Lesson 9. Reported Speech
Learning Objectives

After this lesson, students will be able to:

• Define what reported speech is and differentiate it from direct speech.
• Identify different modifications that need to be done when transforming statements, questions and requests or commands to reported speech.
• Learn other forms of transformations which are exempted from the aforementioned types of sentences.
• Report statements, questions and request or commands using the proper structure learned in the lesson.
Reported speech is when you tell somebody else what you or a person said before. Distinction must be made between direct speech and reported speech.

Direct speech vs Reported speech

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct speech</th>
<th>Reported speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She says: &quot;I like tuna fish.&quot;</td>
<td>She says that she likes tuna fish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She said: &quot;I'm visiting Paris next weekend&quot;</td>
<td>She said that she was visiting Paris the following weekend.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Different types of sentences

When you use reported speech, you either report:

- statements
- questions
- requests / commands
- other types
Different types of sentences
When transforming statements, check whether you have to change:
- pronouns
- tense
- place and time expression

1. Pronouns

In reported speech, you often have to change the pronoun depending on who says what.

She says, “My dad likes roast chicken.”

She says that her dad likes roast chicken.

Reporting Statements – Pronouns
Lesson 9. Reported Speech

2. Tenses

- If the sentence **starts in the present**, there is **no backshift** of tenses in reported speech.
- If the sentence **starts in the past**, there is **often backshift** of tenses in reported speech.

**Backshift**
You must change the tense if the introductory clause is in a past tense (e.g. *He said*).

**No Backshift**
Do not change the tense if the introductory clause is in a present tense (e.g. *He says*). Note, however, that you might have to change the form of the present tense verb (3rd person singular).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Speech</th>
<th>Reported Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(no backshift)</td>
<td>“I write poems.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(backshift)</td>
<td>“I write poems.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Lesson 9. Reported Speech

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Speech</th>
<th>Reported Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Simple Present**  
He said: "I am happy"  | **Simple Past**  
He said that he was happy |
| **Present Progressive**  
He said: "I'm looking for my keys"  | **Past Progressive**  
He said that he was looking for his keys |
| **Simple Past**  
He said: "I visited New York last year"  | **Past Perfect Simple**  
He said that he had visited New York the previous year. |
| **Present Perfect**  
He said: "I've lived here for a long time"  | **Past Perfect**  
He said that he had lived there for a long time |
| **Past Perfect**  
He said: "They had finished the work when I arrived"  | **Past Perfect**  
He said that they had finished the work when he had arrived" |
**Lesson 9. Reported Speech**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Speech</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Past Progressive</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He said: &quot;I was playing football when the accident occurred&quot;</td>
<td>He said that he had been playing football when the accident had occurred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Present Perfect Progressive</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He said: &quot;I have been playing football for two hours.&quot;</td>
<td>He said that he had been playing football for two hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Past Perfect Progressive</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He said: &quot;I had been reading a newspaper when the light went off&quot;</td>
<td>He said that he had been reading a newspaper when the light had gone off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future Simple (will+verb)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He said: &quot;I will open the door.&quot;</td>
<td>He said that he would open the door.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditional (would+verb)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He said: &quot;I would buy Mercedes if I were rich&quot;</td>
<td>He said that he would buy Mercedes if he had been rich&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 9. Reported Speech

The modal verbs *could, should, would, might, needn't, ought to, used to* do not normally change.

- **He said,** "*She might be right.*"
- **He said that she might be right.**

Other modal verbs may change:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modal</th>
<th>Direct speech</th>
<th>Reported speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>can</td>
<td><em>&quot;I can do it.&quot;</em></td>
<td><em>He said he could do it.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may</td>
<td><em>&quot;May I go out?&quot;</em></td>
<td><em>He wanted to know if he might go out.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>must</td>
<td><em>&quot;She must apply for the job.&quot;</em></td>
<td><em>He said that she must/had to apply for the job.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Place, demonstratives and time expressions

Place, demonstratives and time expressions change if the context of the reported statement (i.e. the location and/or the period of time) is different from that of the direct speech. In the following table, you will find the different changes of place; demonstratives and time expressions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Speech</th>
<th>Reported Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Expressions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Place</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>today</td>
<td>here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>now</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yesterday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... days ago</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>last week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>next year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tomorrow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 9. Reported Speech

Change the following statements into reported speech:

1. “He works in a bank”
   She said __________________________________________.
2. “We went out last night”
   She told me ______________________________________.
3. “I’m coming!”
   She said ________________________________________.
4. “I was waiting for the bus when he arrived”
   She told me ______________________________________.
5. “I’d never been there before”
   She said ________________________________________.
6. “I didn’t go to the party”
   She told me ______________________________________.
7. “Lucy’ll come later”
   She said ________________________________________.
8. “He hasn’t eaten breakfast”
   She told me ______________________________________.
9. “I can help you tomorrow”
   She said ________________________________________.
10. “You should go to bed early”
    She told me ______________________________________.
11. “I don’t like chocolate”
    She told me ______________________________________.
12. “I won’t see you tomorrow”
    She said ________________________________________.
13. “She’s living in Paris for a few months”
    She said ________________________________________.
14. “I visited my parents at the weekend”
    She told me ______________________________________.
Report statements that you’ve (recently) heard from the following people:

- a politician
- a woman in a romantic relationship
- a scientist
- a weather forecaster
- a superstar
- a neighbor
Lesson 6. Conditionals

When transforming questions, check whether you have to change:
- pronouns
- place and time expressions
- tenses (backshift)

Also note that you have to:
- transform the question into an indirect question
- use the question word (where, when, what, how) or if / whether

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of questions</th>
<th>Direct speech</th>
<th>Reported speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With question word (what, why, where, how...)</td>
<td>&quot;Why&quot; don’t you speak English?&quot;</td>
<td>He asked me why I didn’t speak English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without question word (yes or no questions)</td>
<td>“Do you speak English?”</td>
<td>He asked me whether / if I spoke English.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 6. Conditionals

Change the following questions into reported speech:

1. “Where is he?”
She asked ________________________________________.

2. “What are you doing?”
She asked ________________________________________.

3. “Why did you go out last night?”
She asked ________________________________________.

4. “Who was that beautiful woman?”
She asked ________________________________________.

5. “How is your mother?”
She asked ________________________________________.

6. “How is your mother?”
She asked ________________________________________.

7. “How is your mother?”
She asked ________________________________________.

8. “What were you doing when I saw you?”
She asked ________________________________________.

9. “How was the journey?”
She asked ________________________________________.

10. “How often do you go to the cinema?”
She asked ________________________________________.

She asked ________________________________________.

12. “Did he arrive on time?”
She asked ________________________________________.

13. “Have you been to Paris?”
She asked ________________________________________.

14. “Can you help me?”
She asked ________________________________________.
Lesson 9. Reported Speech

Report questions that have been asked by the following people to you:

- a stranger on a street
- a toddler
- an elderly
- a colleague or schoolmate
- a customer service representative
- anyone of the opposite gender
Lesson 9. Reported Speech

When transforming requests and commands, check whether you have to change:
- pronouns
- place and time expressions

### Direct speech vs Reported speech

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>“Nancy, do the exercise.”</td>
<td>He told Nancy to do the exercise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Nancy, give me your pen, please.&quot;</td>
<td>He asked Nancy to give him her pen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tenses are not relevant for requests – simply use to / not to + verb (infinitive without "to")**

- She said, *“Sit down.”*  
- She said, *"don't be lazy"*
- She *asked me to sit down.*  
- She *asked me not to be lazy.*

For affirmative use *to* + infinitive (without to)  
For negative requests, use *not to* + infinitive (without to).
Lesson 9. Reported Speech

Change the following requests or commands into reported speech:

1. “Please help me carry this”
   She asked ________________________________.

2. “Please come early”
   She ________________________________.

3. “Please buy some milk”
   She ________________________________.

4. “Could you please open the window?”
   She ________________________________.

5. “Could you bring the book tonight?”
   She ________________________________.

6. “Can you help me with my homework, please?”
   She ________________________________.

7. “Would you bring me a cup of coffee, please?”
   She ________________________________.

8. “Would you mind passing the salt?”
   She ________________________________.

9. “Would you mind lending me a pencil?”
   She ________________________________.

10. “Tidy your room!”
    She ________________________________.

11. “Do your homework!”
    She ________________________________.

12. “Go to bed!”
    She ________________________________.

13. “Don’t be late!”
    She ________________________________.

14. “Don’t smoke!”
    She ________________________________.
Report request or commands that are commonly given by the following people:

- your mother
- your father
- online teacher
- a boss
- a country president
- a pet owner
Expressions of advice with **must**, **should** and **ought** are usually reported using **advise / urge**.

- "You must read this book."
- He advised / urged me to read that book.

The expression **let's** is usually reported using **suggest**. In this case, there are two possibilities for reported speech: gerund or statement with **should**.

- "Let's go to the cinema."
  1. He suggested going to the cinema.
  2. He suggested that we should go to the cinema.

**Main clauses connected with and/but**

If two complete main clauses are connected with **and** or **but**, put **that** after the conjunction.

- He said, "I saw her **but** she didn't see me."
- "He said that he had seen her **but** THAT she hadn't seen him."
  If the subject is dropped in the second main clause (the conjunction is followed by a verb), do not use 'that'.
- She said, "I am a nurse **and** work in a hospital."
- "He said that she was a nurse **and** worked in a hospital."
The End