



# Reported Speech Rules and Examples PDF

Master Direct and Indirect Speech with Simple Explanations and Practice Exercises

## DIRECT SPEECH

*"I am studying English," she said.*

## REPORTED SPEECH

*She said that she was studying English.*

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A complete roadmap to mastering reported speech. Click any chapter title to jump directly to that section, or work through the book sequentially for the full learning experience.

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### **I HOW TO USE THIS BOOK**

If you are new to reported speech, read chapters 1 to 6 in order — they build the foundation. Then move on to specific reporting patterns in chapters 7 to 11. Use the cheat sheet in chapter 16 for quick review, and test yourself with the exercises in chapter 14 before checking your answers in chapter 15.

## CHAPTER 01

# What Is Reported Speech?

Reported speech (also called indirect speech) is a way of telling someone what another person said, without quoting their exact words. It is one of the most useful grammar structures in English because we use it constantly in everyday conversation, news reporting, storytelling, and academic writing.

## Definition

Reported speech is the grammatical structure we use to **convey what someone else has said**, but in our own words rather than repeating their exact sentence. When we use direct speech, we place the speaker's original words inside quotation marks, exactly as they were spoken. When we use reported speech, we remove the quotation marks and typically shift the tenses, pronouns, and time expressions so that the sentence makes sense from

our current point of view. This shift is what gives reported speech its distinctive grammatical character.

For example, if your friend Maria tells you "I am tired," and you later want to tell another friend what Maria said, you would not usually repeat her exact words. Instead, you would say *Maria said that she was tired*. Notice how the pronoun "I" changed to "she," and the verb "am" became "was." These changes are not random; they follow clear rules that you will learn throughout this book.

## Purpose of Reported Speech

The main purpose of reported speech is to **relay information accurately and naturally** without pretending to remember every exact word someone said. In real-life conversation, people rarely speak in perfectly memorable sentences, and even if they did, repeating their exact words would sound strange and stiff. Reported speech gives us a flexible, conversational way to summarize, paraphrase, and pass on what others have communicated.

Beyond everyday conversation, reported speech serves specific purposes in different contexts. Journalists use it to summarize interviews and press conferences. Teachers use it to relay instructions or feedback. Lawyers use it in court to summarize witness statements. Students use it in academic writing to discuss sources. In every case, the goal is the same: to share what was said while adapting the language to fit smoothly into the new sentence.

## Why It Is Important

Mastering reported speech is essential for several reasons. First, it appears constantly in spoken English, so understanding it is critical for listening comprehension. Second, it is a key feature of formal writing, especially in essays, reports, and research papers where you need to discuss what other authors have argued. Third, it is heavily tested in international English exams such as IELTS, TOEFL, and Cambridge English qualifications, where accurate transformation of direct to reported speech is a common task type.

Finally, reported speech forces you to think carefully about tense relationships, pronoun reference, and time expressions — three areas of grammar that are central to fluent English. By studying reported speech, you are simultaneously strengthening your understanding of the entire verb tense system and your ability to maintain clear pronoun reference across sentences.

## **I** KEY IDEA

Reported speech = reporting what someone said **without** quoting their exact words. The two versions carry the same meaning, but the reported version uses different grammar to fit naturally into a new sentence.

## Ten Foundational Examples

Study these ten pairs carefully. Each one shows the direct version (in quotation marks) and the reported version beneath it. Notice the consistent pattern: the quotation marks disappear, the reporting verb is followed by *that* (which is optional), and the tenses, pronouns, or time words shift to fit the new perspective.

### EXAMPLE 1

*"I am tired," Sarah said.*

↓ reported as

Sarah said that she was tired.

### EXAMPLE 2

*"We live in Tokyo," they said.*

↓ reported as

They said that they lived in Tokyo.

### EXAMPLE 3

*"I will call you tomorrow," he promised.*

↓ reported as

He promised that he would call me the next day.

### EXAMPLE 4

*"She has finished her homework," the teacher said.*

↓ reported as

The teacher said that she had finished her homework.

### EXAMPLE 5

*"I can swim very well," Maria told me.*

↓ reported as

Maria told me that she could swim very well.

#### EXAMPLE 6

*"We are studying for the exam," the students said.*

↓ reported as

The students said that they were studying for the exam.

#### EXAMPLE 7

*"I went to the cinema last night," John said.*

↓ reported as

John said that he had gone to the cinema the night before.

#### EXAMPLE 8

*"The train will arrive at 5 p.m.," the announcer said.*

↓ reported as

The announcer said that the train would arrive at 5 p.m.

#### EXAMPLE 9

*"I have been working here for two years," she said.*

↓ reported as

She said that she had been working there for two years.

#### EXAMPLE 10

*"We must leave early tomorrow," the manager told us.*

↓ reported as

The manager told us that we had to leave early the next day.



#### TIP FOR BEGINNERS

Notice that the word **"that"** appears in every reported version above, but it is **optional** in English. "Sarah said that she was tired" and "Sarah said she was tired" are both correct. In informal speech, native speakers often drop "that" entirely.

## CHAPTER 02

# Direct Speech vs Indirect Speech

Direct and indirect speech are two different ways of presenting what someone said. The choice between them affects grammar, punctuation, and tone. This chapter compares them across five key dimensions so you can quickly recognize which form you are dealing with and convert confidently between them.

## Five Key Differences at a Glance

The table below summarizes the five grammatical areas where direct and indirect speech differ. Understanding these five categories will help you anticipate every change that needs to happen when you transform a direct quotation into reported speech.

FEATURE	DIRECT SPEECH	INDIRECT (REPORTED) SPEECH
<b>Quotation Marks</b>	Required. The exact words are placed inside quotation marks: "..."	Not used. The speaker's words are integrated into the sentence.
<b>Reporting Verbs</b>	Usually <i>said</i> , <i>told</i> , <i>asked</i> , etc. followed by the quoted words.	A wider range: <i>said</i> , <i>told</i> , <i>explained</i> , <i>admitted</i> , <i>warned</i> , <i>promised</i> , etc., followed by <i>that</i> + clause.
<b>Pronoun Changes</b>	Pronouns remain as originally spoken (e.g., "I", "we", "my").	Pronouns shift to match the reporter's perspective (e.g., "I" → "she/he", "we" → "they").
<b>Tense Changes</b>	Verbs stay in the original tense the speaker used.	Verbs typically shift one step back in the past (e.g., present simple → past simple).
<b>Time Expressions</b>	Time words refer to the moment of speaking (e.g., "now", "today", "tomorrow").	Time words shift to reflect the new perspective (e.g., "now" → "then", "today" → "that day").

Table 2.1 — Five dimensions of difference between direct and indirect speech

# Twenty Example Pairs for Practice

Work through these twenty pairs slowly. Each one illustrates at least one of the five differences in the table above. Try to identify which features change in each pair before checking the explanation in your mind.

## PAIR 1

*"I like coffee," she said.*



She said that she liked coffee.

## PAIR 2

*"We are watching a movie," they told me.*



They told me that they were watching a movie.

## PAIR 3

*"I will visit Paris next summer," he said.*



He said that he would visit Paris the following summer.

## PAIR 4

*"She has finished the report," the manager told us.*



The manager told us that she had finished the report.

## PAIR 5

*"I can speak three languages," Anna claimed.*



Anna claimed that she could speak three languages.

## PAIR 6

*"They went home early," John said.*



John said that they had gone home early.

## PAIR 7

*"I am working on a new project," she told me.*



She told me that she was working on a new project.

PAIR 8

*"We must finish by Friday," the boss warned.*



The boss warned that we had to finish by Friday.

PAIR 9

*"I saw her yesterday," he said.*



He said that he had seen her the day before.

PAIR 10

*"She may arrive late," the teacher told us.*



The teacher told us that she might arrive late.

 **COMMON MISTAKE TO AVOID**

Many learners forget to **remove the quotation marks** when converting to reported speech, or they keep the original tense. Remember: indirect speech has **no quotation marks** and almost always shifts the verb tense backward.

PAIR 11

*"I will help you tomorrow," she promised.*



She promised that she would help me the next day.

PAIR 12

*"We have lived here for ten years," they said.*



They said that they had lived there for ten years.

PAIR 13

*"He is going to call you," Maria told me.*



Maria told me that he was going to call me.

PAIR 14

*"I cannot attend the meeting," she said.*



She said that she could not attend the meeting.

PAIR 15

*"We were sleeping when you called," they explained.*



They explained that they had been sleeping when I called.

PAIR 16

*"I'll send the email now," he told me.*



He told me that he would send the email then.

PAIR 17

*"She has been working all day," John said.*



John said that she had been working all day.

PAIR 18

*"I want some water," the child said.*



The child said that he wanted some water.

PAIR 19

*"We should leave now," she suggested.*



She suggested that we should leave then.

PAIR 20

*"I have already eaten," he told us.*



He told us that he had already eaten.

## CHAPTER 03

# Basic Reporting Verbs

Reporting verbs are the engines of reported speech. They tell the listener not just *what* was said, but *how* it was said — was it a simple statement, a warning, a promise, an admission? Choosing the right reporting verb makes your English more precise, vivid, and natural. This chapter introduces the ten most essential reporting verbs every learner should master.

Each reporting verb carries its own shade of meaning and its own grammatical pattern. Some are followed by a *that*-clause, others by an infinitive, others by an object + *that*-clause. Pay close attention to the structure shown in each card below, because using the wrong structure is one of the most common errors learners make with reporting verbs.

**said** *used to report general statements without an object* **Subject + said + (that) + clause**

*She said that she was tired.*

*He said he would call back later.*

*They said the meeting was postponed.*

**told** *used when an object (listener) is mentioned* **Subject + told + object + (that) + clause**

*She told me that she was tired.*

*He told us he would call back later.*

*They told the team the meeting was postponed.*

**asked** *used for questions and requests; takes an optional object*

**Subject + asked + (object) + if/whether/WH + clause**

*She asked if I was ready.*

*He asked me where I lived.*

*They asked whether we had finished.*

**explained** *used when giving detailed information or clarification*

**Subject + explained + (that) + clause / explained + noun + to + object**

*The teacher explained that the exam was delayed.*

*She explained the rules to the new students.*

*He explained how the machine worked.*

**suggested** *used to propose an idea or course of action*

**Subject + suggested + (that) + clause / suggested + V-ing**

*She suggested that we leave early.*

*He suggested taking a taxi.*

*They suggested we try the new restaurant.*

**advised** *used to give recommendations or guidance*

**Subject + advised + object + to + infinitive / advised + (that) + clause**

*The doctor advised me to rest.*

*She advised that we consult a lawyer.*

*He advised his client not to sign the contract.*

**warned** *used to alert someone about a danger or risk*

**Subject + warned + (object) + (that) + clause / warned + object + to + infinitive**

*She warned us that the roads were icy.*

*He warned me not to touch the wire.*

*They warned the children to stay away from the dog.*

**promised** *used to report a commitment or guarantee*

Subject + promised + (object) + to + infinitive / promised + (that) + clause

*She promised to call me later.*

*He promised that he would help.*

*They promised the children a trip to the zoo.*

**admitted** *used when someone confesses or acknowledges something*

Subject + admitted + (that) + clause / admitted + V-ing

*He admitted that he had made a mistake.*

*She admitted stealing the money.*

*They admitted being late for the meeting.*

**agreed** *used when someone consents to a proposal or shares a view*

Subject + agreed + (that) + clause / agreed + to + infinitive

*She agreed that the plan was good.*

*He agreed to help us with the project.*

*They agreed to meet the next day.*



### CHOOSING THE RIGHT VERB

Don't just use *say* and *tell* for everything. Choosing a precise verb (*admitted*, *warned*, *promised*) instantly tells the listener more about the speaker's intention and tone, making your English more engaging and accurate.



### WATCH OUT: SAID VS TOLD

**"Said" never takes a direct object.** You cannot say *"He said me that..."* — this is wrong. Use *"He told me that..."* (with object) or *"He said that..."* (without object). This single rule eliminates one of the most common reported speech errors.

## CHAPTER 04

# Tense Changes in Reported Speech

When we report what someone said, we usually shift the verb tense one step back into the past. This happens because the original words were spoken in the past, so the reported version reflects that distance. This chapter explains every tense shift you need to know, with five examples for each rule.

## The Master Tense Shift Table

The table below shows the nine core tense changes that occur when converting direct speech to reported speech. This is the most important reference in the entire book — memorize these patterns and you will be able to convert almost any direct speech sentence accurately.

DIRECT SPEECH TENSE	REPORTED SPEECH TENSE	EXAMPLE SHIFT
Present Simple	Past Simple	"I work" → she worked
Present Continuous	Past Continuous	"I am working" → she was working
Present Perfect	Past Perfect	"I have worked" → she had worked
Past Simple	Past Perfect	"I worked" → she had worked
Past Continuous	Past Perfect Continuous	"I was working" → she had been working
Will	Would	"I will work" → she would work
Can	Could	"I can work" → she could work
May	Might	"I may work" → she might work
Shall	Should	"I shall work" → she should work
Must	Had to	"I must work" → she had to work

Table 4.1 — The nine core tense shifts in reported speech

## Rule 1: Present Simple → Past Simple

When the original speaker uses the present simple, we shift it back to the past simple in reported speech. This is the most common shift you will encounter.

*"I live in London," she said.*



She said that she lived in London.

*"He plays football every weekend," they told me.*



They told me that he played football every weekend.

*"We speak three languages," she said.*



She said that they spoke three languages.

*"The shop opens at 9 a.m.," he said.*



He said that the shop opened at 9 a.m.

*"I want a coffee," she told me.*



She told me that she wanted a coffee.

## Rule 2: Present Continuous → Past Continuous

The present continuous shifts to the past continuous. The auxiliary verb *am/is/are* becomes *was/were*, and the *-ing* form stays the same.

*"I am studying," he said.*



He said that he was studying.

*"She is working from home," they said.*



They said that she was working from home.

*"We are having dinner," they told me.*



They told me that they were having dinner.

*"It is raining," she said.*



She said that it was raining.

*"The children are sleeping," he told me.*



He told me that the children were sleeping.

### Rule 3: Present Perfect → Past Perfect

The present perfect (*have/has + past participle*) shifts to the past perfect (*had + past participle*). The auxiliary *have/has* becomes *had*.

*"I have finished my work," she said.*



She said that she had finished her work.

*"He has visited Japan," they said.*



They said that he had visited Japan.

*"We have lived here for years," she told me.*



She told me that they had lived there for years.

*"She has lost her keys," he said.*



He said that she had lost her keys.

*"I have already eaten," they told us.*



They told us that they had already eaten.

## Rule 4: Past Simple → Past Perfect

The past simple shifts to the past perfect. This shows that the action happened before the moment of reporting.

*"I went to the cinema," he said.*



He said that he had gone to the cinema.

*"She bought a new car," they told me.*



They told me that she had bought a new car.

*"We saw the movie," she said.*



She said that they had seen the movie.

*"He wrote a letter," I said.*



I said that he had written a letter.

*"They left early," she told us.*



She told us that they had left early.

# Tense Changes (continued)

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## Rule 5: Will → Would

The modal verb *will* shifts to *would* in reported speech. This is one of the most common modal shifts you will encounter, especially when reporting promises, predictions, or future plans.

*"I will help you," she said.*



She said that she would help me.

*"He will arrive at 8 p.m.," they told me.*



They told me that he would arrive at 8 p.m.

*"We will travel next summer," she said.*



She said that they would travel the next summer.

*"It will rain tomorrow," he said.*



He said that it would rain the next day.

*"I will call you back," she told me.*



She told me that she would call me back.

## Rule 6: Can → Could

The modal *can* shifts to *could*. Note that *could* here is not the past tense of ability — it is simply the reported form of *can*, retaining the meaning of present or future possibility.

*"I can swim," she said.*



She said that she could swim.

*"He can drive a truck," they told me.*



They told me that he could drive a truck.

*"We can meet tomorrow," she said.*



She said that they could meet the next day.

*"I can speak French," he told them.*



He told them that he could speak French.

*"She can solve the problem," they said.*



They said that she could solve the problem.

## Rule 7: May → Might

The modal *may* shifts to *might*. This applies to both meanings of *may*: permission and possibility.

*"I may come later," she said.*



She said that she might come later.

*"He may join us," they told me.*



They told me that he might join us.

*"We may need more time," she said.*



She said that they might need more time.

*"It may snow tonight," he said.*



He said that it might snow that night.

*"She may not attend," they told us.*



They told us that she might not attend.

## Rule 8: Shall → Should

The modal *shall* shifts to *should*. This shift is most common in British English and formal contexts where *shall* is still used for offers, suggestions, or future reference.

*"Shall I open the window?" she asked.*



She asked whether she should open the window.

*"We shall overcome," they said.*



They said that they should overcome.

*"Shall we go?" he asked.*



He asked whether we should go.

*"I shall return tomorrow," she said.*



She said that she should return the next day.

*"What shall we do?" they asked.*



They asked what they should do.

## Rule 9: Must → Had to

The modal *must* shifts to *had to* when it expresses obligation or necessity. Note that *must* can also express strong probability ("He must be home by now"); in that case, *must* often stays unchanged in reported speech.

*"I must leave now," she said.*



She said that she had to leave then.

*"We must finish the project," they told me.*



They told me that they had to finish the project.

*"He must work harder," the teacher said.*



The teacher said that he had to work harder.

*"I must call my mother," she told me.*



She told me that she had to call her mother.

*"They must leave by 6 p.m.," he said.*



He said that they had to leave by 6 p.m.

### **I** NO TENSE CHANGE NEEDED — WHEN TO SKIP THE SHIFT

In certain situations, the tense does NOT shift in reported speech. Memorize these four exceptions:

- 1. Universal truths and general facts:** "Water boils at 100°C" → She said that water boils at 100°C.
- 2. The reporting verb is in the present tense:** "He says he is tired" → He says that he is tired.
- 3. The original statement is still true or relevant now:** "I love chocolate" → She says she loves chocolate (still true).
- 4. The modal *must* expresses probability (not obligation):** "He must be home" → She said he must be home.



### QUICK MEMORY AID

Think of tense shift as "stepping one rung down the past ladder." Each tense moves one step further back in time: present → past, past → past perfect, future (will) → conditional (would). The only tense that does not move is the past perfect — it stays as past perfect because there is nowhere further back to go.

## CHAPTER 05

# Pronoun Changes

When we report speech, pronouns must change to fit the new speaker's perspective. If Maria says "I love my job," and you report it, the "I" becomes "she" and "my" becomes "her," because Maria is no longer speaking about herself — you are speaking about her. This chapter explains the rules and gives you plenty of practice.

## The Core Rule: Perspective Shift

Pronouns change in reported speech to reflect the relationship between the original speaker, the listener, and the person doing the reporting. The general principle is: **first person pronouns (I, we, my, our) become the same person/number as the original speaker; second person pronouns (you, your) become the same person/number as the original listener; third person pronouns (he, she, they, his, her, their) usually stay the same.** Following this rule systematically will prevent most pronoun errors in reported speech.

For example, if John tells you "I lost my keys," and you later report this to a friend, you say "John said that **he** had lost **his** keys." Both the subject pronoun "I" and the possessive pronoun "my" shift to third person because you are now talking about John, not yourself.

## Pronoun Change Reference Table

TYPE	DIRECT SPEECH	REPORTED SPEECH	WHEN
Subject	I	he / she	Reporting about one person
Subject	We	they	Reporting about a group
Subject	You	I / we / he / she / they	Depends on context
Object	me	him / her	Reporting about one person
Object	us	them	Reporting about a group
Possessive	my	his / her	Reporting about one person
Possessive	our	their	Reporting about a group
Possessive	your	my / our / his / her / their	Depends on context
Reflexive	myself	himself / herself	Reporting about one person
Reflexive	ourselves	themselves	Reporting about a group

Table 5.1 — Pronoun shift patterns in reported speech

## Twenty-Five Example Pairs

Work through these twenty-five examples. Notice how the pronoun shift depends entirely on who is reporting, who is listening, and who the original speaker was. The same direct sentence can produce different reported versions depending on the context.

*"I love my job," Anna said.*



Anna said that she loved her job.

*"We are proud of our team," they said.*



They said that they were proud of their team.

*"You should call your mother," she told me.*



She told me that I should call my mother.

*"I will lend you my book," he said.*



He said that he would lend me his book.

*"We have finished our work," they told the boss.*



They told the boss that they had finished their work.

*"You are my best friend," she told me.*



She told me that I was her best friend.

*"I hurt myself," he said.*



He said that he had hurt himself.

*"We enjoyed ourselves," they told us.*



They told us that they had enjoyed themselves.

*"He is my brother," she said.*



She said that he was her brother.

*"They are our neighbors," he told me.*



He told me that they were his neighbors.

*"I will give you my number," she said.*



She said that she would give me her number.

*"We saw you at the park," they told her.*



They told her that they had seen her at the park.

*"I know your sister," he said.*



He said that he knew my sister.

*"You can use our car," they told me.*



They told me that I could use their car.

*"I lost my phone," she told him.*



She told him that she had lost her phone.

*"We need your help," they said to me.*



They told me that they needed my help.

*"She is our teacher," the children said.*



The children said that she was their teacher.

*"I bought myself a gift," he said.*



He said that he had bought himself a gift.

*"We will invite you to our wedding," she told me.*



She told me that they would invite me to their wedding.

*"I have your book," he told her.*



He told her that he had her book.

*"They visited us last week," she said.*



She said that they had visited them the week before.

*"I am teaching my son to read," he told me.*



He told me that he was teaching his son to read.

*"We are moving to our new house," they said.*



They said that they were moving to their new house.

*"I will return your money," she promised.*



She promised that she would return my money.

*"You remind me of myself," he told her.*



He told her that she reminded him of himself.

### COMMON PRONOUN MISTAKE

Many learners forget to change pronouns and produce sentences like *"Anna said that I loved her job"* — which makes it sound as if Anna loves someone else's job, not her own.

Always ask yourself: **who is the original speaker?** Then make sure the pronouns in the reported sentence refer back to that person correctly.

## CHAPTER 06

# Time and Place Expression Changes

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When we report speech, time and place expressions must also shift to reflect the new perspective. If someone says "I will see you tomorrow," and you report it three days later, "tomorrow" no longer makes sense — it has to become "the next day" or "the following day." This chapter covers every shift you need to know.

## Why Time and Place Expressions Change

Time and place words are **deictic** — they refer to a specific moment or location relative to the speaker. Words like "now," "here," "today," and "tomorrow" only make sense from the original speaker's point of view. When we report the speech later, from a different time and possibly a different place, those references must shift to make sense in the new context. Without these shifts, the reported speech would be ambiguous or misleading.

For example, if John says "I am busy now" at 3 p.m. on Monday, and you report this on Wednesday, you cannot say "John said he was busy now" — because "now" no longer refers to Monday 3 p.m. You must say "John said he was busy *then*." The same logic applies to place words: if someone says "I live here," and you report it from a different location, "here" must become "there."

# Time and Place Conversion Table

DIRECT SPEECH	REPORTED SPEECH	CATEGORY
now	then	Time
today	that day	Time
tonight	that night	Time
yesterday	the day before / the previous day	Time
tomorrow	the next day / the following day	Time
the day after tomorrow	two days later / in two days' time	Time
the day before yesterday	two days before / two days earlier	Time
this week	that week	Time
last week	the week before / the previous week	Time
next week	the following week / the next week	Time
last month	the month before / the previous month	Time
next month	the following month / the next month	Time
last year	the year before / the previous year	Time
next year	the following year / the next year	Time
ago	before / earlier	Time
so far	by then	Time
just now	then / a moment before	Time
here	there	Place
this place	that place	Place
this	that	Place/ Demonstrative
these	those	Place/ Demonstrative
come	go	Direction
bring	take	Direction

## Thirty Practical Examples

*"I am busy now," she said.*



She said that she was busy then.

*"We will meet today," he told me.*



He told me that they would meet that day.

*"I saw her yesterday," she said.*



She said that she had seen her the day before.

*"I will call you tomorrow," he promised.*



He promised that he would call me the next day.

*"We are going on holiday this week," they said.*



They said that they were going on holiday that week.

*"She is here," he told me.*



He told me that she was there.

*"I arrived two hours ago," she said.*



She said that she had arrived two hours before.

*"We will finish next month," they told us.*



They told us that they would finish the following month.

*"I bought this book yesterday," she said.*



She said that she had bought that book the day before.

*"They came here last night," he told me.*



He told me that they had gone there the night before.

*"We are leaving tonight," she said.*



She said that they were leaving that night.

*"I will return the day after tomorrow," he told me.*



He told me that he would return two days later.

*"We had dinner the day before yesterday," she said.*



She said that they had had dinner two days before.

*"I have been waiting so far," he said.*



He said that he had been waiting by then.

*"She just now left," they told me.*



They told me that she had left a moment before.



**TIP: DON'T OVER-SHIFT**

If you are reporting speech on the same day, in the same place, you do not need to shift "today," "here," "this week," etc. For example: "She said she is busy today" (if reported the same day) is correct. The shift only happens when the time/place reference would otherwise be ambiguous.

*"We lived there last year," they said.*



They said that they had lived there the year before.

*"I will visit next week," she promised.*



She promised that she would visit the following week.

*"These flowers are beautiful," she said.*



She said that those flowers were beautiful.

*"Please come here," he told me.*



He told me to go there.

*"Bring your books tomorrow," the teacher said.*



The teacher said to take our books the next day.

*"This is my house," he told us.*



He told us that that was his house.

*"We are leaving this place now," they said.*



They said that they were leaving that place then.

*"I will finish it by next Monday," she said.*



She said that she would finish it by the following Monday.

*"He started his new job last month," they told me.*



They told me that he had started his new job the previous month.

*"These documents are due tomorrow," the manager said.*



The manager said that those documents were due the next day.

*"I will be there in an hour," she told me.*



She told me that she would be there in an hour.

*"We met here yesterday," he said.*



He said that they had met there the day before.

*"I am moving next year," she told them.*



She told them that she was moving the following year.

*"These are my friends," he said.*



He said that those were his friends.

*"We just arrived today," they told us.*



They told us that they had arrived that day.

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## CHAPTER 07

# Reporting Statements

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Statements are the most common type of speech we report. They are simple declarative sentences — facts, opinions, descriptions — that someone has

expressed. This chapter gives you the core formula and shows you how to handle positive, negative, and mixed statements with confidence.

## The Core Formula

Subject + reporting verb + (that) + clause

The reporting verb is typically *said*, *told*, *explained*, *admitted*, *promised*, etc. The word *that* is optional in English — you can include it for clarity or drop it for a more conversational tone. The clause follows the tense shift rules from Chapter 4, the pronoun shift rules from Chapter 5, and the time expression rules from Chapter 6.

For statements, you typically use *said* (no object) or *told* (with object). If you want to be more specific about the speaker's intention, you can use verbs like *explained*, *admitted*, *promised*, *agreed*, *warned*, or *mentioned*. The choice of verb adds nuance — telling the listener whether the original speaker was confident, reluctant, helpful, or cautious.

## Positive Statements

Positive statements are the simplest to report. The verb tense shifts back, pronouns adjust to the new perspective, and time expressions shift if needed. Here are ten clear examples:

*"I love chocolate," she said.*

↓

She said that she loved chocolate.

*"We are happy," they told us.*

↓

They told us that they were happy.

*"He is a doctor," she said.*

↓

She said that he was a doctor.

*"I will help you," he promised.*

↓

He promised that he would help me.

*"They have arrived," the host announced.*



The host announced that they had arrived.

*"She speaks French fluently," her teacher said.*



Her teacher said that she spoke French fluently.

*"We can finish on time," the manager said.*



The manager said that they could finish on time.

*"I am going to the gym," John said.*



John said that he was going to the gym.

*"The weather is beautiful today," she said.*



She said that the weather was beautiful that day.

*"We will travel next summer," they told me.*



They told me that they would travel the following summer.

## Negative Statements

Negative statements follow the same rules, but pay attention to where the negative word (*not*) goes. It usually stays attached to the auxiliary or main verb, just shifted back in tense.

*"I don't like coffee," she said.*



She said that she didn't like coffee.

*"We aren't ready," they told me.*



They told me that they weren't ready.

*"He hasn't finished his work," she said.*



She said that he hadn't finished his work.

*"I won't come to the party," he told us.*



He told us that he wouldn't come to the party.

*"She cannot swim," they said.*



They said that she couldn't swim.

*"We didn't see the movie," he said.*



He said that they hadn't seen the movie.

*"I'm not feeling well," she told me.*



She told me that she wasn't feeling well.

*"They haven't been to Japan," she said.*



She said that they hadn't been to Japan.

*"I won't tolerate this behavior," the teacher warned.*



The teacher warned that she wouldn't tolerate that behavior.

*"We don't have enough time," they told us.*



They told us that they didn't have enough time.

## Mixed and Complex Statements

In real life, statements often combine positive and negative elements, multiple clauses, or different time references. The same shift rules apply — just be careful to apply them consistently throughout the sentence.

*"I love coffee, but I don't like tea," she said.*



She said that she loved coffee, but she didn't like tea.

*"We have finished the report, but we haven't sent it yet," they told the boss.*



They told the boss that they had finished the report, but they hadn't sent it yet.

*"I will go to the party if I finish my work," he said.*



He said that he would go to the party if he finished his work.

*"She is happy because she got a promotion," John told me.*



John told me that she was happy because she had gotten a promotion.

*"We can't meet today, but we can meet tomorrow," they said.*



They said that they couldn't meet that day, but they could meet the next day.

*"I have been studying English for five years, and I still make mistakes," she admitted.*



She admitted that she had been studying English for five years, and she still made mistakes.

*"He didn't call me yesterday, but he promised he would call today," she told me.*



She told me that he hadn't called her the day before, but he had promised he would call that day.

*"We are not going to the beach because it is raining," they explained.*



They explained that they were not going to the beach because it was raining.

*"I will not attend the meeting unless they change the time," she warned.*



She warned that she would not attend the meeting unless they changed the time.

"They haven't decided yet, but they will let us know soon," he said.



He said that they hadn't decided yet, but they would let us know soon.

### **I** MIXED SENTENCES WITH MULTIPLE TENSES

When a statement mixes tenses (e.g., "I have finished, so I will leave"), each verb shifts according to its own rule. "I have finished, so I will leave" → "She said she had finished, so she would leave." The present perfect becomes past perfect; *will* becomes *would*. Don't apply the same shift to every verb — apply the right shift to each one.

## CHAPTER 08

# Reporting Yes/No Questions

Yes/No questions are questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no." When we report them, we cannot keep the question word order — instead, we use the conjunctions *if* or *whether* to introduce the reported clause, and we change the word order back to statement order. This chapter shows you exactly how.

## The Rules

Three things change when you convert a yes/no question into reported speech:

**1. Reporting verb:** Use *asked*, *wondered*, *wanted to know*, or *inquired*. Never use *said* or *told* for questions.

**2. Conjunction:** Insert *if* or *whether* right after the reporting verb. *If* is more common in informal English; *whether* is slightly more formal and is preferred when the question offers alternatives (e.g., "whether... or").

**3. Word order:** Convert the question word order back to statement word order (subject + verb), and shift the tense back as usual.

Subject + asked + (object) + if/whether + subject + verb

### ✓ WHEN TO USE "WHETHER" VS "IF"

Use **whether** when: (a) the question offers alternatives ("She asked whether I wanted tea or coffee"), (b) the question is formal, or (c) the reported clause comes before the main verb ("Whether he will come is unclear"). Use **if** in everyday conversational questions with no alternatives.

## Thirty Examples of Reported Yes/No Questions

*"Are you busy?" she asked.*



She asked if I was busy.

*"Do you like coffee?" he asked me.*



He asked me if I liked coffee.

*"Have you finished?" the teacher asked.*



The teacher asked whether I had finished.

*"Will you help me?" she asked.*



She asked if I would help her.

*"Can you swim?" he asked.*



He asked whether I could swim.

*"Did you see the movie?" they asked me.*



They asked me if I had seen the movie.

*"Are they coming?" she wondered.*



She wondered if they were coming.

*"Have we met before?" he asked.*



He asked whether we had met before.

*"Will it rain tomorrow?" she asked.*



She asked if it would rain the next day.

*"Is she your sister?" he asked me.*



He asked me if she was my sister.

*"Do they live nearby?" the visitor asked.*



The visitor asked whether they lived nearby.

*"Has he arrived yet?" she wanted to know.*



She wanted to know if he had arrived yet.

*"Can we leave early?" they asked.*



They asked whether they could leave early.

*"Are you feeling better?" the doctor asked.*



The doctor asked if I was feeling better.

*"Did she call you?" he asked me.*



He asked me whether she had called me.

### ! COMMON MISTAKES WITH YES/NO QUESTIONS

**1. Forgetting "if" or "whether":** "She asked was I busy" is WRONG. Always include if/whether: "She asked *if* I was busy."

**2. Keeping question word order:** "She asked if was I busy" is WRONG. The reported clause uses statement order: "She asked if *I was* busy."

**3. Keeping the question mark:** Reported questions are statements, not questions. No question mark: "She asked if I was busy." (period, not ?)

*"Will you marry me?" he asked.*



He asked if I would marry him.

*"Have you ever been to Italy?" she asked.*



She asked whether I had ever been to Italy.

*"Is the bus on time?" the passenger asked.*



The passenger asked if the bus was on time.

*"Do you want tea or coffee?" she asked.*



She asked whether I wanted tea or coffee.

*"Has the package arrived?" he wondered.*



He wondered if the package had arrived.

*"Are we going the right way?" she asked.*



She asked whether we were going the right way.

*"Did they win the match?" the fan asked.*



The fan asked if they had won the match.

*"Can I borrow your pen?" the student asked.*



The student asked whether she could borrow my pen.

*"Have you eaten yet?" my mother asked.*



My mother asked if I had eaten yet.

*"Will you be home for dinner?" she asked.*



She asked whether I would be home for dinner.

*"Is the store open on Sundays?" he asked.*



He asked if the store was open on Sundays.

*"Did anyone call while I was out?" she wondered.*



She wondered whether anyone had called while she was out.

*"Have they sent the invitation?" he asked me.*



He asked me if they had sent the invitation.

*"Are you ready to leave?" she asked.*



She asked whether I was ready to leave.

*"Do you know the answer?" the teacher asked.*



The teacher asked if I knew the answer.

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## CHAPTER 09

# Reporting WH Questions

WH questions are questions that begin with question words like *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, *which*, *whose*, or *how*. They cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." When we report them, we keep the WH word but change the word order to statement form.

## The Rules

- 1. Keep the WH word:** Unlike yes/no questions, WH questions already have a conjunction — the question word itself. So we do not add *if* or *whether*; we simply use the WH word to introduce the reported clause.
- 2. Change to statement word order:** The auxiliary verb (*do/does/did/is/are/etc.*) drops out, and the subject comes before the main verb. For example, "Where do you live?" becomes "where I lived" — not "where did I live."
- 3. Shift tenses, pronouns, and time expressions** as usual.

Subject + asked + (object) + WH word + subject + verb

# Common WH Words and Their Uses

WH WORD	ASKS ABOUT	EXAMPLE QUESTION
who	people (subject)	"Who is at the door?"
whom	people (object, formal)	"Whom did you meet?"
what	things, actions, ideas	"What are you doing?"
where	places, locations	"Where do you live?"
when	time, dates	"When will you arrive?"
why	reasons, causes	"Why are you crying?"
which	choice between options	"Which book do you want?"
whose	possession, ownership	"Whose car is this?"
how	manner, method, degree	"How did you do that?"

Table 9.1 — The nine WH words used in English questions

## Thirty Examples of Reported WH Questions

*"Where do you live?" she asked.*



She asked where I lived.

*"What are you doing?" he asked me.*



He asked me what I was doing.

*"When will you arrive?" she asked.*



She asked when I would arrive.

*"Why are you crying?" he asked.*



He asked why I was crying.

*"How did you do that?" she asked.*



She asked how I had done that.

*"Who is at the door?" he wondered.*



He wondered who was at the door.

*"Which book do you want?" she asked.*



She asked which book I wanted.

*"Whose car is this?" the officer asked.*



The officer asked whose car that was.

*"Where have you been?" my mother asked.*



My mother asked where I had been.

*"What time is it?" he asked.*



He asked what time it was.

*"When did she leave?" they wanted to know.*



They wanted to know when she had left.

*"Why didn't you call me?" she asked.*



She asked why I hadn't called her.

*"How old are you?" the teacher asked.*



The teacher asked how old I was.

*"Who told you that?" he asked me.*



He asked me who had told me that.

*"Which way is the station?" the tourist asked.*



The tourist asked which way the station was.

### ! TOP 3 WH QUESTION MISTAKES

**1. Keeping auxiliary "do/does/did":** "She asked where did I live" is WRONG. Drop the auxiliary: "She asked where I lived."

**2. Keeping question word order:** "He asked what was I doing" is WRONG. Use statement order: "He asked what I was doing."

**3. Adding "if":** "She asked if where I lived" is WRONG. Never combine "if" with a WH word. Choose one or the other.

*"Whose phone is ringing?" she asked.*



She asked whose phone was ringing.

*"How much does it cost?" he asked.*



He asked how much it cost.

*"Where are you going on holiday?" they asked me.*



They asked me where I was going on holiday.

*"What did she say?" he wondered.*



He wondered what she had said.

*"When will the train arrive?" the passenger asked.*



The passenger asked when the train would arrive.

*"Why is he angry?" she asked.*



She asked why he was angry.

*"How long have you been waiting?" he asked me.*



He asked me how long I had been waiting.

*"Who is coming to the party?" she wanted to know.*



She wanted to know who was coming to the party.

*"Which flavor do you prefer?" the waiter asked.*



The waiter asked which flavor I preferred.

*"Where did you buy that dress?" she asked.*



She asked where I had bought that dress.

*"What are you studying?" he asked me.*



He asked me what I was studying.

*"When does the movie start?" they asked.*



They asked when the movie started.

*"Why did she quit her job?" he wondered.*



He wondered why she had quit her job.

*"How often do you exercise?" the doctor asked.*



The doctor asked how often I exercised.

"Whose bag is this?" the teacher asked.



The teacher asked whose bag that was.

## CHAPTER 10

# Reporting Commands and Requests

Commands, orders, and requests are not statements or questions — they are imperatives. When we report them, we use a special structure with the infinitive form (to + verb). This chapter shows you the patterns for the five most common reporting verbs used with commands: *tell*, *ask*, *order*, *advise*, and *warn*.

## The Core Structure

Subject + reporting verb + object + (not) + to + infinitive

Notice that commands always require an **object** — the person being commanded. You cannot say "He told to leave"; you must say "He told *me* to leave." Negative commands use *not to* before the infinitive: "Don't touch" → "He told me *not to* touch."

# Five Command Reporting Verbs

VERB	MEANING	PATTERN
tell	direct command	told + object + to + infinitive
ask	polite request	asked + object + to + infinitive
order	military/authority command	ordered + object + to + infinitive
advise	recommendation	advised + object + to + infinitive
warn	caution against danger	warned + object + (not) + to + infinitive

## Examples of Reported Commands

*"Close the door," he said.*



He told me to close the door.

*"Please sit down," she said.*



She asked me to sit down.

*"Stand up!" the sergeant shouted.*



The sergeant ordered the soldiers to stand up.

*"You should see a doctor," she said.*



She advised me to see a doctor.

*"Don't touch the wire," he said.*



He warned me not to touch the wire.

*"Open your books," the teacher said.*



The teacher told the students to open their books.

*"Please pass the salt," she said.*



She asked me to pass the salt.

*"Stop the car!" the officer shouted.*



The officer ordered the driver to stop the car.

*"Don't smoke here," the sign said.*



The sign warned people not to smoke there.

*"You should rest more," the doctor said.*



The doctor advised him to rest more.

## Mini Exercises

Try converting these direct commands into reported speech. The answers are at the end of this chapter.

1. "Leave the room," the teacher told John. → \_\_\_\_\_
2. "Please help me with this," she said to me. → \_\_\_\_\_
3. "Don't be late," he warned us. → \_\_\_\_\_
4. "Drop your weapons!" the officer commanded. → \_\_\_\_\_
5. "You should take this medicine," the doctor advised her. → \_\_\_\_\_

### ANSWERS TO MINI EXERCISES

1. The teacher told John to leave the room.
2. She asked me to help her with that.
3. He warned us not to be late.
4. The officer ordered them to drop their weapons.
5. The doctor advised her to take that medicine.

## ! COMMON COMMAND MISTAKES

- 1. Forgetting the object:** "He told to leave" is WRONG. You need an object: "He told *me* to leave."
- 2. Using "that" instead of "to":** "She asked that I sit down" is awkward. Use the infinitive: "She asked me *to sit* down."
- 3. Wrong negative form:** "He told me to not go" is awkward. Use *not to*: "He told me *not to* go."

## CHAPTER 11

# Reporting Suggestions and Advice

Suggestions and advice are a special category of reported speech because they often use a subjunctive or gerund structure rather than a simple tense shift. This chapter covers the three main verbs — *suggested*, *recommended*, and *advised* — and shows you the grammatical patterns each one requires.

## Three Verbs, Multiple Patterns

Each of these verbs can be used with two or three different grammatical patterns. The meaning stays similar, but the structure changes. Learning these patterns will make your English sound much more natural and flexible.

## PATTERN 1: VERB + THAT + CLAUSE (WITH SUBJUNCTIVE OR SHOULD)

*"Let's go to the cinema," she said.*



She suggested that we (should) go to the cinema.

*"You should study more," the teacher said.*



The teacher recommended that I (should) study more.

*"You should see a lawyer," he said.*



He advised that I (should) see a lawyer.

## PATTERN 2: VERB + V-ING (GERUND)

*"Let's take a taxi," she said.*



She suggested taking a taxi.

*"You should try this restaurant," he said.*



He recommended trying this restaurant.

## PATTERN 3: VERB + OBJECT + TO + INFINITIVE (ONLY FOR ADVISE)

*"You should rest," the doctor said.*



The doctor advised me to rest.

*"You should not smoke," she told him.*



She advised him not to smoke.

### **I** IMPORTANT PATTERN RESTRICTIONS

**suggest** and **recommend** CANNOT take the pattern "verb + object + to + infinitive." You cannot say "She suggested me to go" or "He recommended me to study." This is one of the most common errors learners make with these verbs.

## More Examples of Suggested, Recommended, Advised

*"Let's leave early," she said.*



She suggested that we leave early. / She suggested leaving early.

*"Try the seafood," he told us.*



He recommended that we try the seafood. / He recommended trying the seafood.

*"You should exercise daily," the doctor said.*



The doctor advised me to exercise daily. / The doctor advised that I exercise daily.

*"Let's ask for help," John said.*



John suggested that we ask for help. / John suggested asking for help.

*"You should read this book," she told me.*



She recommended that I read this book. / She recommended reading this book.

*"You should not skip breakfast," the nutritionist said.*



The nutritionist advised me not to skip breakfast.

*"Let's meet again next week," they said.*



They suggested that we meet again the following week.

*"Take the earlier train," the conductor recommended.*



The conductor recommended taking the earlier train.

## ! WATCH THESE PATTERNS

**Error 1:** "She suggested me to go" ❌ → "She suggested that I go" ✅ or "She suggested going" ✅

**Error 2:** "He recommended me to try" ❌ → "He recommended that I try" ✅ or "He recommended trying" ✅

**Error 3:** "She advised going" (without object) ❌ → "She advised me to go" ✅ (advise needs an object with the infinitive pattern)

**Error 4:** "They suggested us to leave" ❌ → "They suggested that we leave" ✅

## ✅ QUICK RULE OF THUMB

If you are not sure which pattern to use, the **that-clause with "should"** pattern is almost always safe: "*She suggested that we should leave early.*" This works for *suggest*, *recommend*, and *advise* alike, in both formal and informal English.

## CHAPTER 12

# Avoid These Common Errors

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This chapter is your defensive driving manual for reported speech. Each card below shows a real mistake that learners make all the time, with the incorrect version, the correct version, and a short explanation of why the correction matters. Study these carefully — avoiding these errors will dramatically improve your accuracy.

1

**✗ She said me that she was tired.**

**✓ She told me that she was tired.**

"Said" never takes a direct object. Use "told" + object, or "said" without object: "She said that she was tired."

2

**✗ He told that he would come.**

**✓ He said that he would come. OR He told me that he would come.**

"Told" needs an object. If there is no object, use "said."

3

**✗ She asked where did I live.**

**✓ She asked where I lived.**

In reported WH questions, use statement word order — drop the auxiliary "did."

4

**✗ He asked if was I busy.**

**✓ He asked if I was busy.**

After "if" or "whether," use statement word order: subject + verb.

5

**✗ She asked if I was busy?**

**✓ She asked if I was busy.**

Reported questions are statements — they end with a period, not a question mark.

6

**✗ He said that he will come tomorrow.**

**✓ He said that he would come the next day.**

"Will" must shift to "would," and "tomorrow" must shift to "the next day" in reported speech.

7

✗ She told me to not be late.

✓ She told me not to be late.

The correct negative form is "not to" (not "to not"). The negative comes before "to."

8

✗ He suggested me to go home.

✓ He suggested that I go home. OR He suggested going home.

"Suggest" cannot take "object + to + infinitive." Use a that-clause or a gerund.

9

✗ She recommended me to take the course.

✓ She recommended that I take the course. OR She recommended taking the course.

Like "suggest," "recommend" cannot take "object + to + infinitive."

10

✗ He said that he is happy yesterday.

✓ He said that he was happy the day before.

Both the tense and the time expression must shift. "Is" becomes "was," "yesterday" becomes "the day before."

11

✗ She told to me that she would call.

✓ She told me that she would call.

"Told" takes a direct object without "to." No preposition is needed.

12

✗ He asked me where I live.

✓ He asked me where I lived.

"Live" should shift to "lived" because the reporting verb "asked" is in the past tense.

13

✗ She said me, "I am tired."

✓ She said to me, "I am tired." OR She said, "I am tired."

"Said" requires "to" before an object, or no object at all. Never "said me."

14

✗ He told me that he has finished his work.

✓ He told me that he had finished his work.

Present perfect "has finished" must shift to past perfect "had finished."

15

✗ She asked that what time it was.

✓ She asked what time it was.

Never combine "that" with a WH word. Just use the WH word directly.

# More Common Errors

16

✗ He suggested us to leave early.

✓ He suggested that we leave early.

"Suggest" cannot take an object + infinitive. Use a that-clause or a gerund.

17

✗ She said that she can swim.

✓ She said that she could swim.

"Can" must shift to "could" in reported speech (when the reporting verb is past tense).

18

✗ He told me don't go there.

✓ He told me not to go there.

Commands in reported speech use "not to + infinitive," not the imperative "don't."

19

✗ She asked me that I wanted tea.

✓ She asked me if I wanted tea.

For yes/no questions in reported speech, use "if" or "whether," not "that."

20

✗ He said me to leave.

✓ He told me to leave.

"Said" cannot introduce a command with "to + infinitive." Use "told" + object + to + infinitive.

21

~~✗~~ She said that she is going to the store tomorrow.

✓ She said that she was going to the store the next day.

Both tense and time expression must shift: "is going" → "was going," "tomorrow" → "the next day."

22

~~✗~~ He asked to me where I was going.

✓ He asked me where I was going.

"Asked" takes a direct object without "to." No preposition needed.

23

~~✗~~ She told that she would be late.

✓ She said that she would be late.

"Told" needs an object. Without one, use "said."

24

~~✗~~ He asked me what was I doing.

✓ He asked me what I was doing.

After the WH word, use statement word order (subject + verb), not question word order.

25

~~✗~~ She said that she must go now.

✓ She said that she had to go then.

"Must" shifts to "had to," and "now" shifts to "then" in reported speech.

26

~~✗~~ He told me that he will come yesterday.

✓ He told me that he would come the day before.

"Will" → "would," "yesterday" → "the day before." Mixing future and past is contradictory.

27

✗ She said to me that she loved me.

✓ She told me that she loved me.

"Said to me" is grammatically possible but unnatural. "Told me" is the standard choice.

28

✗ He asked me whether or not I was coming?

✓ He asked me whether or not I was coming.

Reported questions end with a period, not a question mark, even when "whether" is used.

29

✗ She suggested that we went home.

✓ She suggested that we go home. OR She suggested that we should go home.

After "suggest that," use the base form of the verb (subjunctive) or "should + base form." Do not shift the tense.

30

✗ He said me that he can't come.

✓ He told me that he couldn't come.

"Said me" is wrong — use "told me." Also, "can't" must shift to "couldn't."

31

✗ She asked me what is your name.

✓ She asked me what my name was.

Both word order (statement, not question) and pronoun ("your" → "my") must shift.

32

✗ He told to leave the room.

✓ He told me to leave the room.

"Told" needs an object. Without an object, use "ordered" or "asked" with a clearer pattern.

33

✗ She said that she has been working here.

✓ She said that she had been working there.

Present perfect continuous shifts to past perfect continuous; "here" shifts to "there."

✓ **FINAL TIP**

Most reported speech mistakes fall into one of these five categories: (1) said vs told confusion, (2) question word order, (3) missing tense shift, (4) missing pronoun shift, (5) wrong verb pattern (suggest/recommend/advise). Master these five areas and you will avoid 90% of common errors.

## CHAPTER 13

# 100 Everyday Reported Speech Examples

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This chapter collects 100 practical reported speech examples organized by everyday topic. Use these as a reference and inspiration for your own sentences. Notice how natural reported speech sounds when it follows the rules you have already learned.

*"I forgot my homework," the student said.*

→ **The student said that he had forgotten his homework.**

*"The exam starts at 9 a.m.," the teacher announced.*

→ **The teacher announced that the exam started at 9 a.m.**

*"I need help with this problem," she told me.*

→ **She told me that she needed help with that problem.**

*"We have a test tomorrow," he said.*

→ **He said that they had a test the next day.**

*"Open your textbooks," the teacher instructed.*

→ **The teacher instructed the students to open their textbooks.**

*"I studied all night," John admitted.*

→ **John admitted that he had studied all night.**

*"Don't be late for class," she warned us.*

→ **She warned us not to be late for class.**

*"Who knows the answer?" the teacher asked.*

→ **The teacher asked who knew the answer.**

*"I will tutor you after school," she offered.*

→ **She offered to tutor me after school.**

*"The library is closed today," the librarian said.*

→ **The librarian said that the library was closed that day.**

*"Have you finished your essay?" my classmate asked.*

→ **My classmate asked if I had finished my essay.**

*"You should study harder," my mother told me.*

→ **My mother advised me to study harder.**

*"We are going on a field trip next week," the teacher said.*

→ **The teacher said that they were going on a field trip the following week.**

*"The meeting is at 2 p.m.," my boss told me.*

→ **My boss told me that the meeting was at 2 p.m.**

*"I need this report by Friday," the manager said.*

→ **The manager said that he needed that report by Friday.**

*"We are hiring new staff," HR announced.*

→ **HR announced that they were hiring new staff.**

*"Please send the email now," she told me.*

→ **She asked me to send the email then.**

*"I have finished the presentation," my colleague said.*

→ **My colleague said that she had finished the presentation.**

*"Don't forget the deadline," the boss warned.*

→ **The boss warned us not to forget the deadline.**

*"Can you work overtime?" the supervisor asked.*

→ **The supervisor asked if I could work overtime.**

*"We will discuss this tomorrow," he said.*

→ **He said that they would discuss that the next day.**

*"I am leaving the company," she announced.*

→ **She announced that she was leaving the company.**

*"Who is handling the Smith account?" the director asked.*

→ **The director asked who was handling the Smith account.**

*"You should apply for the promotion," my mentor advised.*

→ **My mentor advised me to apply for the promotion.**

*"The project has been delayed," they told us.*

→ **They told us that the project had been delayed.**

*"The flight is delayed," the announcer said.*

→ The announcer said that the flight was delayed.

*"Where are you traveling?" the customs officer asked.*

→ The customs officer asked where I was traveling.

*"We will arrive in Paris at noon," the pilot announced.*

→ The pilot announced that they would arrive in Paris at noon.

*"Please fasten your seatbelts," the flight attendant said.*

→ The flight attendant told us to fasten our seatbelts.

*"I lost my passport," the tourist told the embassy.*

→ The tourist told the embassy that he had lost his passport.

*"The hotel is fully booked," the receptionist said.*

→ The receptionist said that the hotel was fully booked.

*"Have you been to Rome before?" the guide asked.*

→ The guide asked if I had been to Rome before.

*"We are checking out tomorrow," they told the front desk.*

→ They told the front desk that they were checking out the next day.

*"Don't forget your luggage," the driver warned.*

→ The driver warned us not to forget our luggage.

*"I will call a taxi for you," the concierge offered.*

→ The concierge offered to call a taxi for me.

*"How long is the flight?" the passenger asked.*

→ The passenger asked how long the flight was.

*"The train leaves from platform 5," the conductor said.*

→ The conductor said that the train left from platform 5.

# Everyday Examples (continued)

## FAMILY (38–49)

*"Dinner is ready," my mother called.*

→ My mother called that dinner was ready.

*"I love you," she told her son.*

→ She told her son that she loved him.

*"We are visiting Grandma this weekend," Dad said.*

→ Dad said that we were visiting Grandma that weekend.

*"Don't forget to call your aunt," Mom reminded me.*

→ Mom reminded me not to forget to call my aunt.

*"I will pick up the kids," my husband offered.*

→ My husband offered to pick up the kids.

*"Where are the car keys?" my sister asked.*

→ My sister asked where the car keys were.

*"We had a wonderful time," my parents told me.*

→ My parents told me that they had had a wonderful time.

*"I have bought a new house," my brother announced.*

→ My brother announced that he had bought a new house.

*"Are you coming home for Christmas?" my mother asked.*

→ My mother asked if I was coming home for Christmas.

*"You should spend more time with the family," my wife suggested.*

→ My wife suggested that I spend more time with the family.

*"The baby is sleeping," she whispered.*

→ She whispered that the baby was sleeping.

*"I miss you," my daughter told me on the phone.*

→ My daughter told me that she missed me.

*"The store is closing in 10 minutes," the clerk said.*

→ The clerk said that the store was closing in 10 minutes.

*"These shoes are on sale," the assistant told me.*

→ The assistant told me that those shoes were on sale.

*"Do you have this in a larger size?" the customer asked.*

→ The customer asked if they had that in a larger size.

*"I will take it," she told the cashier.*

→ She told the cashier that she would take it.

*"How much does this cost?" the shopper asked.*

→ The shopper asked how much that cost.

*"We accept credit cards," the sign said.*

→ The sign said that they accepted credit cards.

*"The sale ends tomorrow," the advertisement announced.*

→ The advertisement announced that the sale ended the next day.

*"Can I get a refund?" the customer asked.*

→ The customer asked if she could get a refund.

*"Please wait in line," the security guard told us.*

→ The security guard told us to wait in line.

*"I forgot my wallet at home," she admitted.*

→ She admitted that she had forgotten her wallet at home.

*"Which color do you prefer?" the salesperson asked.*

→ The salesperson asked which color I preferred.

*"We don't have that item in stock," the clerk told me.*

→ The clerk told me that they didn't have that item in stock.

*"My phone is dead," she said.*

→ She said that her phone was dead.

*"I will email you the document," he told me.*

→ He told me that he would email me the document.

*"The website is down," the IT technician said.*

→ The IT technician said that the website was down.

*"Have you tried restarting the computer?" the support agent asked.*

→ The support agent asked if I had tried restarting the computer.

*"Don't click on suspicious links," the security expert warned.*

→ The security expert warned us not to click on suspicious links.

*"I bought a new laptop yesterday," my friend told me.*

→ My friend told me that he had bought a new laptop the day before.

*"The system will be updated tonight," the admin announced.*

→ The admin announced that the system would be updated that night.

*"What is your password?" the technician asked.*

→ The technician asked what my password was.

*"I can't connect to the Wi-Fi," the user complained.*

→ The user complained that he couldn't connect to the Wi-Fi.

*"Back up your files regularly," the expert advised.*

→ The expert advised us to back up our files regularly.

*"This app is free to download," the developer said.*

→ The developer said that that app was free to download.

*"We are launching a new feature next month," the CEO announced.*

→ The CEO announced that they were launching a new feature the following month.

# Health & IELTS-Style Examples

## HEALTH (74–87)

*"I have a headache," she told the doctor.*

→ She told the doctor that she had a headache.

*"You should rest for a few days," the doctor advised.*

→ The doctor advised me to rest for a few days.

*"I am feeling much better," the patient said.*

→ The patient said that he was feeling much better.

*"Don't eat spicy food," the nutritionist warned.*

→ The nutritionist warned me not to eat spicy food.

*"When did the symptoms start?" the doctor asked.*

→ The doctor asked when the symptoms had started.

*"I have been taking the medication for a week," she said.*

→ She said that she had been taking the medication for a week.

*"You need to drink more water," the trainer told me.*

→ The trainer told me that I needed to drink more water.

*"The test results will be ready tomorrow," the nurse said.*

→ The nurse said that the test results would be ready the next day.

*"I feel dizzy," the patient complained.*

→ The patient complained that he felt dizzy.

*"Please fill out this form," the receptionist told me.*

→ The receptionist told me to fill out that form.

*"Have you had any allergies before?" the doctor asked.*

→ The doctor asked if I had had any allergies before.

*"You should exercise at least three times a week," the cardiologist recommended.*

→ The cardiologist recommended that I exercise at least three times a week.

*"I quit smoking last month," my uncle announced proudly.*

→ My uncle announced proudly that he had quit smoking the previous month.

*"The pharmacy is closed on Sundays," the sign said.*

→ The sign said that the pharmacy was closed on Sundays.

*"I have lived in this city for ten years," the candidate said.*

→ The candidate said that he had lived in that city for ten years.

*"What do you enjoy about your hometown?" the examiner asked.*

→ The examiner asked what I enjoyed about my hometown.

*"I would like to study abroad," the student told the counselor.*

→ The student told the counselor that she would like to study abroad.

*"The graph shows a significant increase," the lecturer explained.*

→ The lecturer explained that the graph showed a significant increase.

*"Can you describe the chart?" the instructor asked.*

→ The instructor asked if I could describe the chart.

*"I disagree with that statement," the student argued.*

→ The student argued that he disagreed with that statement.

*"You should support your opinion with examples," the teacher advised.*

→ The teacher advised us to support our opinions with examples.

*"The lecture will focus on climate change," the professor announced.*

→ The professor announced that the lecture would focus on climate change.

*"How long have you been preparing for the exam?" my classmate asked.*

→ My classmate asked how long I had been preparing for the exam.

*"I find speaking the most challenging part," the candidate admitted.*

→ The candidate admitted that she found speaking the most challenging part.

*"Please speak clearly into the microphone," the examiner told me.*

→ The examiner told me to speak clearly into the microphone.

*"The results will be released in two weeks," the administrator said.*

→ The administrator said that the results would be released in two weeks.

*"I have been practicing my English every day," the learner said.*

→ The learner said that he had been practicing his English every day.



### USING THESE EXAMPLES

Try covering the reported versions and converting the direct sentences yourself. Then check your answer. This active recall practice is one of the fastest ways to internalize the rules of reported speech.

## CHAPTER 14

# Practice Exercises

Test your understanding with these 80 practice questions across four sections. Work through them carefully, then check your answers in Chapter 15. Don't peek — the struggle to recall is what cements the knowledge.

## Section A · Convert Direct to Reported Speech

*Convert each direct speech sentence into reported speech.*

1. "I am studying for my exam," she said.
2. "We will travel to Japan next year," they told me.
3. "He has finished his homework," the teacher said.
4. "I can speak three languages," Maria claimed.
5. "They went to the cinema last night," John said.
6. "I am working on a new project," she told me.
7. "We must finish by Friday," the boss warned.
8. "I saw her yesterday," he said.
9. "She may arrive late," the teacher told us.
10. "I will help you tomorrow," she promised.
11. "We have lived here for ten years," they said.
12. "He is going to call you," Maria told me.
13. "I cannot attend the meeting," she said.
14. "We were sleeping when you called," they explained.
15. "I'll send the email now," he told me.
16. "She has been working all day," John said.
17. "I want some water," the child said.
18. "We should leave now," she suggested.
19. "I have already eaten," he told us.
20. "They are coming tonight," she said.

## Section B · Choose the Correct Reporting Verb

Choose the best reporting verb (*said, told, asked, admitted, warned, promised, suggested, advised*) for each sentence.

1. She \_\_\_ that she had made a mistake.
2. He \_\_\_ me that he would call back later.
3. The doctor \_\_\_ me to rest for a week.
4. They \_\_\_ us that the roads were icy.
5. She \_\_\_ to help me with the project.
6. He \_\_\_ that we leave early.
7. The teacher \_\_\_ if I had finished my homework.
8. She \_\_\_ me where the nearest bank was.
9. They \_\_\_ that the plan was good.
10. He \_\_\_ that he had stolen the money.
11. The manager \_\_\_ the team to finish the report.
12. She \_\_\_ that we try the new restaurant.
13. He \_\_\_ us not to touch the wire.
14. They \_\_\_ that they would arrive at 8 p.m.
15. She \_\_\_ me to call her later.
16. The professor \_\_\_ that the lecture was canceled.
17. He \_\_\_ that we should consult a lawyer.
18. She \_\_\_ whether I wanted tea or coffee.
19. They \_\_\_ to meet us at the station.
20. He \_\_\_ that he had been working all night.

# Practice Exercises (continued)

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## Section C · Correct the Mistakes

*Each sentence contains one mistake. Find the mistake and write the corrected sentence.*

1. She said me that she was tired.
2. He told that he would come tomorrow.
3. She asked where did I live.
4. He asked if was I busy?
5. She told me to not be late.
6. He suggested me to go home.
7. She recommended me to take the course.
8. He said that he is happy yesterday.
9. She told to me that she would call.
10. He asked me where I live.
11. She said me, "I am tired."
12. He told me that he has finished his work.
13. She asked that what time it was.
14. He suggested us to leave early.
15. She said that she can swim.
16. He told me don't go there.
17. She asked me that I wanted tea.
18. He said me to leave.
19. She said that she must go now.
20. He told me that he will come yesterday.

Convert each direct speech sentence into reported speech. Mix of statements, questions, and commands.

1. "Are you coming to the party?" she asked me.
2. "Close the window, please," he told me.
3. "I have been waiting for an hour," she complained.
4. "Where did you buy that dress?" her friend asked.
5. "Don't forget your umbrella," my mother reminded me.
6. "We will travel to Spain next summer," they announced.
7. "Can you help me with this exercise?" the student asked.
8. "You should see a dentist," my friend advised.
9. "I have already finished my homework," the child said.
10. "What time does the train leave?" the passenger asked.
11. "Please don't be late again," the boss warned.
12. "I will call you when I arrive," she promised.
13. "Have you ever been to Brazil?" the teacher asked.
14. "Let's order pizza tonight," my brother suggested.
15. "I lost my phone at the cinema," he admitted.
16. "Why are you crying?" the mother asked her daughter.
17. "Turn off the lights before you leave," she told me.
18. "I am going to start a new job next week," he said.
19. "Do you know the answer?" the teacher asked the class.
20. "I think we should leave now," she said to her husband.

### **I** HOW TO CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

After completing all four sections, turn to Chapter 15 for the complete answer key. Score yourself honestly — the goal is to identify which rules you have mastered and which need more review. Re-read the relevant chapter for any section where you missed multiple questions.

## CHAPTER 15

# Answer Key

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Complete answers for all 80 practice exercises. Compare your answers carefully — even small differences in word choice can be correct, so focus on the grammatical structure rather than exact wording.

**SECTION A · DIRECT TO REPORTED**

1. She said that she was studying for her exam.
2. They told me that they would travel to Japan the following year.
3. The teacher said that he had finished his homework.
4. Maria claimed that she could speak three languages.
5. John said that they had gone to the cinema the night before.
6. She told me that she was working on a new project.
7. The boss warned that they had to finish by Friday.
8. He said that he had seen her the day before.
9. The teacher told us that she might arrive late.
10. She promised that she would help me the next day.
11. They said that they had lived there for ten years.
12. Maria told me that he was going to call me.
13. She said that she could not attend the meeting.
14. They explained that they had been sleeping when I called.
15. He told me that he would send the email then.
16. John said that she had been working all day.
17. The child said that he wanted some water.
18. She suggested that we should leave then.
19. He told us that he had already eaten.
20. She said that they were coming that night.

## SECTION B · CHOOSE THE REPORTING VERB

1. admitted
2. told
3. advised
4. warned
5. promised
6. suggested
7. asked
8. asked
9. agreed
10. admitted
11. told
12. suggested / recommended
13. warned
14. promised / said
15. asked
16. announced / said
17. advised
18. asked
19. agreed / promised
20. admitted

## SECTION C · CORRECT THE MISTAKES

1. She told me that she was tired.
2. He said that he would come the next day.
3. She asked where I lived.
4. He asked if I was busy.
5. She told me not to be late.
6. He suggested that I go home. / He suggested going home.
7. She recommended that I take the course. / She recommended taking the course.
8. He said that he was happy the day before.
9. She told me that she would call.
10. He asked me where I lived.
11. She said to me, "I am tired." OR She said, "I am tired."
12. He told me that he had finished his work.
13. She asked what time it was.
14. He suggested that we leave early.
15. She said that she could swim.
16. He told me not to go there.
17. She asked me if I wanted tea.
18. He told me to leave.
19. She said that she had to go then.
20. He told me that he would come the day before.

## SECTION D · MIXED PRACTICE

1. She asked me if I was coming to the party.
2. He asked me to close the window.
3. She complained that she had been waiting for an hour.
4. Her friend asked where I had bought that dress.
5. My mother reminded me not to forget my umbrella.
6. They announced that they would travel to Spain the following summer.
7. The student asked if I could help him with that exercise.
8. My friend advised me to see a dentist.
9. The child said that he had already finished his homework.
10. The passenger asked what time the train left.
11. The boss warned us not to be late again.
12. She promised that she would call me when she arrived.
13. The teacher asked if I had ever been to Brazil.
14. My brother suggested that we order pizza that night. / My brother suggested ordering pizza that night.
15. He admitted that he had lost his phone at the cinema.
16. The mother asked her daughter why she was crying.
17. She told me to turn off the lights before I left.
18. He said that he was going to start a new job the following week.
19. The teacher asked the class if they knew the answer.
20. She told her husband that she thought they should leave then.

# Quick Reference Cheat Sheet

A two-page summary of every key rule in this book. Print this cheat sheet and keep it next to your desk for instant reference whenever you need to convert direct to reported speech.

## 1. Tense Changes Table

DIRECT SPEECH	REPORTED SPEECH
Present Simple (I work)	Past Simple (she worked)
Present Continuous (I am working)	Past Continuous (she was working)
Present Perfect (I have worked)	Past Perfect (she had worked)
Past Simple (I worked)	Past Perfect (she had worked)
Past Continuous (I was working)	Past Perfect Continuous (she had been working)
Will (I will work)	Would (she would work)
Can (I can work)	Could (she could work)
May (I may work)	Might (she might work)
Shall (I shall work)	Should (she should work)
Must (I must work)	Had to (she had to work)

## 2. Pronoun Changes Table

TYPE	DIRECT	REPORTED
Subject (1st)	I / we	he, she / they
Subject (2nd)	you	I / we / he / she / they
Subject (3rd)	he, she, they	he, she, they (no change)
Object (1st)	me / us	him, her / them
Object (2nd)	you	me / us / him / her / them
Possessive (1st)	my / our	his, her / their
Possessive (2nd)	your	my / our / his / her / their
Reflexive (1st)	myself / ourselves	himself, herself / themselves

# Cheat Sheet (continued)

## 3. Time & Place Expression Changes

DIRECT SPEECH	REPORTED SPEECH
now	then
today	that day
tonight	that night
yesterday	the day before
tomorrow	the next day
this week	that week
last week	the week before
next week	the following week
ago	before
here	there
this	that
these	those
come	go
bring	take

#### 4. Question Reporting Patterns

TYPE	DIRECT	REPORTED
Yes/No Question	"Are you tired?"	She asked if/whether I was tired.
WH Question	"Where do you live?"	She asked where I lived.
Question with modal	"Can you swim?"	She asked if I could swim.
Negative question	"Don't you like coffee?"	She asked if I didn't like coffee.
Alternative question	"Tea or coffee?"	She asked whether I wanted tea or coffee.

#### 5. Command Reporting Patterns

VERB	PATTERN	EXAMPLE
tell	told + obj + to + inf	He told me to leave.
ask	asked + obj + to + inf	She asked me to sit down.
order	ordered + obj + to + inf	The officer ordered them to stop.
advise	advised + obj + to + inf	The doctor advised me to rest.
warn	warned + obj + (not) + to + inf	He warned me not to touch it.
suggest	suggested + that + clause / V-ing	She suggested leaving early.
recommend	recommended + that + clause / V-ing	He recommended that we try it.



## THE 5-STEP CONVERSION PROCESS

1. Identify the type: statement, yes/no question, WH question, or command.
2. Choose the right reporting verb (said, told, asked, etc.).
3. Add the correct connector: *that* (statements), *if/whether* (yes/no), WH word (WH questions), *to + infinitive* (commands).
4. Shift the tense back one step.
5. Change pronouns and time/place expressions to fit the new perspective.

## BONUS SECTION

# Reported Speech for IELTS & TOEFL

Reported speech is heavily tested on both IELTS and TOEFL. This bonus section explains exactly where and how it appears on each exam, with speaking, writing, and listening examples plus exam-focused tips to help you earn a higher score.

## Why Reported Speech Matters on These Exams

On IELTS and TOEFL, reported speech is not tested in isolation as a grammar transformation exercise. Instead, it appears naturally across all four skills. In the speaking section, you will need reported speech to paraphrase what an examiner asked, what a study partner said, or what a lecturer argued. In the writing section, particularly IELTS Academic Task 1 (describing a chart that quotes someone) and Task 2 (discussing different viewpoints), reported speech lets you reference sources smoothly. In the listening section, you will frequently hear speakers reporting what others have said — and

your ability to follow the tense and pronoun shifts will directly affect your comprehension accuracy.

Beyond pure accuracy, using reported speech well signals to examiners that you have a sophisticated command of English grammar. It shows you can move beyond simple sentence patterns and handle the kind of complex, embedded clauses that characterize academic and professional English. For this reason alone, mastering reported speech can lift your grammar band score.

## IELTS Speaking Examples

In IELTS Speaking Part 2, you may need to describe a conversation you had. Here is how reported speech naturally appears:

*"My friend told me that she had visited Japan the previous summer, and she said that she would love to go back someday."*

**examiner hears**

Smooth, natural use of reported speech with correct tense shifts.

*"The teacher asked me why I had chosen that topic, and I explained that I had been interested in it for years."*

**examiner hears**

Embedded reported question + statement with past perfect continuous.

## IELTS Writing Examples

In IELTS Writing Task 2, you often need to discuss opinions. Reported speech lets you attribute views without quoting directly:

*"Some experts argue that climate change is the most pressing issue of our time, while others contend that economic growth should take priority."*

**examiner sees**

Sophisticated use of reporting verbs (argue, contend) for academic tone.

## TOEFL Listening Examples

TOEFL Listening lectures frequently contain reported speech. Practice following tense shifts to understand who said what:

"The professor mentioned that earlier researchers had believed the earth was flat, but he explained that more recent studies had proven otherwise."

listener must track

Three levels of time reference: past, past perfect, present perfect.

### ✓ FIVE EXAM-FOCUSED TIPS

- 1. Vary your reporting verbs.** Don't just use "said" and "told." Use *argued, claimed, noted, observed, suggested, asserted, contended* to show vocabulary range.
- 2. Use reported speech to paraphrase.** In speaking and writing, paraphrasing what others have said (rather than quoting) demonstrates sophisticated grammar control.
- 3. Watch for tense shifts in lectures.** TOEFL listening passages often contain reported speech with multiple tense layers. Practice identifying the original time frame vs. the reporting time frame.
- 4. Don't overuse "that."** Dropping "that" in informal speech is natural and shows fluency. "She said she was tired" sounds more native than "She said that she was tired."
- 5. Mix sentence types.** Combine reported statements, questions, and commands for varied sentence structure — examiners reward syntactic variety.

### I BAND SCORE BOOSTERS

For IELTS Speaking Band 7+, you need to "use a range of complex structures with some flexibility." Reported speech — especially with varied reporting verbs and accurate tense shifts — is exactly the kind of complex structure examiners look for. For TOEFL, the same applies: high-scoring essays and speaking responses consistently use reported speech to discuss sources and reference opinions.



THANK YOU FOR READING

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