

REPORTED SPEECH

We use the reported speech when we want to tell someone what another person said without saying the exact words.

REPORTED STATEMENTS

For example:

Direct speech: 'I'm going to the cinema tonight'.

Indirect speech: She says (that) she is going to the cinema tonight.

We can tell in the present tense what someone has just said. In order to do so we just use a reporting verb like 'say' or 'tell', we remove the inverted commas and we change the subject pronoun to adapt it.

But we usually use the past tense in the reporting verb and then, we need to change the tense in the reported speech.

TENSE	DIRECT SPEECH	INDIRECT SPEECH
Present simple	'He works as a lawyer'.	She said that he worked as a lawyer.
Present continuous	'He is working as a lawyer'.	She said that he was working as a lawyer.
Past simple	'He worked as a lawyer'.	She said that he had worked as a lawyer.
Past continuous	'He was working as a lawyer'.	She said that he had been working as a lawyer.
Present perfect simple	'He has worked as a lawyer'.	She said that he had worked as a lawyer.
Present perfect continuous	'He has been working as a lawyer'.	She said that he had been working as a lawyer.
*Past perfect simple	'He had worked as a lawyer'.	She said that he had worked as a lawyer.
*Past perfect continuous	'He had been working as a lawyer'.	She said that he had been working as a lawyer.
Future simple	'He will work as a lawyer'.	She said that he would work as a lawyer.
MODAL VERBS		
	CAN	COULD
	MAY	MIGHT
	MUST / HAVE TO	HAD TO
	SHALL	SHOULD

- These tenses and would, should, ought to, might, used to, could don't change.

Occasionally, we don't need to change the present tense into the past if the information in direct speech is still true, but this is only for general facts. For example:

Direct speech: 'Crime is punished by the law'.

Indirect speech: She said that crime is punished by the law.

Apart from removing the inverted commas and changing the tense, it is also necessary to change the pronouns and some time and place expressions.

TIME AND PLACE EXPRESSIONS	
DIRECT SPEECH	INDIRECT SPEECH
Now	Then
Today	That day
Tonight	That night
Yesterday	The previous day/The day before
Last week	The previous week/The week before
A month ago	The previous month/The month before
Tomorrow	The following day/The day after/Next day
Next week	The following week/ the week after
Here	There
This	That
These	Those

The most common verbs used in the reported speech are 'say' and 'tell'.

SAY: can be used with or without an indirect object, but if the indirect object appears, it has to be preceded by the preposition 'to'.

For example: 'The police caught the robber'.

He said that the police had caught the robber.

He said to us that the police had caught the robber.

TELL: can only be used followed by an indirect object and without the preposition 'to'.

For example: 'The police caught the robber'.

He told us that the police had caught the robber.

Other reporting verbs we can use to transmit the speaker intention are:

VERB+THAT+PROPOSITION:

Admit, declare, explain, insist, recommend, reply, reveal, say, suggest

VERB+INDIRECT OBJECT+TO+INFINITIVE:

Ask, advise, invite, order, remind, tell

VERB+TO+INFINITIVE:

Agree, decide, offer, promise, refuse, threaten

VERB+-ING

Apologize for, recommend, suggest

REPORTED QUESTIONS

The tense, pronouns and time and place expression changes are the same as in the statement sentences.

There are two types of questions:

- **Yes/No questions:**

These are questions which can be answered with a 'yes' or 'no'. In indirect speech we use 'if' or 'whether' after the reporting verb. Then, we remove the inverted commas and the interrogative sign. As we haven't got a question any more, we need to change the grammar to a positive sentence and the inversion subject-verb also disappears. For example:

Direct speech: 'Did the contestant win a lot of money?' he asked.

Indirect speech: He asked if/whether the contestant had won a lot of money.

- **Wh- Questions:**

These are questions which cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no'. They include: what, who, where, when, why, whose, how, how long...). Instead of using 'if' or 'whether' we use the interrogative question word. For example:

Direct speech: 'Where is the station?' she asked.

Indirect speech: She asked where the station was.

REPORTED REQUESTS

What if someone asks you to do something? We don't need to report every word, we simply use 'ask', 'order' or 'tell' etc...+to+infinitive.

For example:

DIRECT REQUEST	REPORTED REQUEST
'Please help me'.	She asked me to help her.
'Could you pass me the salt, please?'	She asked me to pass her the salt.
'Please don't smoke'.	She asked me not to smoke.