

Reported speech 2

A

It is not always necessary to change the verb in reported speech. If the situation *is still the same*, you do not need to change the verb to the past. For example:

- ☐ *direct* Paul said 'My new job **is** boring.'
- reported* Paul said that his new job **is** boring.
(The situation is still the same. His job **is** still boring now.)
- ☐ *direct* Helen said 'I **want** to go to Canada next year.'
- reported* Helen told me that **she wants** to go to Canada next year.
(Helen still wants to go to Canada next year.)

You can also change the verb to the past:

- ☐ Paul said that his new job **was** boring.
- ☐ Helen told me that she **wanted** to go to Canada next year.

But if the situation has changed or finished, you *must* use a past verb:

- ☐ Paul left the room suddenly. He said **he had** to go. (*not* has to go)

B

You need to use a past form when there is a difference between what was said and what is really true. For example:

You met Sonia a few days ago.

She said: **Joe is in hospital.**

Later that day you meet Joe in the street. You say:

Hi, Joe. I didn't expect to see you. Sonia said you **were** in hospital.
(*not* 'Sonia said you are in hospital', because clearly he is not)



C

Say and tell

If you say *who* somebody is talking to, use **tell**:

- ☐ Sonia **told me** that you were in hospital. (*not* Sonia said me)
- ☐ What did you **tell the police**? (*not* say the police)

Otherwise use **say**:

- ☐ Sonia **said** that you were in hospital. (*not* Sonia told that ...)
- ☐ What did you **say**?

But you can '**say** something **to** somebody':

- ☐ Ann **said** goodbye **to** me and left. (*not* Ann said me goodbye)
- ☐ What did you **say to** the police?



D

Tell/ask somebody to do something

We also use the infinitive (**to do** / **to be** etc.) in reported speech, especially with **tell** and **ask** (for orders and requests):

- ☐ *direct* '**Drink** plenty of water,' the doctor said to me.
- reported* The doctor **told me to drink** plenty of water.
- ☐ *direct* '**Don't be** late,' I said to Joe.
- reported* I **told Joe not to be** late.
- ☐ *direct* '**Can you help** me, please,' Jackie said to me.
- reported* Jackie **asked me to help** her.

You can also say 'Somebody **said (not) to** do something':

- ☐ Paul **said not to worry** about him. (*but not* Paul said me)