

REPORTED SPEECH

1. What is Reported Speech?

Reported (or indirect) speech is used to convey what someone said, thought, or asked without quoting their exact words.

Example:

Direct: "I am preparing for the exam."

Reported: She said (that) she was preparing for the exam."

2. Say vs. Tell

<p><u>Say Something</u> June: "I love English." June said (that) she loved English.</p>	<p><u>Tell Someone Something</u> June: "I love English." June told me (that) she loved English.</p>
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3. Tense Changes (Backshift)

When the reporting verb is in the past, tenses usually move one step back.

Direct Speech	Reported Speech	Example
Present Simple	Past Simple	I work → He said he worked
Present Continuous	Past Continuous	I am studying → She said she was studying
Present Perfect	Past Perfect	I have finished → He said he had finished
Past Simple	Past Perfect	I left → She said she had left
Will	Would	I will call → He said he would call

When we are reporting **PAST ACTIONS**, it is **NOT ALWAYS** necessary to change the verb tense. We can usually leave the verbs in the same tense and just change the pronouns. However, we sometimes need to use the Past Perfect to clarify the time order of events.

"I ate pizza, so I am not hungry." → He said (that) he had eaten pizza, so he wasn't hungry."

Note: **Past Perfect Simple** and **Past Perfect Continuous** never change in Reported Speech.

Modal Verb Changes:

will → would | can → could | may → might | must (obligation) → had to

No change: would, could, might, should, ought to

4. Time Expressions

now → then / at that moment

today → that day

tonight → that night

this week / month etc. → that week / month etc.

yesterday → the day before / the previous day

tomorrow → the next day / the following day

next week/year etc. → the following week/year etc.

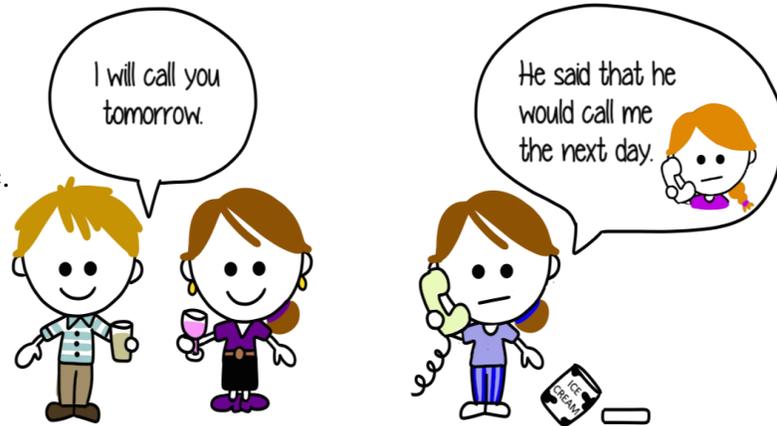
last week → the previous week

recently → shortly before

in two days → two days later

a year ago → a year before / the previous year

six days ago → six days before



5. Place, Movement & Reference Words

here → there

this / these → that / those

come → go

bring → take

6. When Tenses Do NOT Change

- ♥ Reporting verb in present or future tense (eg. She says she is ill now)
- ♥ General truths and facts (eg. The teacher said water boils at 100°C.)
- ♥ Situations still true at the time of reporting (eg. Carl said he is going skiing on Sunday
– She said she was unhappy at work vs She said she is unhappy at work.)
- ♥ formal, academic, or journalistic contexts, speakers often **avoid backshifting** to keep statements **timeless and objective** (The report concluded that the system fails to meet current needs.)
- ♥ 2nd and 3rd conditional sentences, Past Perfect Simple and Continuous, Modal verbs that do not change, after would rather, wish, if only

Key reminder: Backshift is the default rule, not an absolute one.

7. Reporting Questions

Use the **affirmative** form of the verb. Use **if** or **whether** there is no question word.

“Where is the train station?” He asked me/ wanted to know where the train station was.

8. Orders / Commands

We use **Infinitives** when reporting orders and commands, especially when using tell.

“Do your homework. Don't use a dictionary!!” He told me **to do** my homework and **not to use** a dictionary.