

UNIT 7 HEALTHY LIVING

Reported speech

Tense changes

We use reported speech to quote another person's words. Sentences in reported speech are usually spoken by another speaker and at a different time, so we change the verb tenses and pronouns. Below you can see how the tenses change between direct speech and reported speech.

| Direct speech | | Reported speech |
|--|---|---|
| Present simple 'I need a new computer.' | → | Past simple He said that he needed a new computer. |
| Present continuous 'We're working on a new invention.' | → | Past continuous She said that they were working on a new invention. |
| Present perfect 'She's lost her mobile phone.' | → | Past perfect He said that she had lost her mobile phone. |
| Past simple 'I didn't understand the instructions.' | → | Past perfect He said that he hadn't understood the instructions. |

MODALS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| can 'I can't get into my Facebook account.' | → | could He said that he couldn't get into his Facebook account. |
| will 'We'll buy a 3D TV next year.' | → | would They said that they would buy a 3D TV next year. |
| must 'We must install the new software.' | → | had to She said that we had to install the new software. |

It is usually also necessary to change pronouns and possessive adjectives.

'My dog isn't very well,' Harry said. → Harry said that **his** dog wasn't very well.

'I'm buying a present for **my** dad,' she said. → She said that she was buying a present for **her** dad.

We also change expressions of time and place.

now → then/at that moment
 today → that day
 this week → that week
 last week → the week before
 yesterday → the day before
 tomorrow → the next/following day
 a minute ago → a minute earlier/before
 next week → the following week
 here → there

'Our email isn't working **today**,' they said. → They said that their email wasn't working **that day**.

'I forgot my password **yesterday**,' she said. → She said that she had forgotten her password **the day before**.

'We left our laptops here **last week**,' he said. → He said that they had left their laptops there **the week before**.

We don't change the tense, time or place words when the reporting verb is in the present, present perfect, or future.

'We're too busy to come **tomorrow**.' → They'll say that they're too busy to come tomorrow.

'I was here **yesterday**.' → She says that she was here yesterday.

'We didn't expect to win the prize.' → They've said that they didn't expect to win the prize.

The following tenses do not change.

| Direct speech | | Reported speech |
|---|---|---|
| Past perfect 'He had already tested the new plane.' | → | Past perfect She said that he had already tested the new plane. |
| would Would you like to use my computer? | → | would She asked me if I would like to use her computer. |
| should I think you should leave. | → | should He said he thought I should leave. |
| could We couldn't see the screen. | → | could He said that they couldn't see the screen. |
| had better They'd better improve their performance. | → | had better She said that they'd better improve their performance. |

Yes/No questions

To report a yes/no question, we use the structure *ask* (+ object) + *if/whether* + affirmative word order.

'Did you fix your Wi-Fi?' → He asked (me) *if/whether* I had fixed my Wi-Fi.

Wh- questions

To report a *wh-* question, we use the structure *ask* (+ object) + *wh-* + affirmative word order.

'Where is your bag?' → He asked (me) *where* my bag was.

'What are they doing?' → You asked *what* they were doing.

'Why are you tired?' → She asked *why* he was tired.

'When will we leave?' → We asked *when* we would leave.

Say and tell

We use *say* and *tell* to report what someone else said.

► After *tell* we always use a complement (a pronoun or somebody's name).

Harry told me he was hungry.

Harry told Sally he was hungry.

NOT Harry told he was hungry.

► We never use a complement directly after *say*.

Mary said that she wanted a sandwich.

Dominic said to Tom that he had eaten some pasta.

NOT Mary said me that she wanted a sandwich.

1 Rewrite the reported speech as direct speech.

- 1 She said that she had bought an amazing new MP3 player.

- 2 He said that he was testing a new video game.

- 3 They say that they didn't use a calculator to solve these maths problems.

- 4 Sarah told me that she would reply to my email the following day.

- 5 Ben will say that he didn't leave the house yesterday.

- 6 She asked John why he didn't answer her calls.

2 Put the words in the correct order in each of the sentences (1–6) to make reported questions.

- 1 her/He/the headphones./when/had/asked/bought/she

- 2 Tom/work./She/if/would/meet/he/her/after/asked

- 3 angry with/Rick/was/asked/whether/I/him./me

- 4 switched off/they/He/hadn't/asked/why/the computer./them

- 5 doing/what/there./asked/we/us/She/were

- 6 if/him/asked/he/plane./They/repair/their/could

3 Rewrite the direct questions as reported questions.

- 1 Did you watch the TV programme about inventors last night?
He asked me _____.
- 2 Why aren't you answering my calls?
She asked John _____.
- 3 Are you happy with your new tablet?
Sophie asked her mother _____.
- 4 Can you help me with my homework?
He asked me _____.
- 5 Have you decided where to go on holiday?
They asked him _____.
- 6 Who will be responsible for this project?
He asked her _____.

Reported commands and requests

We can use several different structures to report people's speech.

- ▶ verb + *that* + reported statement
admit, agree, announce, apologize, boast, claim, confess, deny, explain, insist, promise, say, suggest
We admitted that we had copied the plans.
She promised that she would call him the following day.
I suggested that we go for a walk.
 - ▶ verb + object + *that* + reported statement
remind, tell, warn
They reminded us that they had already changed the instructions.
He warned me that I would find the course very challenging.
I told them that it was time to leave.
 - ▶ verb + infinitive with *to*
agree, demand, offer, promise, refuse
I agreed to leave at once.
She refused to speak to us.
 - ▶ verb + object + infinitive with *to*
advise, ask, beg, encourage, forbid, invite, order, persuade, remind, tell, warn
He persuaded us to buy the more expensive model.
She told them not to wait for her.
 - ▶ verb + gerund
admit, deny, recommend, suggest
We admitted cheating in our final exams.
They suggested moving to a different part of the country.
 - ▶ verb + preposition + gerund
apologize for, boast of/about, confess to, insist on
I apologized for forgetting his birthday.
He insisted on speaking to the manager.
 - ▶ verb + object + preposition + gerund
accuse (someone) of, congratulate (someone) on, criticize (someone) for, warn (someone) against
They criticized us for leaving early.
She accused me of stealing her ideas.
- Some verbs can be followed by more than one structure.
- He admitted that he had broken the window./He admitted breaking the window.*
Erica promised that she would be on time./Erica promised to be on time.
I suggested eating outside./I suggested that we (should/could) eat outside.
You recommended buying a new phone./You recommended that I (should) buy a new phone.