new job **that day**.

# OTHER CHANGES IN REPORTED SPEECH

In reported speech, pronouns may also need to be changed to ensure they refer to the correct person or thing.

I don't believe **these** ghost stories.

He said he didn't believe **those** ghost stories.

"These" is replaced by the more distant "those".

I can't wait to move into **our** new house.

He said he couldn't wait to move into **their** new house.

Pronoun "our" is replaced by "their"

Thank you!

## REFERENCES

Murphy, Raymond & Smalzer, William. *Grammar in use, Intermediate*. Cambridge U. Press, 2019.

DK. *English for Everyone – English Grammar Guide*. Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2016.

Picture on slide 9: <https://www.dreamstime.com/sick-boy-thermometer-his-mouth-viruses-flying-around-coronavirus-prevention-world-quarantine-cartoon-design-sick-boy-image176293516>

Picture on slide 20: <https://similarpng.com/cute-girl-on-transparent-background-png/>