

Reported Speech

Diana had a meeting yesterday.



Today, Diana met Alison. Alison asked her what they had said. Diana told her that they would use her plans.



- ◆ **Direct Speech** is the exact words someone said. We use quotation marks (' ') in direct speech.
e.g. 'I'm very tired,' Mary said.
- ◆ **Reported Speech** is the exact meaning of what someone said, but not the exact words. We do not use quotation marks in reported speech. We can either use the word **that** after the introductory verb or we can omit it. e.g. Mary said (that) she was very tired.

Say - Tell

We use the verb **say**:

- ◆ both in direct and reported speech **without** the preposition **to** when it is not followed by the person being spoken to.
e.g. Jerry said, 'I need some money.' Jerry said (that) he needed some money.
- ◆ both in direct and reported speech **with** the preposition **to** when it is followed by the person being spoken to.
e.g. Jerry said to me, 'I need some money.' Jerry said to me (that) he needed some money.
- ◆ in expressions such as: say good morning/afternoon, etc., say something, say one's prayers, say so, etc.

We use the verb **tell** without the preposition **to**:

- ◆ both in direct and reported speech when it is followed by the person we are talking to.
e.g. Jerry told me, 'I need some money.' Jerry told me (that) he needed some money. (NOT: ~~Jerry told to me that he...~~)
- ◆ in expressions such as: tell the truth, tell a lie, tell a secret, tell a story, tell the time, tell the difference, tell sb one's name, tell sb the way, tell one from another, etc.

1

Fill in the gaps with say or tell in the correct tense.

A Richard (1) ...*told*... Sarah that he was having a party on Saturday night. He (2) that it would start early but it would finish quite late. He (3) her to bring her sister along as well. Sarah (4) she was looking forward to going. Richard (5) her he would probably call again on Friday to (6) her the way to his house.

B 'What shall we do?' asked Carrie. 'It's raining outside, so let's watch television,' I (1) I turned on the television and Carrie (2) to me, 'Look! That's my favourite programme. Let's watch it.' 'To (3) you the truth, I don't like it,' I (4)

C 'Good morning, Mr Pearson,' (1) Bella. 'Good morning, Bella,' he replied. 'I've got lots of letters for you to type today,' he (2) to her. 'Alright,' Bella (3) 'I'll type them after I finish writing this report for you.'

Reported Statements



Yesterday, the Johnsons and the Smiths had a barbecue together. What did Laura say to Jim? What did Ed say to Celia?

Laura told Jim that the hot dogs **were** delicious and that he **was** a great cook. Ed told Celia that he **was having** a great time and that he **really liked** their new house.

- ◆ When we report statements (that is, a positive or negative sentence), we use the verbs 'say' or 'tell' to introduce the statement. Pronouns and possessive adjectives change according to the meaning.
e.g. Sophie said, 'I bought a new camera yesterday.'
Sophie said (that) **she** had bought a new camera the day before.

- ◆ When the introductory verb is in the past simple, the verb tenses change as follows:

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
Present Simple 'I want to find a better job,' he said.	Past Simple He said he wanted to find a better job.
Present Continuous 'They're playing table tennis,' he said.	Past Continuous He said they were playing table tennis.
Present Perfect 'I've ordered a new fridge,' she said.	Past Perfect She said she had ordered a new fridge.
Past Simple 'Jack left the country,' they said.	Past Perfect They said Jack had left the country.
Future (will) 'I'll send you a letter,' he said.	Conditional (would) He said he would send me a letter.

- ◆ Certain words and time expressions change as follows:

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
tonight, today, this week/month/year, etc.	that night, that day, that week/month/year, etc.
now	then, at that time, at once, immediately
yesterday, last night/week/month/year, etc.	the day before/the previous day, the previous night/week/month/year, etc., the night/week/month/year, etc. before
tomorrow, next week/month/year, etc.	the day after/the following /next day, the next/following week/month/year, etc.
two days/months/years, etc. ago	two days/months/years etc. before
this, these	that, those/the/some
here	there
come	go

- ◆ When the introductory verb is in the present, future or present perfect simple or when the sentence expresses something which is always true (general truth), there are no changes in the verb tenses in reported speech.

Direct speech: She says, 'I don't like him.'
Reported speech: She **says** (that) she **doesn't like** him. | 'It **is** cold in the Arctic,' said the teacher.
 The teacher said (that) it **is** cold in the Arctic.

- ◆ The past continuous, past perfect simple and past perfect continuous do not change in reported speech.

Direct speech: 'I **was watching** TV while she **was cooking**,' he said.
Reported speech: He said (that) he **was watching** TV while she **was cooking**.

- ◆ Certain modal verbs do not change in reported speech. These are **would, could, might, should** and **ought to**.

Direct speech: 'I **could** run fast when I was young,' Tom said.
Reported speech: Tom said (that) he **could** run fast when he was young.

2 Fill in the gaps with the correct pronouns or possessive adjectives.

- Mary said, 'I want to go out with my friends.'
 Mary said (that) ...*she*... wanted to go out with ...*her*... friends.
- Tom said, 'I have lost my keys.'
 Tom said (that) had lost keys.
- Bob and Marie said, 'We are taking our dog for a walk.'
 Bob and Marie said (that) were taking dog for a walk.
- Andrew said, 'My sister is coming to visit me next week.'
 Andrew said (that) sister was going to visit the following week.
- Mr Jones said, 'I need to buy a present for my wife.'
 Mr Jones said (that) needed to buy a present for wife.
- Father said, 'I want you to wash my car for me.'
 Father said (that) wanted to wash car for

3 Turn from direct into reported speech.

- 'I can't find my bag,' she said.
She said (that) she couldn't find her bag.
- 'They are working in the garden,' he said.

- 'We got married six months ago,' she said to us.

- 'I'll go shopping tomorrow,' he said.

- 'I bought a new car last week,' he said.

- 'We aren't doing anything next week,' they said.

- 'I can't go out tonight,' she said to me.

- 'I forgot to pay the bill,' he said.

- 'We've brought you a present,' she said to me.

- 'I'll phone you tomorrow,' she said to Peter.

4 In which of the following sentences do the tenses not change? Why? Then, turn the following statements from direct into reported speech.

- 'I'll paint the house next week,' he says.
Tenses do not change because the introductory verb is in the present simple. He says (that) he will paint the house.
- 'I've put the washing in the washing-machine,' Rose said.

- 'A giraffe is bigger than a mouse,' he said.

- 'We haven't seen Tom for two weeks,' she said.

- 'I haven't phoned my uncle since last month,' she says.

- 'Birds can fly,' the student said.

- 'He's studying for an exam now,' she said.

- 'Leaves fall from the trees in autumn,' he said.

- 'We visited the circus last weekend,' they said.

- 'She dropped the vase on the floor,' Tony said.

- 'He took the money to the bank this morning,' she said.

- 'The Earth moves round the sun,' the teacher said.

Reported Questions



Yesterday, Mary went to the doctor's.
 The doctor **asked** Mary **how often** she exercised.
 She also asked her **if/whether** she **drank** milk.

◆ We introduce reported questions with **ask** or **want to know**.

In reported questions, the verb is in the affirmative and the question mark is omitted. Verb tenses, pronouns and time expressions change as in statements.

e.g. 'Are you working tomorrow morning?' Paul asked her.
 Paul asked her **if** she was working the next morning.

◆ When the direct question begins with a **question word** (who, where, how, when, why, what, etc.), then the reported question begins with the same question word.

e.g. 'Why are you late?' Mother asked me.
 Mother asked me **why** I was late.

◆ When the direct question begins with an **auxiliary** (is, do, have, etc.) or a **modal verb** (can, may, etc.), then the reported question begins with **if** or **whether**.

e.g. 'Can you speak French?' they asked me.
 They asked me **if/whether** I could speak French.

5 Turn the questions from direct into reported speech.

- 1 'How old are you?' he asked me.
 He asked me *how old I was*.
- 2 'When will you call me?' she asked George.

- 3 She asked, 'Can you play the piano?'

- 4 He asked, 'Who's there?'

- 5 'Do you like fish?' she asked Jonathan.

- 6 'What have you done today?' Mother asked.

- 7 Jim asked, 'Did you go to work yesterday?'

- 8 'How did you get here?' he asked.

- 9 'Have you seen my blue jacket anywhere?' she asked.

- 10 He asked, 'Will you take me to work tomorrow?'

- 11 She asked, 'Where have you been?'

- 12 She asked, 'Will they visit us in the summer?'

6 There has been a fire in a busy area of your town. Read the reporter's questions and turn them into reported speech.



- 1 'How did the fire start?'
 The reporter asked *how the fire had started*.
- 2 'Who called the fire brigade?'
 The reporter wanted to know
- 3 'Did you ask people to leave the building?'
 The reporter asked
- 4 'Was anybody injured?'
 The reporter wanted to know
- 5 'How many fire-fighters are here now?'
 The reporter asked
- 6 'Have any of the houses been damaged?'
 The reporter wanted to know

Reported Commands/ Requests/Suggestions

Let's make some cards.
Ruth, sit down please.
Be careful with the glue.
Don't make a mess.



The teacher **suggested making** some cards.
She **asked Ruth to sit down**.
She **told the children to be careful with the glue**.
She also **told them not to make a mess**.

◆ To report **commands or instructions** we use the verbs **order** or **tell + sb + (not) to - infinitive**.

e.g. 'Give me your money!' he said to me.
He **ordered me to give him my money**.
'Don't shoot!' he said to them.
He **ordered them not to shoot**.
'Cut the paper into two pieces,' she said to me.
She **told me to cut the paper into two pieces**.

◆ To report **requests**, we use the verbs **ask** or **beg + sb + (not) to - infinitive**. The sentence in direct speech usually contains the word 'please'.

e.g. 'Listen to me, please,' Laura said to Bob.
Laura **asked Bob to listen to her**.
'Please, please don't tell anyone I'm here,' she said to him.
She **begged him not to tell anyone (that) she was there**.

◆ To report **suggestions**, we use the verb **suggest + -ing form**.

e.g. 'Let's play a game,' Father said to us.
'We can/could play a game,' Father said to us.
'Shall we play a game?' Father said to us.
'How about playing a game?' Father said to us.

Father **suggested playing** a game.

7

Fill in the gaps with the verbs in the list in the correct form.

order, tell, ask, beg, suggest

- 'Let's call Brian,' Susan said to me.
Susan ...*suggested*... calling Brian.
- 'Don't make any noise,' Mother said to us.
Mother us not to make any noise.
- 'Please stay a little longer,' Kate said to her sister.
Kate her sister to stay a little longer.
- 'Fire!' the General said to the soldiers.
The General the soldiers to fire.
- 'Please, please forgive me,' she said to him.
She him to forgive her.

8

Turn the following sentences into reported speech.



- Be careful of the glass! *The fire-fighter told them to be careful of the glass.*
- Stand back!
- Bring the light nearer!
- Pass me an axe!
- Go to the other side of the plane!

9

Turn from direct into reported speech.

- Mary said to me, 'Come with me, please.'
Mary asked me to go with her.
- The shop assistant said to the child, 'Don't touch anything.'
.....
- The secretary said to me, 'Wait here, please.'
.....
- She said, 'Shall we go swimming?'
.....
- The park keeper said to them, 'Don't walk on the grass.'
.....
- He said to them, 'Don't stay out late tonight.'
.....
- Annie said to Barry, 'Please, please help me.'
.....

Introductory Verbs

Apart from 'say' and 'tell', there are other introductory verbs which can be used in reported speech. These verbs give the meaning of the direct sentence more accurately and are followed by either the to - infinitive or the '-ing form'. Study the table:

Introductory Verb	Direct Speech	Reported Speech
promise refuse offer	'I'll be home early.' 'No, I won't wash the dishes.' 'Can I get you an aspirin?'	He promised to be home early. He refused to wash the dishes. He offered to get me an aspirin.
advise ask beg order warn	'You should stay in bed.' 'Please post this letter.' 'Please, please listen to me.' 'Don't move!' 'Don't go near the fire.'	He advised me to stay in bed. He asked me to post the letter. He begged her to listen to him. He ordered me not to move . He warned me not to go near the fire.
suggest	'Let's have some tea.' 'Shall we go to Helen's party?'	He suggested having some tea. He suggested going to Helen's party.

10 Choose an introductory verb and turn the following from direct into reported speech.

advised, asked, ordered, warned, promised, begged, offered, refused, suggested

- 'I think you should eat more vegetables,' my mother said to me.
My mother advised me to eat more vegetables.
- 'Please get me a glass of water,' he said to Jill.
.....
- 'No, I won't help you,' she said to Jim.
.....
- 'I'll buy you something nice for your birthday,' her mother said to her.
.....
- 'Don't play near the road because it's dangerous,' he said to us.
.....
- 'Would you like me to do the shopping?' she said.
.....
- 'Please, please don't leave me alone in the dark,' she said to her parents.
.....
- 'How about going to the cinema tonight?' he said.
.....
- 'Go to bed! ... Now!' his father said to him.
.....
- 'Shall we watch a video?' they said.
.....

11 The people in the picture had a meeting yesterday in which they discussed some business matters. Read their comments and turn them into reported speech.



- Tom: 'We should advertise on TV.'
Tom suggested advertising on TV.
- Alison: 'I'll help you organise the meeting.'
.....
- Alex: 'I can give you copies of the plan.'
.....
- Bob: 'Let's do some research on the subject.'
.....
- Nick: 'I'll give you all the details next week.'
.....
- Diana: 'Don't decide until you know the cost.'
.....

To turn a sentence from reported into direct speech, we follow the same steps as we do when we turn a sentence from direct into reported speech (see page 93), but in reverse order. We also:

- put the sentence in quotation marks.
- mention the speaker before or after the direct speech.
- put commas before or after the direct speech.
- begin the direct speech with a capital letter.
- put a question mark and not a comma if the direct speech is a question and the person being spoken to comes after it.

reported speech: Jack told me that he was leaving the next day.
direct speech: Jack said to me, 'I'm leaving tomorrow.' or 'I'm leaving tomorrow,' Jack said to me.

reported speech: The boss asked me if I enjoyed my work.
direct speech: 'Do you enjoy your work?' the boss asked me. or
 The boss asked me, 'Do you enjoy your work?'

12 Turn the following sentences from reported into direct speech.

- 1 Trevor asked me if I had posted the letter.
'Did you post the letter?' Trevor asked me.
- 2 Sarah told me she was looking for a new job.
.....
- 3 Brian wanted to know what time the train to Leeds left.
.....
- 4 She said that she didn't like jogging.
.....
- 5 He said he would be back the following day.
.....
- 6 He asked how much my new car had cost.
.....
- 7 I asked Marie if she could do the shopping for me.
.....
- 8 Jill asked Roy to close the window.
.....

13 Turn from direct into reported speech or vice versa.

- 1 'I've finished the housework,' she said.
She said (that) she had finished the housework.
- 2 'Why did you do that?' he asked her.
.....
- 3 Susie told her mother that *Titanic* was the best film she had ever seen.
.....
- 4 He told them to put the rubbish in the bin.
.....
- 5 'Please answer the telephone,' he said to her.
.....
- 6 Alex said that they were going to Hawaii for their honeymoon.
.....

- 7 'Are you going out on Saturday night?' Ben asked me.
.....
- 8 Adam said that he had never ridden a horse before.
.....
- 9 'We'll go to the circus tomorrow,' said Mother.
.....
- 10 Mr Carter told them to pick up the paper from the floor.
.....
- 11 Julia begged her parents to let her go to the party.
.....
- 12 Greg said, 'Let's have a party on my birthday.'
.....

14 Turn the underlined sentences from reported into direct speech.



I met an old friend yesterday. I hadn't seen her for two years. I asked what she had been doing. We decided to go for a drink. We sat in a café for three hours. We talked about many different things. She asked me to give her my phone number and she wrote it down. When we left the café, I told her to call me very soon.

'What have you been doing?' I asked her.

15 Correct the mistakes.

- 1 He asked me where was the post office.
- 2 She suggested to visit the zoo.
- 3 Mother said, 'You must always say the truth.'
- 4 The doctor told me to not exercise a lot.
- 5 My parents offered giving me a lift to the railway station.
- 6 Our teacher said to us that the test was quite easy.
- 7 She asked how could she contact me.
- 8 He said that Kate had left the last month.
- 9 The old man told good night and went to bed.
- 10 Jenny said me, 'I hate Maths.'

Revision Box

16 Underline the correct word(s).

- 1 A: Where are you going/do you go?
B: To work.
- 2 A: **Did you do/Have you done** your homework yet?
B: Yes. I **was doing/did** it last night.
- 3 A: Did you paint the house?
B: Yes. I did it all by **me/myself**.
- 4 A: Can you get the sugar from the shelf?
B: No, I'm not tall **too/enough** to reach it.
- 5 A: Do you still play tennis?
B: No, I **used to/didn't use to** play every week, but I don't any more.
- 6 A: Do I have to go to the shops today?
B: No, you **needn't/mustn't**. I'll go instead.
- 7 A: Why are your clothes all wet?
B: I **was washing/have been washing** the dog!
- 8 A: Have you read this book?
B: Of course. It **is written/was written** by my aunt!
- 9 A: Who's that woman over there?
B: It's the woman **whose/who's** son is in my class at school.
- 10 A: **Shall/Must** we go out tonight?
B: Yes. Let's go to the cinema.
A: Okay. I **have to/will** meet you there at 8 o'clock.
- 11 A: I need some paper.
B: There is some in the drawer **who/which** is on your right.
- 12 A: Nicola's hair is short now.
B: Really? It **used to/didn't use to** be really long.

ORAL Activity

Tim Stevens, the famous actor, gave a press conference yesterday. Lucy Morton, a young reporter, attended the conference. Read what Tim Stevens said. Then, in pairs, ask and answer questions, as in the example.

SA: What did Tim Stevens say?

SB: He said that he was very happy to be in our country.

SA: What else did he say?

1 I'm very happy to be in your country.

2 I have already been to Venice and Florence.

3 I went to France two months ago.

4 I starred in a film called 'L'amour'.

5 I'll return with my wife in the summer.

WRITING Activity

Lucy is writing an article about Tim Stevens for the magazine she works for. Complete the article using the information from the Oral Activity.

FAMOUS ACTOR VISITS OUR COUNTRY

Tim Stevens, who I'm sure all of you know, was here for a short visit. I was lucky enough to attend the press conference he gave yesterday. This is what Mr Stevens told the reporters. He said that he was very happy to be in our country. He also said

.....
.....
.....