

# Reported Speech: Comprehensive Guide

Reported speech (also known as indirect speech) is used to relay what someone said without quoting their exact words. It is essential for reporting conversations or relaying information in a concise and accurate way.

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## 1. What Is Reported Speech?

- **Direct Speech**  
: The exact words spoken by someone.
    - **Example:** He said, "I am learning English."
  - **Reported Speech**  
: Paraphrasing what was said without using quotation marks.
    - **Example:** He said (that) he was learning English.
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## 2. Changes in Reported Speech

When converting direct speech to reported speech, certain changes are made based on the context. These include changes in **pronouns**, **tenses**, **time expressions**, and **modals**.

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## 3. Rules for Changing Tenses

### A. If the Reporting Verb is in the Present/Future

The tense of the original statement remains the same.

- **Example:** She says, "I love chocolate."  
→ She says (that) she loves chocolate.

## B. If the Reporting Verb is in the Past

The tense of the original statement usually shifts **one step back** in time.

DIRECT SPEECH	REPORTED SPEECH
Present Simple	Past Simple
"I like ice cream."	He said he liked ice cream.
Present Continuous	Past Continuous
"I am reading a book."	She said she was reading a book.
Present Perfect	Past Perfect
"I have finished my homework."	He said he had finished his homework.
Past Simple	Past Perfect
"I saw her yesterday."	She said she had seen her the day before.
Past Continuous	Past Perfect Continuous
"I was watching TV."	He said he had been watching TV.
Future Simple (will)	Would
"I will call you."	She said she would call me.

## 4. Changes in Pronouns

Pronouns are adjusted based on the speaker and the subject of the sentence.

### Examples:

- Direct: "I love this book," she said.  
Reported: She said (that) **she** loved **that** book.
- Direct: "We are going to the party," they said.  
Reported: They said (that) **they** were going to the party.

## 5. Changes in Time and Place Expressions

DIRECT SPEECH	REPORTED SPEECH
Now	Then

DIRECT SPEECH	REPORTED SPEECH
Today	That day
Tomorrow	The next day / The following day
Yesterday	The day before / The previous day
Here	There
This	That
These	Those

### Examples:

- Direct: "I am coming here tomorrow."  
Reported: He said he was coming **there** the **next day**.
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## 6. Reporting Questions

### A. Yes/No Questions

Use **if** or **whether** to introduce the reported question.

- **Example:**  
Direct: "Do you like coffee?" she asked.  
Reported: She asked if I liked coffee.

### B. Wh- Questions

The question word remains, but the word order changes to that of a statement.

- **Example:**  
Direct: "Where are you going?" he asked.  
Reported: He asked where I was going.
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## 7. Reporting Commands, Requests, and Advice

### A. Commands

Use **to + base verb** to report commands.

- **Example:**

Direct: "Sit down!"

Reported: He told me to sit down.

### B. Negative Commands

Use **not to + base verb**.

- **Example:**

Direct: "Don't touch that!"

Reported: She told me not to touch that.

### C. Requests

Use **ask + object + to + base verb**.

- **Example:**

Direct: "Please help me."

Reported: She asked me to help her.

### D. Advice

Use **advise + object + to + base verb**.

- **Example:**

Direct: "You should see a doctor."

Reported: She advised me to see a doctor.

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## 8. Reporting Modals

DIRECT SPEECH	REPORTED SPEECH
Can	Could
"I can swim."	He said he could swim.
May	Might
"It may rain."	She said it might rain.
Must	Had to
"You must leave."	He said I had to leave.
Shall	Should / Would
"Shall we go?"	He asked if we should go.

**Exception: Modals like could, should, would, might, ought to remain unchanged.**

- **Example:**

Direct: "I might call you."

Reported: She said she might call me.

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## 9. Special Cases

### A. Reporting Universal Truths

If the statement is a fact or universal truth, the tense does not change.

- **Example:**

Direct: "Water boils at 100°C."

Reported: She said water boils at 100°C.

### B. Reporting Hypothetical Questions

When reporting a hypothetical or imagined situation, the tense may not follow normal rules.

- **Example:**

Direct: "What would you do if you won the lottery?"

Reported: He asked what I would do if I won the lottery.

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## 10. Common Mistakes in Reported Speech

### A. Forgetting to Change Tenses

- **Mistake:** He said, "I will help you" → He said he will help me.
- **Correct:** He said he **would** help me.

### B. Confusing Time Expressions

- **Mistake:** She said, "I'll call you tomorrow" → She said she would call me tomorrow.
- **Correct:** She said she would call me **the next day**.

### C. Keeping Questions in Question Format

- **Mistake:** He asked, "Where are you going?" → He asked where are you going.
- **Correct:** He asked where I was going.

### D. Misreporting Modals

- **Mistake:** He said, "I must leave now" → He said he must leave then.
  - **Correct:** He said he **had to** leave then.
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## 11. Practice Exercises

### A. Convert to Reported Speech

1. She said, "I am learning French."
2. He asked, "Did you finish your homework?"
3. They said, "We will visit you tomorrow."
4. "Please open the window," she said.

### B. Correct the Mistakes

1. She said she will come tomorrow.
2. He asked if do I like pizza.
3. They told me to not shout.
4. She said, "I can't find my phone" → She said she can't find her phone.

### C. Fill in the Blanks

1. He said he \_\_\_ (like/liked) chocolate.
  2. She asked where I \_\_\_ (am/was) going.
  3. They said they \_\_\_ (would/had) help me the next day.
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