

Reported speech 1 (He said that ...)

A

Study this example situation:

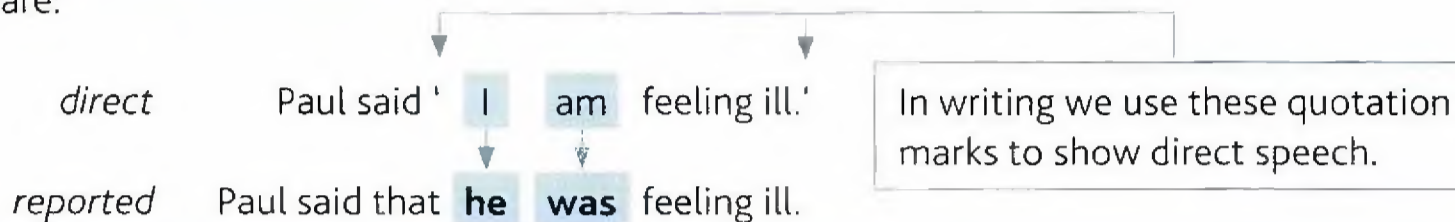


You want to tell somebody what Paul said. There are two ways of doing this:

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:



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 Anna. Here are some of the things she said in *direct* speech:

My parents **are** fine.
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.



ANNA

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

- Anna said that her parents **were** fine.
- 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.

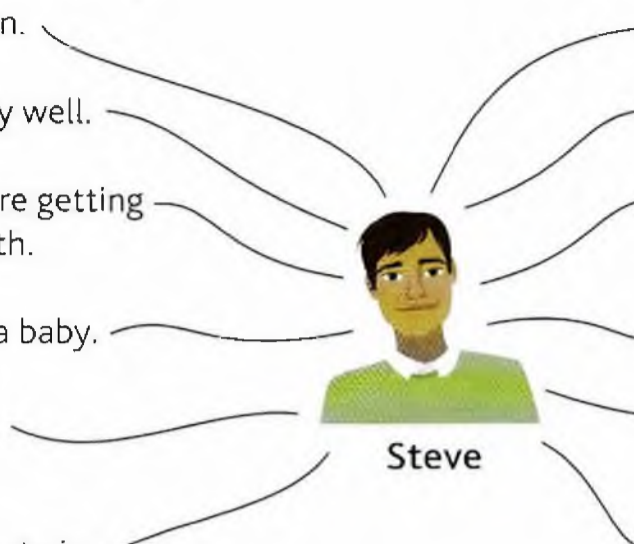
C

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.

Exercises

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:

- 
- 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 Joe is doing.
 - 6 I saw Helen at a party in June and she seemed fine.
 - 7 I haven't seen Amy 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 not what you expected. Use your own ideas to complete your answers.

- 1 A: It's quite a long way from the hotel to the station.
B: Is it? The man on the reception desk said *it was only five minutes' walk*
- 2 A: Sue is coming to the party tonight.
B: Is she? I saw her a few days ago and she said she
- 3 A: Sarah gets on fine with Paul.
B: Does she? Last week you said each other.
- 4 A: Joe knows lots of people.
B: That's not what he told me. He said anyone.
- 5 A: Jane will be here next week.
B: Oh, really? When I spoke to her, she said away.
- 6 A: I'm going out tonight.
B: Are you? I thought you said home.
- 7 A: John speaks French quite well.
B: Does he? He told me any other languages.
- 8 A: I haven't seen Ben recently.
B: That's strange. He told me last weekend.

Reported speech 2

A

It is not always necessary to change the verb in reported speech. If the situation *is still the same*, you do not need to change the verb to the past. For example:

- direct* Paul said 'My new job **is** boring.'
- reported* Paul said that his new job **is** boring.
(The situation is still the same. His job **is** still boring now.)
- direct* Helen said 'I **want** to go to Canada next year.'
- reported* Helen told me that **she wants** to go to Canada next year.
(Helen still wants to go to Canada next year.)

You can also change the verb to the past:

- Paul said that his new job **was** boring.
- Helen told me that she **wanted** to go to Canada next year.

But if the situation has changed or finished, 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.**

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

Hi, Joe. I didn't expect to see you. 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?



D

Tell/ask somebody to do something

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

- direct* '**Drink** plenty of water,' the doctor said to me.
- reported* The doctor **told me to drink** plenty of water.
- direct* '**Don't be** late,' I said to Joe.
- reported* I **told Joe not to be** late.
- direct* '**Can you help** me, please,' Jackie said to me.
- reported* Jackie **asked me to help** her.

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

- Paul **said not to worry** about him. (*but not* Paul said me)

Exercises

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?

Sarah	You
1 Dave works very hard.	But you said he was lazy.
2 Let's have fish for dinner.	But
3 I'm going to buy a car.
4 Jane is always short of money.
5 My sister lives in Paris.
6 I think New York is a great place.
7 Let's go out tomorrow evening.
8 I've never spoken to Jane.

48.2 Complete the sentences with **say** or **tell** (in the correct form). Use only one word each time.

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

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 me a paper?

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.

- Will was taking a long time to get ready, so I told him to hurry up
- Sarah was driving too fast, so I asked
- Sue was nervous about the situation. I told
- I couldn't move the piano alone, so I
- The security guard looked at me suspiciously and
- Tom was going to the shop, so I
- The man started asking me personal questions, so I
- John was in love with Marianne, so he
- I didn't want to delay Helen, so I