

# 15. Reported Speech

**Direct speech** is the exact words someone said.

We use quotation marks in Direct speech.

He said, "I'll wait for you."

**Reported speech** is the exact meaning of what someone said but not the exact words. We do not use quotation marks in Reported speech.

He said that he would wait for me.



## Say – Tell

We use **say** in Direct speech. We also use **say** in Reported speech when **say** is not followed by the person the words were spoken to. We use **tell** in Reported speech when **tell** is followed by the person the words were spoken to.

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Direct speech :   | She <b>said to me</b> , "I am very tired."  |
| Reported speech : | She <b>told me</b> that she was very tired. |
| Reported speech : | She <b>said that</b> she was very tired.    |

**Expressions with say** say good morning etc, say something, say one's prayers, say so

**Expressions with tell** 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

### 211 Fill in "say" or "tell" in the correct form.

- The policeman ..... *said* ..... that the man was lying.
- Philip ..... it would probably rain tomorrow.
- Susan ..... , "Let's go out for dinner tonight."
- Jim ..... me about the party last night.
- Our teacher ..... he was pleased with our work.
- Yesterday my friend ..... he ..... (not) anyone my secret.

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7. Stop ..... lies!
8. Could you please ..... me your name?
9. The little girl ..... her prayers and went to bed.
10. I really can't ..... Jane from Kate. They are twins.
11. "I haven't got enough money," he ..... to John.
12. He ..... he would meet us later.



We can report:      A. statements      B. questions      C. commands, requests, suggestions

### Reported Statements

1. To report statements we use a reporting verb (**say, tell, advise, explain, promise** etc.) followed by a **that**-clause. In spoken English **that** may be omitted.
2. Pronouns and possessive adjectives change according to the meaning.

Direct speech :            He said, "I can't fix it **myself**."

Reported speech :        He said **he** couldn't fix it **himself**.

3. Certain words change as follows :

Direct speech :            **this/these, here, come**

Reported speech :        **that/those, there, go**

"**This** is my book," he said.

He said **that** was his book.

Note that :

**can** changes to **could**

**will** " " **would**

**may** " " **might**

**must** " " **had to**

### 4. When the reporting verb is in the Past the verb tenses change as follows :

| Direct speech  | Reported speech   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Present Simple</b><br/>"I <b>can't remember</b> his name," she said.</p> <p><b>Present Continuous</b><br/>"She's <b>speaking</b> to Joe," he said.</p> <p><b>Present Perfect</b><br/>"I've <b>bought</b> you some flowers," she said.</p> <p><b>Past Simple</b><br/>"He <b>lost</b> all the money," she said.</p> <p><b>Future</b><br/>"I'll <b>see</b> you later," he said.</p> | <p><b>Past Simple</b><br/>She said she <b>couldn't remember</b> his name.</p> <p><b>Past Continuous</b><br/>He said she <b>was speaking</b> to Joe.</p> <p><b>Past Perfect</b><br/>She said she <b>had bought</b> me some flowers.</p> <p><b>Past Perfect</b><br/>She said that he <b>had lost</b> all the money.</p> <p><b>Conditional</b><br/>He said he <b>would see</b> me later.</p> |

### 5. Time expressions change as follows :

| Direct speech   | Reported speech   |
|---|---|
| <p>tonight, today, this week/month/year<br/>now<br/>now that<br/>yesterday, last night/week/month/year<br/>tomorrow, next week/month/year<br/>two days/months/years etc., ago</p> <p>"He arrived <b>last week</b>," she said.</p> | <p><b>that night, that day, that week/month/year</b><br/><b>then, at that time, at once, immediately</b><br/><b>since</b><br/><b>the day before, the previous night/week/month/year</b><br/><b>the day after, the following day, the next week/month/year</b><br/><b>two days/months/years etc., before</b></p> <p>She said that he had arrived <b>the previous week</b>.</p> |

### 6. There are no changes in verb tenses when the reporting verb is in the Present, Future or Present Perfect tense or when the sentence expresses something which is always true.

|                        |                                  |  |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Direct speech</b>   | She'll say, "I can do it."       | "The earth <b>is</b> round," said the teacher.     |
| <b>Reported speech</b> | She'll say (that) she can do it. | The teacher said (that) the earth <b>is</b> round. |

### 7. The Past Continuous does not usually change.

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Direct speech :</b>   | "I <b>was travelling</b> to Brighton while she <b>was flying</b> to the USA," he said. |
| <b>Reported speech :</b> | He said he <b>was travelling</b> to Brighton while she <b>was flying</b> to the USA.   |

### 8. Certain modal verbs do not change in Reported speech. These are : **would, could, might, should, ought to.**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Direct speech :</b>   | "He <b>might</b> visit us," Mum said.   |
| <b>Reported speech :</b> | Mum said that he <b>might</b> visit us. |

## 15. Reported Speech

### 212 Report what the guests said at a wedding last Sunday.



1. Miss Moore *said (that) they would make a lovely couple.* .....
2. Mr Smith .....
3. Mrs Jones .....
4. Mr Roberts .....
5. Mr Clarke .....
6. Miss Mayall .....

### Reported Questions

In Reported questions we use affirmative word order and the question mark is omitted. To report a **wh- question**, we use **ask** followed by the question word (who, what, etc). When there is no question word in direct questions, **if** or **whether** is used in Reported questions. Pronouns, possessive adjectives, tenses, time expressions etc. change as in statements.

**Direct speech:** He asked, "What time is it?" He asked me, "Do you know her?"  
**Reported speech:** He asked **what** time it was. He asked me **if/whether** I knew her.

### 213 Report the police-officer's questions to the shop owner.

1. What's your name?
2. Did you see the robbers?
3. What were they wearing?

1. *The police-officer asked him what his name was.* .....
2. ....
3. ....

4. How do you think they got in?
5. What did they take?
6. Has this ever happened before?

4. ....
5. ....
6. ....

**Reported Commands / Requests / Suggestions**

To report commands, requests, suggestions etc we use a reporting verb (**order, ask, tell, advise, offer, warn, beg, suggest\*** etc) followed by **to -infinitive** or **not to - infinitive**.

(\***suggest** is followed by the **-ing form**. eg. He said, "Shall we go by bus?" He suggested **going** by bus.)

**Direct speech:** He said to me, "Stop talking!" He said to me, "Don't touch it!"

**Reported speech:** He told me **to stop** talking. He told me **not to touch** it.

**214 Report what Mrs Lane told her babysitter to do.**

1. Don't answer the door to anyone!
2. Phone me if there's an emergency!
3. Don't let the children eat any sweets!
4. Send the children to bed at 9 o'clock!



5. Give the children a bath before they go to bed!
6. Don't take the dog into the children's bedroom!
7. Close all the windows!
8. Put the toys away in the cupboard!

1. Mrs Lane told her babysitter not to answer the door to anyone. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....
7. ....
8. ....

**215 Turn from Direct into Reported speech.**

1. "I've ordered a pizza for dinner," he said. *He said that he had ordered a pizza for dinner.* ...
2. "We must write a letter to our lawyer," she said. ....
3. "I will come tomorrow and fix the tap," the plumber said to them. ....
4. "This is the best holiday I've ever had," she said to her friend. ....
5. "Why did you say that to me?" she asked him. ....
6. "Don't speak to your father like that," she said to them. ....
7. "Could you show me where the manager's office is?" he asked the secretary. ....
8. "Take your books with you," she said to her son. ....

## 15. Reported Speech

**216** Choose a reporting verb and turn the following from Direct into Reported speech.

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

1. "I think you should take more exercise," the doctor said to me.  
*The doctor advised me to take more exercise.*
2. "I will not answer your questions," the actor said to him.
3. "I really will phone this evening," he said.
4. "Do you know where I've put my hat?" he said to her.
5. "What have you bought me for Christmas?" the little boy said to his parents.
6. "Go to your room now and do your homework," the mother said to her son.
7. "You will be paid twice a month," her boss said.
8. "Would you like me to drive you into town?" she said to me.
9. "Let's go for a walk!" he said.
10. "Please let me come with you," she said to her mother.
11. "Let's play in the garden," Ted said.
12. "The sun is bigger than the earth," Mary said to the children.
13. "Don't go near the fire because it's dangerous," she said to Ben.
14. "Let's have steak for dinner," said June.
15. "I promise I'll write to you as soon as I arrive, Mary," said John.
16. "Please, don't shoot me!" he said to the robber.

**217** First state if the following statements are true (T) or false (F) then turn them from Direct into Reported speech.

1. "Penguins can swim," he said. ... *He said (that) penguins can swim.*
2. "The earth is flat," the old man said.
3. "The cheetah is the fastest animal in the world," she said.
4. "A train goes faster than a plane," he said.
5. "Dolphins are less intelligent than sharks," he said.
6. "Man does not live forever," she said.

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**218** Write the exact words the customs officer asked Tracy.

The customs officer asked Tracy if she had got anything to declare. He asked her if she had bought anything in the Duty Free shop. He also asked her which hotel she was going to stay at. Then he asked her if she minded opening her suitcase. Next he asked her whose camera that was. He asked her if she was meeting anyone there. Finally he asked her what she had got in the bag and told her to have a pleasant stay.



1. *Have you got anything to declare?*

2. ....

3. ....

4. ....

5. ....

6. ....

7. ....

8. ....

**219** Write the exact words Miss Prim said to her students.

Miss Prim told her students not to talk when she's talking. She told them to give their homework to her at the end of each lesson. She asked them not to write on the desks. Then she told them to put their hands up if they had a question. She also asked them not to eat in the classroom. She told them to write everything in pen and asked them to throw their rubbish into the wastepaper bin. Finally she told them not to leave the classroom without permission.



1. *Don't talk when I'm talking!*

2. ....

3. ....

4. ....

5. ....

6. ....

7. ....

8. ....

**220** Turn the following dialogue into Reported Speech.

**Sally:** Have you applied for the job?

**Diane:** Yes, I had an interview yesterday.

**Sally:** How did it go?

**Diane:** Fine, but I'm wondering if I want the job because I will have to move to Manchester.

**Sally:** What will you do then?

**Diane:** If they offer me the job, I can't accept it.

*Sally asked Diane if she had applied for the job.  
Diane told her .....*

.....

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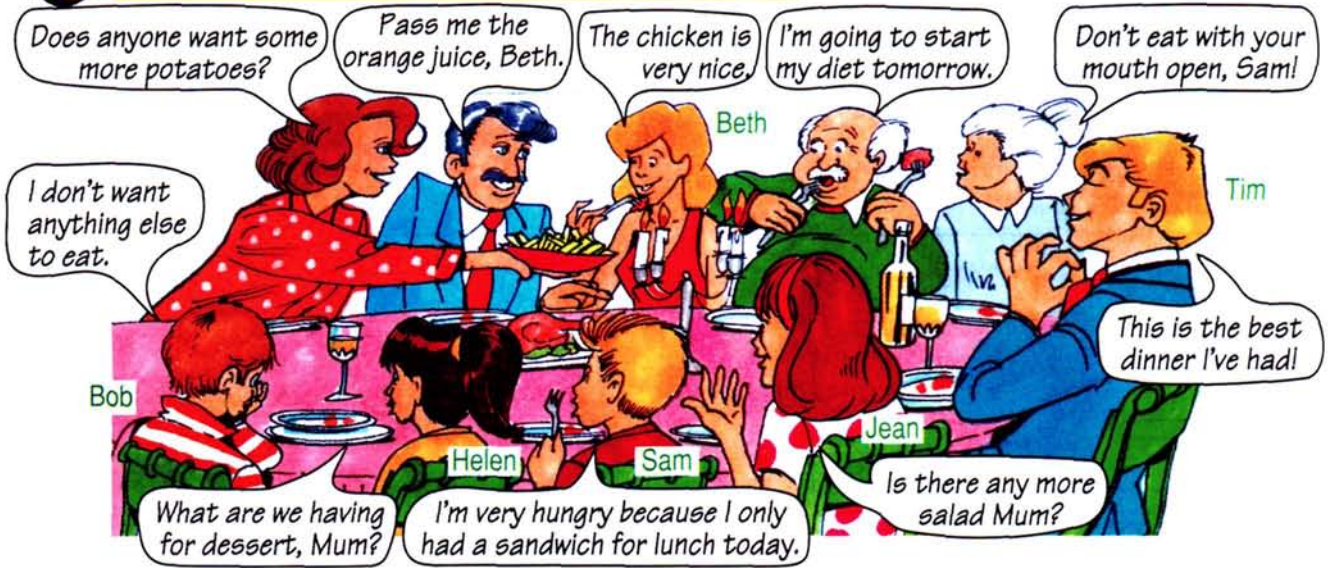
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## 15. Reported Speech

**221** Write what the family said at the dinner table.



1. Mother asked if anyone wanted some more potatoes.
2. Father .....
3. Beth .....
4. Grandfather .....
5. Grandmother .....
6. Tim .....
7. Jean .....
8. Sam .....
9. Helen .....
10. Bob .....

**222** Turn from Direct into Reported speech.

1. "Paris is the capital of France," said the teacher.  
*The teacher said that Paris is the capital of France.* .....
2. "I didn't break the window," said the little boy to her. ....
3. "Eat your dinner," she said to him. ....
4. "Have you seen this film?" Jane asked Helen. ....
5. "I had an argument with Mark yesterday," said Fiona.  
.....
6. "The new guests will arrive tomorrow," explained the manager.  
.....
7. "Greece is hotter than England," said George. ....
8. "Where is the post office?" Simon asked the stranger.  
.....
9. "I might go sailing next week," Michael said. ....
10. "Don't eat with your fingers," the mother said to her children.  
.....