

# Enter the World of Grammar

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&



*Use  
of  
English*

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# Reported Speech

In **Direct Speech** we give the exact words somebody said and use quotation marks. In **Reported Speech** we give the meaning of what someone said, but with some changes and without quotation marks.

**Direct Speech:** She said, "I'm tired."  
"I'm tired," she said.

**Reported Speech:** She said (that) she was tired.

We usually introduce **Reported Speech** with the verbs **tell** (when there is a person/pronoun as an object) and **say** (when there is no person/pronoun as an object). **That** is optional.

"I'm leaving, Tom," she said. → She told Tom (that) she was leaving.

"I'm leaving," she said. → She said (that) she was leaving.

## Changing from Direct to Reported Speech

|             | Direct Speech                      |                                                                             | Reported Speech                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tenses      | <b>Present Simple</b>              | He said, "I want to buy a new car."                                         | <b>Past Simple</b><br>He said (that) he wanted to buy a new car.                                                                                                                               |
|             | <b>Present Progressive</b>         | She said, "I'm learning Spanish."                                           | <b>Past Progressive</b><br>She said (that) she was learning Spanish.                                                                                                                           |
|             | <b>Past Simple</b>                 | "I missed the train," he said.                                              | <b>Past Perfect Simple</b><br>He said (that) he had missed the train.                                                                                                                          |
|             | <b>Present Perfect Simple</b>      | "I've missed the train," he said.                                           | <b>Past Perfect Simple</b><br>He said (that) he had missed the train.                                                                                                                          |
|             | <b>Past Progressive</b>            | She said, "I was staying with a friend."                                    | <b>Past Perfect Progressive</b><br>She said (that) she had been staying with a friend.                                                                                                         |
|             | <b>Present Perfect Progressive</b> | She said, "I have been staying with a friend."                              | <b>Past Perfect Progressive</b><br>She said (that) she had been staying with a friend.                                                                                                         |
| Modal verbs | <b>will</b>                        | She said, "I'll call you."                                                  | <b>would</b><br>She said (that) she would call me.                                                                                                                                             |
|             | <b>can</b>                         | He said, "I can run very fast."                                             | <b>could</b><br>He said (that) he could run very fast.                                                                                                                                         |
|             | <b>may</b>                         | They said, "We may go on holiday."                                          | <b>might</b><br>They said (that) they might go on holiday.                                                                                                                                     |
|             | <b>must</b>                        | She said, "I must get up early every day."<br>He said, "You must be tired." | <b>had to</b> (obligation)<br><b>must</b> (deduction)<br>She said (that) she had to get up early every day.<br>He said (that) I must be tired.                                                 |
|             | <b>must not</b>                    | She said, "You mustn't smoke."                                              | <b>must not</b> (prohibition)<br>She said (that) I/we mustn't smoke.                                                                                                                           |
|             | <b>need</b>                        | She said, "I need to go shopping."                                          | <b>needed/had to</b><br>She said (that) she needed/had to go shopping.                                                                                                                         |
|             | <b>needn't</b>                     | He said, "I needn't hurry."<br>She said, "You needn't pick me up tomorrow." | <b>needn't/didn't have to</b> (present)<br><b>wouldn't have to</b> (future)<br>He said (that) he didn't have to hurry.<br>She told me (that) I wouldn't have to pick her up the following day. |

► **would, could, might, should, ought to** do not change in Reported Speech.

## Direct Speech

## Reported Speech

|                  |                                 |                                                             |
|------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Time Expressions | now                             | then                                                        |
|                  | today/tonight                   | that day/that night                                         |
|                  | yesterday                       | the day before/the previous day                             |
|                  | tomorrow                        | the next/following day                                      |
|                  | last week (month etc.)          | the previous week (month etc.)/the week (month etc.) before |
|                  | next week (month etc.)          | the following week (month etc.)                             |
| Other changes    | ago                             | before                                                      |
|                  | this/these                      | that/those                                                  |
|                  | here                            | there                                                       |
|                  | pronouns /possessive adjectives | they change according to the context                        |

## ATTENTION

**No changes** are made in the following cases:

- When the reporting verb is in the Present, Future or Present Perfect tense.  
He says, "I'll be a lawyer when I grow up." → He says (that) he will be a lawyer when he grows up.
- When the sentence expresses a general truth or something that is unlikely to change.  
She said, "The days are longer in the summer." → She said (that) the days are longer in the summer.  
She said, "I prefer coffee to tea." → She said (that) she prefers coffee to tea.
- The Past Perfect (Simple and Progressive) does not change in Reported Speech.  
She said, "I had prepared dinner in advance." → She said (that) she had prepared dinner in advance.
- The Past Progressive does not usually change; **Past tenses in time clauses** do not change.  
"I was speaking on the phone when the doorbell rang," she said. → She said (that) she was speaking on the phone when the doorbell rang.
- When something is reported immediately after it is said.  
"This dress looks awful," Mary said. → Mary said (that) this dress looks awful.
- The Past Simple in colloquial speech can either change or remain the same.  
"I got my school report yesterday," said Jim. → Jim said (that) he got/had got his school report the day before.
- When something, although said earlier, will take place in the future.  
John said, "I'm flying to Rome tomorrow." → John said (that) he is flying to Rome tomorrow. (It is still today.)
- When there is a **Conditional** (Type 2 or 3) or a sentence with wish/if only.  
Peter said, "If I were rich, I would travel a lot." → Peter said (that) if he were rich, he would travel a lot.  
Karen said, "If I hadn't woken up late, I wouldn't have missed the bus." → Karen said (that) if she hadn't woken up late she wouldn't have missed the bus.  
Susan said, "I wish I knew his name." → Susan said (that) she wished she knew his name.

## Reported Questions

**Reported Questions** are introduced with the verbs **ask, inquire, wonder, want to know** etc. The auxiliaries **do, does, did** and question marks are not used. The word order is the same as in statements and the tenses change according to the rules.

| Type             | Form                                              | Examples                                                    |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Yes-No questions | ask<br>wonder etc. } + if/whether+subject+verb    | "Do you speak German?" →<br>She wondered if I spoke German. |
| Wh-questions     | ask<br>wonder etc. } + question word+subject+verb | "Where do you live?" →<br>She wanted to know where I lived. |

**NOTE** ► **Whether** often indicates uncertainty or doubt. It is used when there is a choice between two alternatives.

He wondered whether I had posted the letter or not.

► **Question Tags** are omitted in Reported Speech.

"They haven't arrived yet, have they?" he said. → He asked if/whether they had arrived yet.

### Commands – Requests – Advice

To report commands, requests, advice, warnings or suggestions we use the verbs **tell, ask, beg, order, command, advise, forbid, warn, encourage etc. + (object) + full infinitive**

The flight attendant said, "Please return to your seats and fasten your seat belts." → The flight attendant asked us to return to our seats and fasten our seat belts.

"Don't talk so fast," he said. → He advised me not to talk so fast.

### Other Reporting Verbs

● **refuse/offer/promise (+object)/threaten (+object)/claim/agree etc. + full infinitive**

"I'll pick you up from the airport," he said. → He offered to pick me up from the airport.

● **accuse sb of/complain to sb about/insist on/admit (to)/deny/apologise for + -ing form**

Susan said, "He stole the old woman's handbag." → Susan accused him of stealing the old woman's handbag.

"I didn't write anything on the desk," he said. → He denied having written anything on the desk.

● **complain/explain/agree/claim/deny  
promise/threaten/warn + (object)** } + **that-clause**

"My coffee is too cold," she said. → She complained that her coffee was too cold.

**NOTE**

"Let's go for a swim," Peter said. → Peter suggested {  
going for a swim.  
that they go/went for a swim.  
that they should go for a swim.



## GRAMMAR EXERCISES

**A** A dentist advises his patients on their problems. Rewrite the dialogues in Reported Speech.

1. **Mr Parker:** I have had bad breath for the past year.

I brush my teeth regularly, but no matter  
what I do, I still have bad breath.

**Dentist:** Do you eat onions, garlic or food with lots  
of spices? Do you smoke?

**Mr Parker:** Yes, I do all these things.

**Dentist:** Well, besides brushing your teeth regularly,  
you should use dental floss. Also, you must  
drink plenty of water, and don't eat a lot of  
spicy food.

2. **Mrs Kent:** My gums are very sore. Yesterday, as I was  
brushing my teeth, I noticed that my gums  
were bleeding! Is there anything wrong with  
them? How can I stop the bleeding? What  
should I do?

**Dentist:** Firstly, don't panic. If you take my advice, you won't have any problems. Buy a soft toothbrush and brush your teeth twice a day to keep your gums healthy. I'll make an appointment for you next week, so that I can remove the plaque that has built up and is causing you problems.

**B** A small town in the country is at risk from a forest fire. Homes are being threatened. A Fire Protection Officer (F.P.O.) is giving the mayor of the town information on what to do over the phone. Rewrite the following dialogue in Reported Speech.

**Mayor:** We've evacuated the houses. What else can we do?

**F.P.O.:** Wet down all the houses and the area surrounding them. You also need to cut down any trees that are close to the town, otherwise the fire may spread to the houses.

**Mayor:** When is help coming? We've been waiting for over two hours. If the fire brigade had come earlier, the fire wouldn't have got so close to our homes!

**F.P.O.:** We know, but all our units are elsewhere. The fire has spread all over the area and has already burnt down some homes.

**Mayor:** I wish we had some help!

**F.P.O.:** The important thing is not to panic. Help will arrive soon...

**C** Change the following sentences into Reported Speech. Use one of the reporting verbs given below.

advise  
promise

suggest  
inquire

warn  
agree

threaten  
apologise

complain  
refuse

- "Why don't we invite Jane to dinner tonight?" Mrs Stone said.
- "Where is Mount Everest?" asked a student.
- "If you scream, I'll shoot," said the robber to the girl.
- "I have been standing in this queue for two hours!" said the man.
- "You should stay in the shade and wear a hat, Mrs Bent," said the doctor.
- "You'll burn yourself, Tom, if you keep playing with matches," said his father.
- "I'm really sorry that I woke you up this morning, Harry," said Chris.

8. "I think you're right, Tracey. We ought to let the others know," said Kerry.

.....

9. "I'll definitely pay you back by the end of the week, Mum," said Sue.

.....

10. "I will not let you borrow my car tomorrow, Graham," said Michael.

.....

**D Rewrite using Direct Speech.**

1. Chris told Tanya that he was going on a business trip and asked her if she would mind looking after his house while he was away.

**Chris:** .....

.....

.....

Tanya answered that she wouldn't mind at all.

**Tanya:** .....

Chris told Tanya that she didn't have to feed the fish because he had an automatic feeder, but he asked her to water the plants every two days. He told her she mustn't forget to turn the alarm off when she entered the house.

**Chris:** .....

.....

.....

Tanya asked him when he would be back.

**Tanya:** .....

Chris answered that he would be back the following week.

**Chris:** .....

.....

2. Sandra told Marie that she had been trying to call the university for the last hour but the line had been engaged.

**Sandra:** .....

.....

.....

Marie inquired what Sandra wanted to ask them.

**Marie:** .....

Sandra answered that they had sent out her results the week before but that she hadn't received them yet.

**Sandra:** .....

.....

Marie asked Sandra whether she knew that the post office had been on strike for the past week.

**Marie:** .....

.....

She replied that she hadn't known. She explained that if only she had known, then she wouldn't have wasted so much time on the phone.

**Sandra:** .....

.....

.....

**E Correct the following sentences if necessary by taking out the inappropriate word.**

1. She wanted to know whether do I like sweets.
2. He said that, "I'll become a doctor when I grow up."
3. The teacher asked me if where I had been.
4. Jake told to me that he would visit us the following week.
5. He says that he enjoys reading in his free time.

6. She explained that she had bought the computer the month before.
7. Debbie wondered why did I wanted to resign.
8. The man denied to having seen us before.
9. The gardener asked us not to step on the grass.
10. Peter suggested that renting a car.



## TRANSFORMATION

Using the words given and other words, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence. Do not change the word given. (Use 2-5 words in total.)

1. "Drop your gun at once!" the police officer shouted at the robber.  
**ordered** The police officer ..... his gun at once.
2. "I must have this document translated into French," said Robert.  
**had** Robert said that ..... document translated into French.
3. "You really must let me pay for the meal," said Jane.  
**insisted** Jane ..... for the meal.
4. "If only I could explain everything," she sighed.  
**wished** She ..... everything.
5. "Leave me alone," Tony said to us.  
**told** Tony ..... alone.
6. "I rang you last night, Julie," said Brian.  
**rung** Brian explained to Julie that he ..... night.
7. "Would you like me to drive you to the airport?" he asked me.  
**offered** He ..... to the airport.
8. "You needn't move to England next year," they told me.  
**would** I was told that I ..... to England the following year.
9. "How much does it cost to go to Rome by plane?" he asked himself.  
**wondered** He ..... to go to Rome by plane.
10. "You'd better not swim too far from the shore," the lifeguard said to us.  
**advised** The lifeguard ..... too far from the shore.
11. "You're not coming to the meeting, are you?" Mr Joy asked me.  
**going** Mr Joy asked ..... to the meeting.
12. "Why don't we go to the library to study?" she asked me.  
**went** She ..... to the library to study.
13. "Are you working today, Peter?" she asked.  
**whether** She wanted to know ..... day.
14. "You should join the football team, Kelly," said the gym instructor.  
**encouraged** The gym instructor ..... the football team.
15. "Have you ever tasted goulash, Betty?" Ben asked.  
**had** Ben asked Betty ..... goulash.
16. "Don't bring your dog into the shop," the shop owner said to Mary.  
**forbade** The shop owner ..... dog into the shop.

