

# Reported speech 1 (He said that ...)

A

Study this example situation:



'I'm feeling ill.'

PAUL

You want to tell somebody what Paul said. There are two ways of doing this:

You can repeat Paul's words (*direct speech*): Paul said, 'I'm feeling ill.'

Or you can use *reported speech*: Paul said that he was feeling ill.

Compare:

*direct*

Paul said, 'I am feeling ill.'

*reported*

Paul said that he was feeling ill.

In writing we use these quotation marks to show direct speech.

B

When we use reported speech, the main verb of the sentence is usually past (Paul said that ... / I told her that ... etc.). The rest of the sentence is usually past too:

- Paul said that he was feeling ill.
- I told Lisa that I didn't have any money.

You can leave out **that**. So you can say:

- Paul said that he was feeling ill. or Paul said he was feeling ill.

In general, the *present* form in direct speech changes to the *past* form in reported speech:

am/is → was	do/does → did	will → would
are → were	have/has → had	can → could
want/like/know/go etc. → wanted/liked/knew/went etc.		

Compare direct speech and reported speech:

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

'My parents are very well.'

'I'm going to learn to drive.'

'I want to buy a car.'

'John has a new 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 phone you when I get back.'



JENNY

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

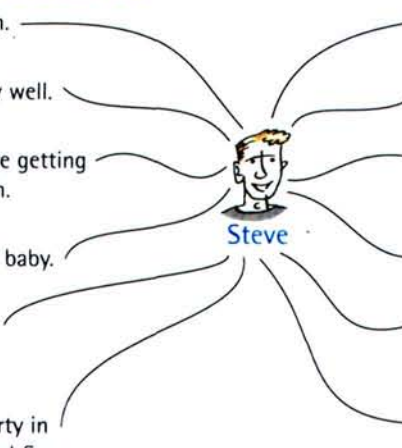
- Jenny said that her parents were very well.
- She said that she was going to learn to drive.
- She said that she wanted to buy a car.
- She said that John had a new job.
- She said that she couldn't come to the party on Friday.
- She said she didn't have much free time.
- She said that she was going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

C

The *past simple* (*did/saw/knew* etc.) can usually stay the same in reported speech, or you can change it to the *past perfect* (*had done / had seen / had known* etc.):

- direct* Paul said: 'I woke up feeling ill, so I didn't go to work.'
- reported* Paul said (that) he woke up feeling ill, so he didn't go to work. or Paul said (that) he had woken up feeling ill, so he hadn't gone to work.

47.1 Yesterday you met a friend of yours, Steve. You hadn't seen him for a long time. Here are some of the things Steve said to you:

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- 1 I'm living in London.
  - 2 My father isn't very well.
  - 3 Rachel and Mark are getting married next month.
  - 4 My sister has had a baby.
  - 5 I don't know what Frank is doing.
  - 6 I saw Helen at a party in June and she seemed fine.
  - 7 I haven't seen Diane recently.
  - 8 I'm not enjoying my job very much.
  - 9 You can come and stay at my place if you're ever in London.
  - 10 My car was stolen a few days ago.
  - 11 I want to go on holiday, but I can't afford it.
  - 12 I'll tell Chris I saw you.

Later that day you tell another friend what Steve said. Use reported speech.

- 1 Steve said that he was living in London.
- 2 He said that .....
- 3 He .....
- 4 .....
- 5 .....
- 6 .....
- 7 .....
- 8 .....
- 9 .....
- 10 .....
- 11 .....
- 12 .....

47.2 Somebody says something to you which is the opposite of what they said earlier. Complete the answers.

- 1 A: That restaurant is expensive.  
B: Is it? I thought you said it was cheap .....
- 2 A: Sue is coming to the party tonight.  
B: Is she? I thought you said she .....
- 3 A: Sarah likes Paul.  
B: Does she? Last week you said .....
- 4 A: I know lots of people.  
B: Do you? I thought you said .....
- 5 A: Jane will be here next week.  
B: Will she? But didn't you say .....
- 6 A: I'm going out this evening.  
B: Are you? But you said .....
- 7 A: I can speak a little French.  
B: Can you? But earlier you said .....
- 8 A: I haven't been to the cinema for ages.  
B: Haven't you? I thought you said .....

## Reported speech 2

A

It is not always necessary to change the verb in reported speech. If you report something and the situation *hasn't changed*, you do not need to change the verb to the past:

- *direct* Paul said, 'My new job is very interesting.'
- *reported* Paul said that his new job is very interesting.  
(The situation hasn't changed. His job is still interesting.)
- *direct* Helen said, 'I want to go to New York next year.'
- *reported* Helen told me that she wants to go to New York next year.  
(Helen still wants to go to New York next year.)

You can also change the verb to the past:

- Paul said that his new job **was** very interesting.
- Helen told me that she **wanted** to go to New York next year.

But if you are reporting a finished situation, you *must* use a past verb:

- Paul left the room suddenly. He said he **had** to go. (*not* has to go)

B

You need to use a past form when there is a difference between what was said and what is really true. For example:

You met Sonia a few days ago.

She said: 'Joe is in hospital.' (*direct speech*)

Later that day you meet Joe in the street. You say:

'I didn't expect to see you, Joe. Sonia said you **were** in hospital.'  
(*not* 'Sonia said you are in hospital', because clearly he is not)



C

Say and tell

If you say *who* somebody is talking to, use **tell**:

- Sonia **told me** that you were in hospital. (*not* Sonia said me)
- What did you **tell the police**? (*not* say the police)

Otherwise use **say**:

- Sonia **said** that you were in hospital. (*not* Sonia told that ...)
- What did you **say**?

But you can 'say something to somebody':

- Ann **said** goodbye to me and left. (*not* Ann said me goodbye)
- What did you **say to** the police?

TELL SOMEBODY

SAY SOMEBODY

D

Tell/ask somebody to do something

We also use the *infinitive* (*to do / to stay* etc.) in reported speech, especially with **tell** and **ask** (for orders and requests):

- *direct* 'Stay in bed for a few days,' the doctor said to me.
- *reported* The doctor **told me to stay** in bed for a few days.
- *direct* 'Don't shout,' I said to Jim.
- *reported* I **told Jim not to shout**.
- *direct* 'Please don't tell anybody what happened,' Jackie said to me.
- *reported* Jackie **asked me not to tell** anybody what (had) happened.

You can also say 'Somebody said (not) to do something':

- Jackie **said not to tell** anyone. (*but not* Jackie said me)

48.1 Here are some things that Sarah said to you:



- I've never been to the United States.
- I don't have any brothers or sisters.
- I can't drive.
- I don't like fish.
- Jane has a very well-paid job.
- I'm working tomorrow evening.
- Jane is a friend of mine.
- ~~Dave is lazy.~~

But later Sarah says something different to you. What do you say?

<p style="text-align: center;">Sarah</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Dave works very hard.</li> <li>2 Let's have fish for dinner.</li> <li>3 I'm going to buy a car.</li> <li>4 Jane is always short of money.</li> <li>5 My sister lives in Paris.</li> <li>6 I think New York is a great place.</li> <li>7 Let's go out tomorrow evening.</li> <li>8 I've never spoken to Jane.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;">You</p> <p><i>But you said he was lazy.</i></p> <p>But .....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
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48.2 Complete the sentences with say or tell (in the correct form). Use only one word each time.

- 1 Ann said goodbye to me and left.
- 2 ..... us about your holiday. Did you have a nice time?
- 3 Don't just stand there! ..... something!
- 4 I wonder where Sue is. She ..... she would be here at 8 o'clock.
- 5 Dan ..... me that he was bored with his job.
- 6 The doctor ..... that I should rest for at least a week.
- 7 Don't ..... anybody what I ..... . It's a secret just between us.
- 8 'Did she ..... you what happened?' 'No, she didn't ..... anything to me.'
- 9 Gary couldn't help me. He ..... me to ask Caroline.
- 10 Gary couldn't help me. He ..... to ask Caroline.

48.3 The following sentences are direct speech:

- Don't wait for me if I'm late.
- Mind your own business.
- Don't worry, Sue.
- Please slow down!
- Can you open your bag, please?
- Could you get a newspaper?
- Hurry up!
- Will you marry me?
- Do you think you could give me a hand, Tom?

Now choose one of these to complete each of the sentences below. Use reported speech.

- 1 Bill was taking a long time to get ready, so I told him to hurry up .....
- 2 Sarah was driving too fast, so I asked .....
- 3 Sue was nervous about the situation. I told .....
- 4 I couldn't move the piano alone, so I .....
- 5 The customs officer looked at me suspiciously and .....
- 6 Tom was going to the shop, so I .....
- 7 The man started asking me personal questions, so I .....
- 8 John was very much in love with Mary, so he .....
- 9 I didn't want to delay Helen, so I .....