

GRAMMAR

Reported speech in depth

LEVEL

Upper-Intermediate
(B2)

NUMBER

EN_B2_3122G

LANGUAGE

English



Learning outcomes

- I can identify and use a variety of structures to report speech.
- I can relay extended information provided by somebody else.

Reported speech

The following slides will cover some **advanced structures** of reported speech.

What is **reported speech** and why do we use it?

As a class, discuss what you already know about this topic. You can use the examples below to guide you.



He told me he would write while he was away.
He promised that he would write while he was away.
He claimed he would write while he was away, but he didn't!



Structure of reported speech

Reported speech = direct speech → indirect speech

Basic formula = add **reporting verbs**, change **pronouns and possessives** as needed, shift the **verb tense** back.

Direct speech	Reported speech	What's changed?
I've never been on a plane!	He admitted that he had never been on an aeroplane.	Add reporting verb: to admit Change pronoun: 1st person → 3rd person Shift tense back: present perfect → past perfect
Our children are perfect. They never fight!	They claimed that their children were perfect and never fought.	Add reporting verb: _____ Change pronoun + possessive: ____ → ____ ____ → ____ Shift tense: ____ → ____



Changing the verb tense

Read the examples and **complete** the blue boxes.

She shared that she's working on a new album.

He admitted that he loves reality TV.

They reminded me that their film comes out next month.

- If you are relaying speech that is **still true** at the time you are reporting it or **always true**, the verb tense can stay the same.

- **Match to an example sentence:**

This fact is currently or always true

This is an ongoing project and therefore still true

This is relaying information about a future event

Structures for reporting speech (1)

Read the examples. Complete the blue boxes.

My teacher **suggested that** I study in Spain for the year.
The speaker **stated that** we could contact her after the conference.
The court **ruled that** the defendant should pay a large fine.

- The basic verbs for reporting speech are **told** and **said**.
- However, there are many ways to make **reported speech** more descriptive.
- The examples above show the **verb + that + clause** structure.

- Which **reporting verbs** are used?
- How do these verbs help to **provide more context** to the information being relayed in each sentence?

Structures for reporting speech (2)

My teacher **reminded us** that our essays were due tomorrow.

My teacher **warned our class** that our essays were due tomorrow.

- The structure **verb + somebody + that** can be used with a wide variety of reporting verbs.
- It also allows you to indicate the **direction** of the direct speech.



Structures for reporting speech (3)

She **advised** **me** to learn Chinese.
They **reminded** **us** to arrive at nine a.m. sharp!

- These sentences use
verb + somebody + to-infinitive
- This structure also indicates the **direction of the direct speech** and is useful for reporting **advice, orders, and requests**.

Structures for reporting speech (4)

The candidate **promised to end** corruption and violence although he knew it would be difficult.

The manager **refused to apologise** for his staff's terrible service.

- Above are examples of reported speech using the structure **verb + to infinitive**.
- Note that you can add detail by adding **clauses**.

Different structures for reporting speech

1. **Complete** the sentences below using the most appropriate reporting verb.
2. **Identify** examples of some of the structures discussed on the previous three slides.

1 My teacher _____ me that my current marks were worryingly low.

2 Our boss _____ that we take a twenty minute break, as we'd been working since noon.

3 Christina _____ to explain her situation, but nobody understood.

4 The politician _____ that every teen do a year of voluntary service.

5 The principal _____ that she listens to her students' concerns, but she doesn't.

to try
to suggest
to claim
to propose
to warn



Practise reporting speech

Use the **prompts** to write sentences with reported speech. There is no one correct answer.

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | Sarah → John
<i>You need to start cleaning up after yourself.</i> | > | She warned him that he needed to start cleaning up after himself.
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| 2 | Teacher → our class
<i>Complete the last exercise for homework.</i> | > | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| 3 | Your mother → you
<i>I can't believe you're turning thirty already!</i> | > | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| 4 | The manager → a customer
<i>You're right. This chicken is undercooked.</i> | > | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| 5 | Martin → Eleanor
<i>I've travelled all around the world.</i> | > | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| 6 | Politician → journalist
<i>I'm not going to answer that question.</i> | > | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |





Saying *no*

How do you report **negative statements**?

The table below shows how to use different structures for **negative reported speech**.

not + gerund	not + infinitive	verb + that + negative
He apologised for not bringing a gift to the party.	He asked me not to tell anyone his secret.	He promised that he would not open the envelope before I got home.
He regretted not being kinder to his colleagues.	He decided not to be knighted.	She worried that her boss would not agree to the promotion.



Make negative statements

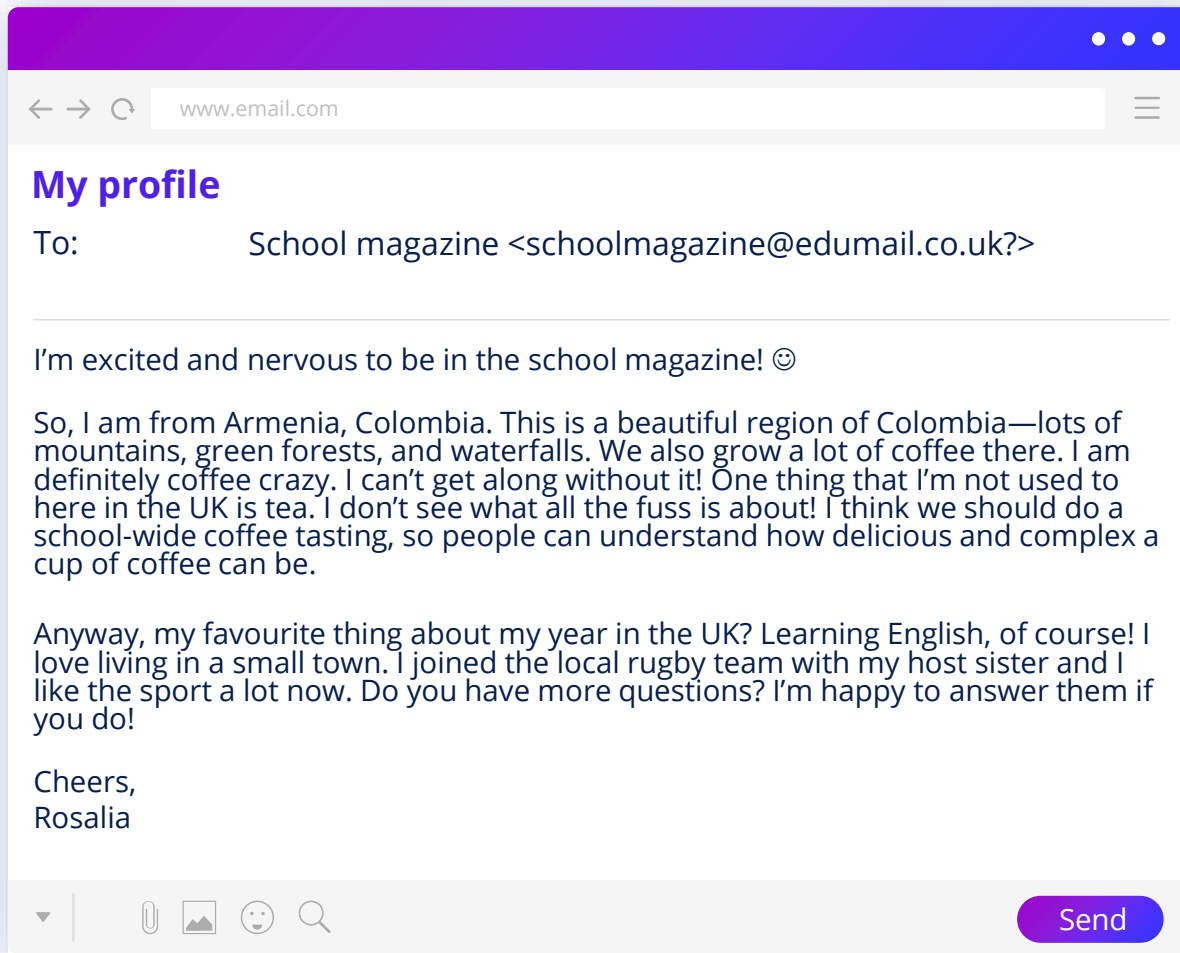
Complete the sentences below using **a negative** and the **correct form** of the verbs in the red box. Note that you may have to use the passive infinitive form.

- 1 He promised _____ at his birthday presents.
- 2 He asked _____ in the programme as a donor, saying that he preferred to be anonymous.
- 3 She argued that it _____ fair to close the park to the public.
- 4 He apologised for _____ on time.

to peek
to name
to be
to arrive

Rosalia's profile

Read Rosalia's email, which contains her responses to the questions for your article.





Rosalia mentions that
she's coffee **crazy**.

What does the word **crazy** mean in this
sentence? Does Rosalia enjoy coffee?

Are you also coffee crazy?



What did Rosalia say?

Match (1-4) with (a-d) to build complete sentences.

1 Rosalia offered to...

2 Rosalia suggested that...

3 Rosalia informed me...

4 Rosalia shared that...

a that she is from Armenia, Colombia.

b answer more questions if I had any.

c she has joined the local rugby team.

d we do a school-wide coffee tasting.



Pass on the message

You're meant to interview Louisa, another exchange student. She cancels, but sends you a message explaining why. **Relay her message** to your editor...

1 She apologised...



...for not showing up to the interview.

2 She admitted...



3 She explained...



4 She regretted...



5 She suggested...





Interview your classmate

Take turns interviewing each other in pairs **in breakout rooms** or **as a class**.
Make notes of your partner's answers.



Where are you from? What is it known for?

What do you miss most about home when you're away?

What countries have you visited recently? What did you find interesting or surprising about life there?

What parts of your culture would you most like to share with the rest of the world?



What did they say?

Relay the information given by your classmate, using reported speech.
You can use the verbs below to help you, or the other reporting verbs you've learned so far.



They said...

They admitted...

They offered...



End of the lesson

Idiom

Don't quote me on that!

Meaning: use this phrase when you tell someone something, but you're not sure if it's 100% correct

Example: We can get a shuttle bus from the train station I think... But don't quote me on that!



Additional practice

Transform Louisa's answers into reported speech +

Focus on the **pronouns** and **possessives** and transform Louisa's ideas into reported speech.



One thing I notice about Brits is that you all are so polite—but quiet. Back home, we're really loud!



Your university system is very different to ours.



My host family is wonderful. I actually share a room with my host sister, who has become a close friend.



It has taken me a while to get used to driving on the other side of the road!



Improve the text

Read the text and **complete** the activity below.

Hector is a 17-year-old exchange student from Guadalajara, Mexico. He said that he arrived in the UK on a rainy day last October. No surprise there! He said that he loves cycling, and that riding his bike on the roads in our area is loads of fun. Hector lives with a local family in Haverford, and he told me that he really likes country life. He told me he even liked helping with the chickens that his host family has. Back home, Hector attended a big school in the city, and was the captain of the volleyball team. Hector told me that here, he is focusing on learning English. He said he wanted to come abroad to meet new people. He asked: *will I speak perfect English when I leave? I hope so!*

Can you make this text more interesting? This is the first draft of a foreign exchange student profile, but the reported speech structures could be more advanced. Change at least four of the sentences in the text.





Profiling Louisa

Transform your interview with Louisa into reported speech.

Write five sentences about your conversation with Louisa and her experience as a foreign student in the UK.

What are the differences between her country and yours? What has her experience been like?





Answer key

P.4: to claim; 1st person plural → 3rd person plural; our → their; present simple → past simple

P.10: 1. warned 2. suggested 3. tried 4. proposed 5. claimed

P.11: Ideas for answering:

2. The teacher told us/reminded us to complete the last exercise
3. My mother told me that she couldn't believe I was turning thirty
4. The manager admitted that the chicken was undercooked
5. Martin claimed that he'd travelled all around the world; Martin told Eleanor that he'd travelled all around the world
6. The politician refused to answer the question

P.13: 1. not to peek 2. not to be named 3. wasn't fair 4. not arriving

P.16: 1. b 2. d 3. a 4. c



Summary

Structure of reported speech:

- **Reported speech** = **direct speech** → **indirect** speech. Basic formula = add **reporting verbs**, change **pronouns and possessives** as needed, shift the **verb tense** back.
- *I've never been on a plane!* - He admitted that he had never been on an aeroplane.

Changing the verb tense:

- If you are relaying speech that is **still true** at the time you are reporting it or **always true**, the verb tense can stay the same.
- *She shared that she's working on a new album.; He admitted that he loves reality TV.; They reminded me that their film comes out next month.*

Structures for reporting speech (1):

- The basic verbs for reporting speech are **told** and **said**. However, there are many ways to make **reported speech** more descriptive. Structure: **verb + that + clause** structure.
- *My teacher **suggested** that I study in Spain for the year.; The speaker **stated** that we could contact her after the conference.; The court **ruled** that the defendant should pay a large fine.*

Structures for reporting speech (2):

- The structure **verb + somebody + that** can be used with a wide variety of reporting verbs. It also allows you to indicate the **direction** of the direct speech.
- *My teacher **reminded us that** our essays were due tomorrow.; My teacher **warned our class that** our essays were due tomorrow.*



Summary

Structures for reported speech (3):

- These sentences use **verb + somebody + to-infinitive**. This structure also indicates the **direction of the direct speech** and is useful for reporting **advice, orders, and requests**.
- ***She advised me to learn** Chinese.; **They reminded us to arrive** at nine a.m. sharp!*

Structures for reported speech (4):

- These are examples of reported speech using the structure **verb + to infinitive**. Note that you can add detail by adding **clauses**.
- *The candidate **promised to end** corruption and violence although he knew it would be difficult.; The manager **refused to apologise** for his staff's terrible service.*

Saying no:

- **Not + gerund:** *He apologised for **not bringing** a gift to the party.*
- **Not + infinitive:** *He asked me **not to tell** anyone his secret.*
- **Not + that + negative:** *He promised **that he would not open** the envelope before I got home.*



Vocabulary

to admit

to rule

to knight

to peek

crazy

