



**LANGUAGE**  
English

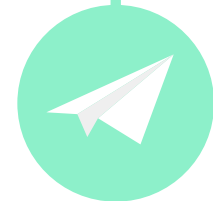


## Goals

- Can recognise and explain the purpose of tense shifting in reported speech and questions.
- Can use tense shifting in reported speech, with modal verbs and time phrases.



I asked my student if he would like to study grammar during this lesson and he said yes. He told me that he loves studying English grammar and he was looking forward to it.





## Introduction to tense shifting

This is a grammar lesson about tense shifting. We use tense shifting most often during reported speech. Tense shifting refers to changing tenses, in this case from the past into the present.



Julie **said** that she **wanted** to show you where she **likes** to **eat**.



## Tense shifting in reported speech

- One of the most common ways we use tense shifting is in **reported speech**.
- We use reported speech when we want to tell someone what another person said.
- In order to do this, we usually have to **go back one tense**.
- The reporting verb, i.e. **say** or **tell**, is paired with the action, which will be in the **past**, i.e. **was going home**.

Direct speech	Reported speech
I'm going home.	Mary said she was going home.
I didn't enjoy it.	He said that he hadn't enjoyed it.
John gave it to me.	He said that John had given it to him.



## Tense shifting in reported speech

Look at these examples. This will make you familiar with the changes each tense undergoes during reported speech.

Tense	Direct speech	Reported speech
<b>Present simple</b>	I eat meat.	She said she ate meat.
<b>Present continuous</b>	I am eating meat	She said she was eating meat.
<b>Past simple</b>	I ate meat.	She said she had eaten meat.
<b>Past continuous</b>	I was eating meat.	She said she had been eating meat.



## Tense shifting in reported speech

Look at these examples. This will make you familiar with the changes each tense undergoes during reported speech.

Tense	Direct speech	Reported speech
<b>Present perfect</b>	I have eaten meat.	She said she had eaten meat.
<b>Present perfect continuous</b>	I have been eating meat.	She said she had been eating meat.
<b>Past perfect</b>	I had eaten meat.	She said she had eaten meat.
<b>Past perfect continuous</b>	She had been eating meat.	She said she had been eating meat.
<b>Future simple (will)</b>	I will eat meat.	She said she would eat meat.



## Tense shifting with modal verbs

**Modal verbs** sometimes also change form during reported speech. Look at the examples below.

<b>Would</b>	I would go.	She said she would go.
<b>Can</b>	I can go.	She said she could go.
<b>Could</b>	I could go.	She said she could go.
<b>Should</b>	I should go.	She said she should go.
<b>Might</b>	I might go.	She said she might go.
<b>Must</b>	I must go.	She said she had to go.





## The past perfect



Did you notice that the past perfect and the past perfect continuous do not change form? They cannot shift backwards.

"I had always liked fast food," said James.

James said that he had always liked fast food.





## Tense shifting with pronouns

Sometimes we have to change the pronoun in reported speech, depending on who we are reporting about, or who is doing the reporting.

Direct speech	Reported speech
<b>"Alice gave it to me," said Joan.</b>	Joan said that Alice had given it to her.
<b>"Alice gave it to me, " I said.</b>	I said that Alice had given it to me.
<b>"Yuri told me," Marco said.</b>	Marco said that Yuri had told him.
<b>"Yuri told me," I said.</b>	I said that Yuri had told me.



## Transform the sentences to reported speech using he/she

1. I am happy.

→ She said that she was happy.

2. I am going home.

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. I went home.

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. He was speaking to Julia.

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. I have already eaten.

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. I will call you.

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. I can't eat gluten.

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. I have spoken to her already.

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Read the dialogue between two friends



I will give you a list of what we need for the party.

I don't know if it will be enough. Maybe we should buy more...

I bought everything for the main course already, so you just need to buy snacks.

Great. I have already bought some drinks.

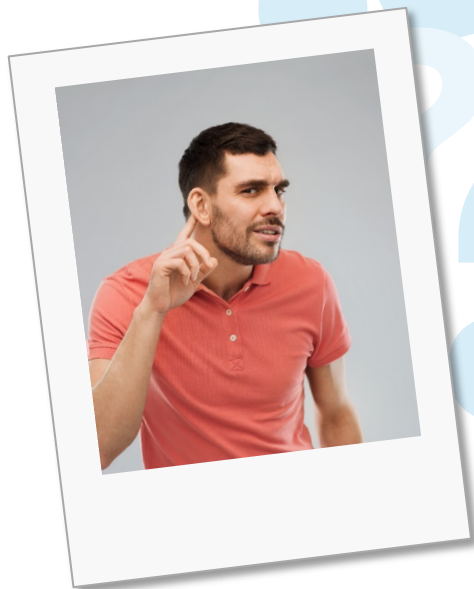
No worries. I can buy more when I get the food.

That's easy! I'll pick up some crisps and stuff.



## Use reported speech

**Use reported speech to tell your teacher what the dialogue on the previous page says.**





## Reported questions

- When we want to report questions, we must follow the rules of tense shifting.
- There are two main ways to report questions depending on whether the question is **yes or no**, or a **wh-** question.
- With **yes or no** questions, we change **do** for **if** or **whether**.
- With **wh-** questions we must change the **word order**.

Direct question	Reported question
Do you like chocolate?	He asked if she liked chocolate.
Do they eat meat?	She asked whether they ate meat.
Where is he?	She asked where he was.
Why did you do that?	He asked why she had done that.



## Reporting commands

- When we want to report commands we do not need to use tense shifting.
- We must use an appropriate reporting verb in the past tense, followed by a **to infinitive**.

Direct command	Reported command
Stop smoking.	The doctor told me to stop smoking.
Show me your ID.	The police officer ordered me to show him my ID.
Be quiet, please!	She asked me to be quiet.
Don't cross the road here.	He told us not to cross the road there.



## Reporting verbs

- There are many verbs that we can use in reported speech besides **say**. There are some examples below.
- It is important to remember that these reporting verbs should be in the past tense.
- It is also important to think about verb patterns, i.e. whether the verb is followed by **-ing**, or **to**, or something else.

He asked if we could go to the cinema.

She suggested going to the cinema.

They decided to go to the cinema.

He told me to meet him at the cinema.

He explained that he couldn't come to the cinema.

She mentioned that she would like to go to the cinema

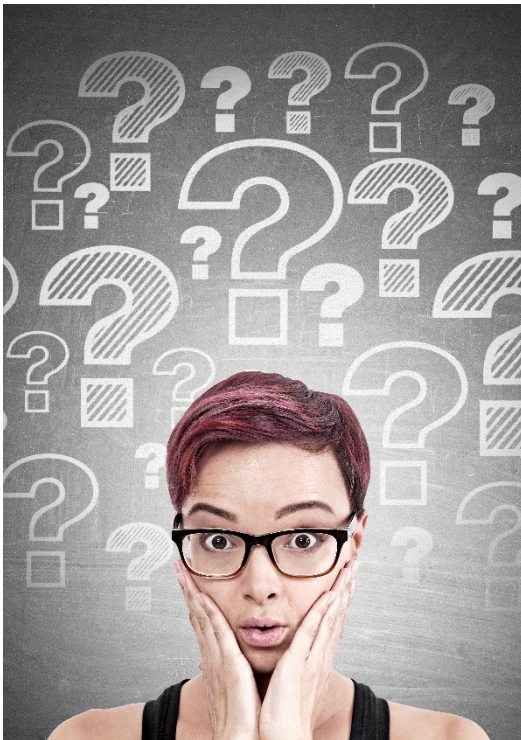






## Questions

**Think of some people who ask you questions, and of the questions they might ask. Make the questions as obscure as possible, and don't tell your teacher yet.**



your grandmother

a bouncer in a  
club

a teacher

your boss

a taxi driver



## Reporting questions

**Now report the questions to your teacher. Your teacher has to guess who asked.**

She asked me if I had a girlfriend.

Was it a girl in your class?

No, guess again.



## Reporting commands

Think about three times in your life when someone told you to do something. What was your response? Tell your teacher using reported speech.



When I was a  
child...

The last time I saw  
my boss...



## Time phrases when tense shifting

Certain **time phrases** must also change when we use **reported speech**.

Direct speech	Reported speech
<b>Today, tonight</b>	That day, that night
<b>Yesterday</b>	The day before
<b>Tomorrow</b>	The next day, the following day
<b>Last night (week, month)</b>	The night (week, month) before, the previous night
<b>Next week (month, year)</b>	The following week (month, year)





## More changes when tense shifting

Here are some more time and place phrases which change when we use **reported speech**.

Direct speech	Reported speech
Ago	Before
In two hours	Two hours later
Here	There
This	That
Come	Go





## Tense shifting with time phrases

Look at these examples of tense shifting with time phrases.

Direct speech	Reported speech
Tom is coming here tomorrow.	She said that Tom was going there the next day.
Tom came yesterday.	She said that Tom went the previous day.
Tom is coming tonight.	She said that Tom was going that night.
Tom will come next year.	She said that Tom would go the following year.
Tom came last night.	She said that Tom had gone the night before.



## When not to tense shift



Tense shifting is not always necessary in reported speech, though it is never wrong to do so. These are the main occasions when back shifting is not necessary.

- When we are talking about a **universal truth**.
- When something is **still true**.
- When something is **yet to happen**.

Direct speech	Reported speech
Our planet goes around the sun.	Copernicus said that our planet goes around the sun.
I drive a red Honda.	Harry said that he drives a red Honda.
Lunch will be at 1pm.	She said lunch will be at 1pm.



## When not to tense shift

Here are some more examples of when tense shifting is not necessary.

She said that the sun sets in the west.

He told me that smoking is bad for my health.

She said she will arrive on time.

They said that their flat is hard to find.

He told me he likes coffee.







## Fill in the gaps

**Change the words in brackets so they fit in with the sentences. The first one is an example.**

1. She said that he would arrive **the following day** (tomorrow).
2. He said he hoped he would finish \_\_\_\_\_ (next year).
3. She told me the letter came two days \_\_\_\_\_ (ago).
4. I told him to come home early \_\_\_\_\_ (last night).
5. She asked if she could bring it \_\_\_\_\_ (next week).
6. They said they couldn't come \_\_\_\_\_ (yesterday).





## Back shift or not?

**Decide whether or not you need to use back shifting in these sentences. Tell your teacher the reason for each answer.**

1. "Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius."

2. "I have two children."

3. "Dinner will be served from 7pm."

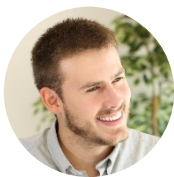
4. "I went to the shop yesterday."

5. "Work hard and you will be successful."



## Write a dialogue

**Write a dialogue in direct speech between two people about a story you heard on the news recently. Try to use questions and time phrases as well as ordinary speech.**



Hey, Susan...

\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





## Reporting your dialogue

**Now, tell your teacher in reported speech what the dialogue is about.**





## Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





## Answer key

### Exercise p. 26

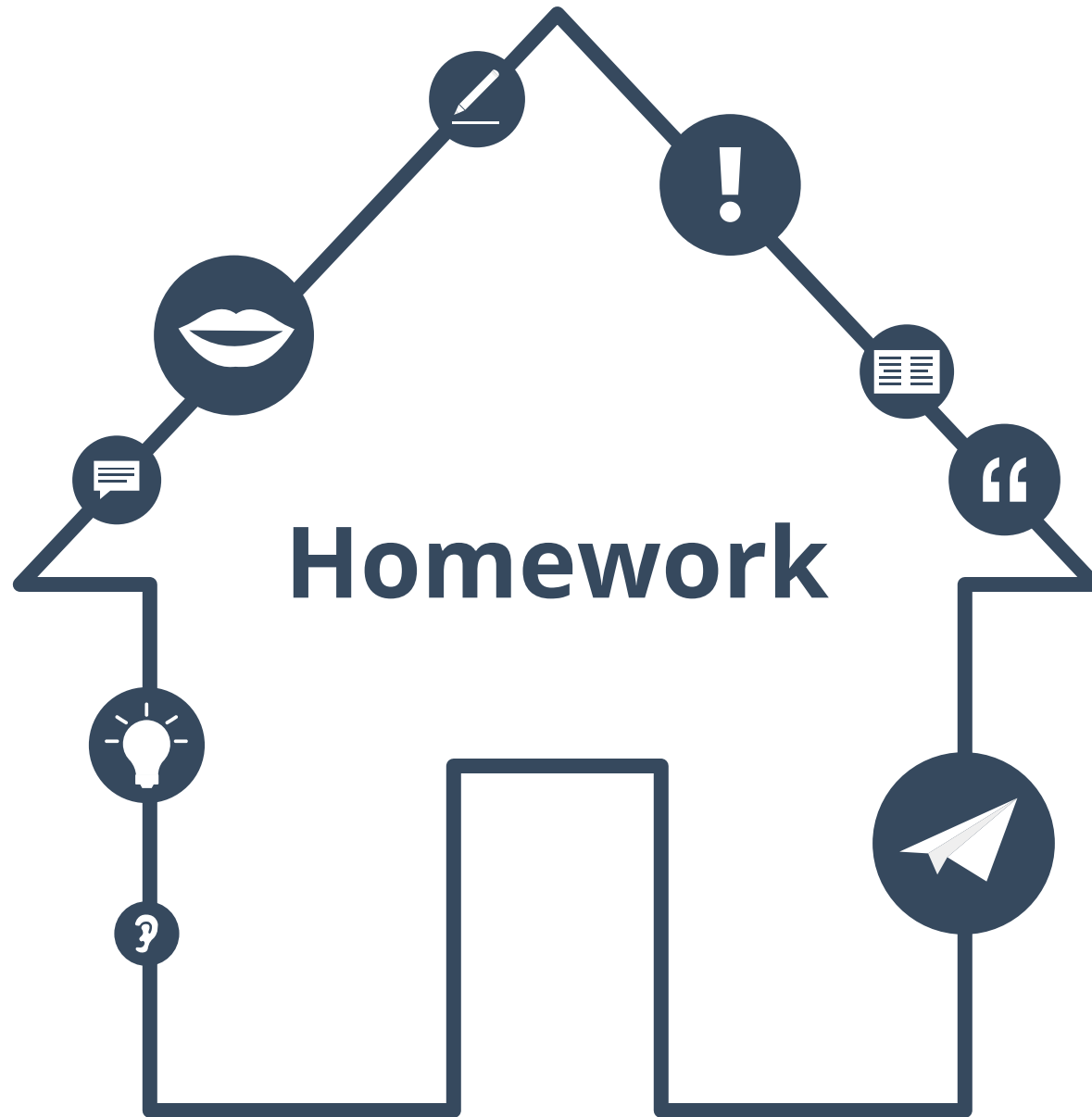
Accept any answer you think is appropriate. Remember that back shifting is never strictly wrong, though sometimes it isn't natural.

### Exercise p. 25

2. The following year, 3. before, 4. the night before/the previous night, 5. the following week, 6. the day before

### Exercise p. 11

2. He said he was going home. 3. He said he had gone home. 4. He said he had been speaking to Julia. 5. He said he had already eaten. 6. He said he would call me. 7. He said he couldn't eat gluten. 8. He said he had already spoken to her.





## Transform the direct speech to reported speech

1. Can you help Jim?

→ He asked if I could help Jim.

2. Should Jack come?

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. I must do my homework.

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Is there any milk?

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Would you like a coffee?

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Where is the station?

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Stop eating junk food!

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Give this to your mum.

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





## Reporting a conversation

**Write a report of a conversation between you and a friend.**

The worksheet features a large area of horizontal lines for writing. On the left side, there is a graphic of a notepad with a torn edge. A small white label with the name "John" is attached to the top of the notepad. Below the label, the text "He asked me where..." is written on the notepad's lines. A large, light gray arrow points from the notepad towards the right side of the worksheet, indicating the direction of the report.



## Homework answer key

### Exercise p. 31

2. He asked if Jack should come. 3. He said he had to do his homework. 4. He asked if there was any milk. 5. He asked if I would like a coffee. 6. He asked where the station was. 7. He told me to stop eating junk food. 8. He told me to give that to my mum.



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