

REPORTED SPEECH

We use reported speech when we want to report what somebody else has said before.

Direct speech: Susan said: "I'm tired."
Reported speech: Susan said that she was tired.

When reporting what somebody else has said there are changes in tenses, people, places and times.

1. REPORTED STATEMENTS

CHANGING TENSES

Basic rules

- a) present simple → past simple
- b) present continuous → past continuous
- c) present perfect → past perfect
- d) past simple → past perfect / or stays the same
- e) past continuous → past perfect continuous
- f) will → would
- g) can → could
- h) no change: past perfect, must, could, would, might, should

Direct speech	Reported speech
"I'm not very happy."	She said (that) she wasn't very happy.
"I work as an assistant."	He said (that) he worked as an assistant."
"I've lost my keys again."	He said (that) he had lost his keys again."
"We saw them in the cinema."	They said (that) they had seen them in the cinema. They said (that) they saw them in the cinema.
"We are going to be late again."	They said that they were going to be late again.
"I will be back soon."	She said (that) she would be back soon.
"I can speak Chinese."	He said(that) he could speak Chinese.
"You might be right."	The teacher said that I could be right.
"I had seen the play before."	She said that she had seen the play before.

No changes in tense if the situation is always true.

e.g. "Michael doesn't like bananas." → She said that Michael doesn't like bananas.

"I live in Birmingham." → She said that she lives in Birmingham.

CHANGES IN PEOPLE, PLACES AND TIMES

"I'll see **you here** at 8am **tomorrow**." → She said she would see **me there** at 8am **the next day**.

"I bought this magazine yesterday." → Peter said **he** had bought **that** magazine **the day before**.

Direct speech	Reported speech
here	there
this	that
now	then
today	that day
tonight	that night
tomorrow	the next day/the following day
yesterday	the day before / the previous day
next Saturday	the following Saturday
last weekend	the previous weekend

2. REPORTING QUESTIONS

Rules:

- a) **tenses, people, places and times change in the same way as in the reported statements**
- b) **word order is the same as in the statements**
- c) **where there is no question word, we use *if* or *whether***

“What does this word mean?” → She asked what that word meant.

“What did she say?” → He wanted to know what she had said.

“Why are leaving now?” → She wondered why I was leaving then.

“Are you tired?” → She asked if / whether I was tired.

Tasks

Ex.1 Change the reported statements and questions into direct speech.

1. “I’m going on holiday with my boyfriend,” Susan said.
2. “I must do some shopping today,” my mum said.
3. “Did you watch the news last night?” my friend asked me.
4. “We had dinner in the Mexican restaurant yesterday,” they said.
5. “Can you speak Italian?” I asked Martin.
6. “Kate has passed her driving test,” her Mum told us.
7. “I’m sorry but I can’t come to your party,” she apologized.
8. “Have you been waiting long?” he asked.
9. “We might have met before,” he said.
10. “Would you like something to drink?” the waitress asked.