

Reported Speech (Intermediate - Advanced)

Reported Speech vs. Direct Speech

When we want to tell somebody else what another person said, we can use either **DIRECT SPEECH** or **REPORTED SPEECH**.

When we use *Direct Speech*, we use the same words but use **quotation marks**, “ ”.

For example: Scott said, “I am coming to work. I will be late because there is a lot of traffic now.”

When we use *Reported Speech*, we **usually change** the **verbs**, **specific times**, and **pronouns**.

For example: *Scott said that he **was** coming to work. He said that he **would be** late because there **was** a lot of traffic **at that time**.*

How do we use reported speech?

Since reported speech is usually talking about the past, we **usually** change the verbs into the past. It is **ALWAYS necessary** to change the verbs when the **action has finished or is untrue**.

We do not always change the verbs. When you are reporting an action that is still *current* or *true*, it is not necessary to change the verb tense.

For example: How old are you? “*I am twenty-seven years old.*”
She said she is twenty-seven years old.

We **usually** follow the rules below. When we are reporting speech, we are usually talking about the past; therefore, we change the verbs into the past.

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
Simple Present: “I eat pizza.”	Simple Past: He said (that) he ate pizza.
Present Continuous: “I am eating pizza.”	Past Continuous: He said (that) he was eating pizza.
Future (will): “I will eat pizza.”	Would + Verb: He said (that) he would eat pizza.
Future (be going to): “I am going to eat pizza.”	Past Continuous: He said (that) he was going to eat pizza.
<p>When we are reporting PAST ACTIONS, it is NOT ALWAYS necessary to change the verb tense. We can usually leave the verbs in the same tense and just change the pronouns. However, we sometimes need to use the Past Perfect to clarify the time order of events.</p> <p>Note: the Past Perfect never changes in Reported Speech.</p>	
Simple Past: “I ate pizza.” “I ate pizza, so I am not hungry.”	Simple Past: He said (that) he ate pizza. Past Perfect: He said (that) he had eaten pizza, so he wasn't hungry.”
Past Continuous: “I was eating pizza.” “I was eating pizza when she called.”	Past Continuous: He said (that) he was eating pizza. Past Perfect: He said (that) he had been eating pizza when she called.

Reporting Questions

We use a special form when we report questions:

WH-Questions:

Where **is + Tom's house**? He asked where **Tom's house + was**.

Where **does** Tom live? He asked where Tom **lived**.

Yes/No Questions:

Does Tom live in Miami? She asked **if** Tom **lived** in Miami.

Is Tom happy? She asked **if** Tom **was** happy.

Say vs. Tell

Say Something

June: "I love English."

June said (that) she loved English.

Tell Someone Something

June: "I love English."

June told **me** (that) she loved English.

Modal Verbs and Reported Speech

Must, might, could, would, should, and **ought to** stay the same in *Reported Speech*. We usually change **may** to **might**.

Infinitives and Reported Speech

Infinitives stay the same in reported speech:

"I am going to the store **to buy milk**." He said he was going to the store **to buy** milk.

We also use *Infinitives* when reporting **orders** and **commands**, especially when using **tell**.

"**Do** your homework. **Don't use** a dictionary!!" He told me **to do** to my homework and **not to use** a dictionary.

Reporting Suggestions

When we are reporting another speakers suggestions, we can use a special form with *suggest*, *recommend*, or *propose*.

SUGGEST/ RECOMMEND/PROPOSE + (*THAT) + SUBJECT PRONOUN + **V1

SUGGEST/ RECOMMEND/PROPOSE + V1 + ING

"I think you should visit Viscaya." → He suggested we visit Viscaya. He suggested visiting Viscaya.

"Try to get there early to get good seats." → He recommended we get there early to get good seats.

*That is often omitted in speech.

**The verb is always in the base form. We do not use third person.

Reported Statements

A *reported statement* begins with an introductory clause and is followed by the 'information' clause. The speaker may choose different words, but the meaning remains unchanged. Some formal words to introduce a reported statement or response are: **declared, stated, informed, responded, replied, etc.**

"I don't agree with these new rules. I am not going to accept this change!" → He **declared** that he was in disagreement with the new rules and **stated** that he would not accept the changes.

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Exercises and Practice

A. Change each *direct speech* example into the *reported speech*. The first one has been done for you.

1. Michelle said, "I love my Chihuahua, Daisy."

Michelle said that she loved her Chihuahua, Daisy.

2. Republicans said, "We don't support Obama's plan to raise taxes."

_____.

3. With her mouth full, Sarah said, "I am eating mashed potatoes."

_____.

4. John Lee said, "This year, I will not pay my taxes."

_____.

5. Lebron said, "I am going to win the championship next year."

_____.

6. Patty said, "I can't stomach another hamburger. I ate one yesterday."

_____.

B. Rewrite the sentences/questions below using reported / indirect speech. Always change the tense, even though it is not always necessary. You can use 'said', 'told me', or 'asked'.

1. Sarah: "I am in the shower right now."

2. John: "I dropped my son off at school this morning."

3. Samuel: "I am going to the beach with my sister this afternoon."

4. John: "Jessica will call you later."

5. The girls: "Who does John live with?"

6. Our classmate: "Did we have any homework last night?"

7. Sarah: "I am moving to Tokyo because I want to learn Japanese."

8. John: "Why do you have an umbrella?"

9. The students: "Our teacher can't find her books anywhere."

10. Sarah and Jillian: "Is John British?"

11. Steve: "I'm going to the beach so that I can play volleyball."

12. Ann: "Where is the bathroom?"

13. My parents: "What are you going to do with your life?"

14. Sarah: "I ate breakfast before I came to school."

C. Your friend Megan is very nosy (she always wants to know what's going on) so she constantly asks questions about your life and the lives of your friends. Rewrite her questions using the reported questions form. The first one has been done for you.

1. Why do you date Ryan?

She asked me why I dated Ryan.

2. How much money do you make at your new job?

3. Does Ryan think I'm pretty?

4. Where is your favorite restaurant?

5. Do I look good in these jeans?

6. Can I borrow some twenty bucks?

D. Your American grandfather is telling you about how things used to be. Using the *reported speech*, tell your friends what he said.

"In the 1930s, people were very poor. They ate watery soup and hard bread. Many people lost their jobs. To make matters worse, a horrible drought ruined most of the farmland in the American midwest. People went to California to look for a better life. They picked strawberries in the hot California sun."