

English III

Reported Speech

MENG211 - 2020

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Lesson 2

Reported (Indirect) Speech

- If we report what another person has said, we usually do not use the speaker's exact words (direct speech), but reported (indirect) speech.
- We need to transform the structure of the statement, question, or request.
- Often, a “reporting verb” like ‘say’ or ‘tell’ is used.

Reported Speech - Statements

When transforming statements, check to see if you have to change:

- Pronouns
- Present tense verbs (3rd person singular)
- Place and time expressions
- Tense of reporting verb (backshift)

Reported Speech - Statements

Type	Example
direct speech	"I speak English."
reported speech (no backshift)	He says that he speaks English.
reported speech (backshift)	He said that he spoke English.

Reported Speech - Questions

When transforming questions, check to see if you have to change:

- Pronouns
- Present tense verbs (3rd person singular)
- Place and time expressions
- Tense of reporting verb (backshift)

Note if there are other changes:

- Transform the question into an indirect question
- Use the interrogative or '*whether*' / '*if*'

Reported Speech - Questions

Type		Example
with interrogative	direct speech	"Why don't you speak English?"
	reported speech	He asked me why I didn't speak English.
without interrogative	direct speech	"Do you speak English?"
	reported speech	He asked me whether / if I spoke English.

Reported Speech - Requests

When transforming requests, use:

'Ask' + pronoun + 'to' + root verb

Direct Speech:

- Close the window, please. -or-
- Could you close the window please?

Reported Speech:

- He/She asked me to close the window.

Reported Speech - Requests

Other examples:

Direct Speech:

- Please do not smoke.
- Could you pass the milk, please?

Reported Speech:

- He/She asked me not to smoke.
- He/She asked me to pass the milk.

Difference between 'say' and 'tell'

Say and *tell* are irregular reporting verbs used in reported speech. However:

'Say' is used to communicate information, an opinion, or a feeling.

'Tell' is used to communicate to someone in spoken or written forms.

Remember: You say something ***BUT*** you tell someone something.