

Reported speech 1 (He said that ...)

A

Study this example situation:



You want to tell somebody what Paul said.
There are two ways of doing this:

You can repeat Paul's words (direct speech):
Paul said 'I'm feeling ill.'

Or you can use reported speech:
Paul said **that he was feeling ill.**

Compare:

direct	Paul said ' I am feeling ill.'
reported	Paul said that he was feeling ill.

In writing we use these quotation marks to show direct speech.

B

When we use reported speech, the main verb of the sentence is usually past (Paul **said** that ... / I **told** her that ... etc.). The rest of the sentence is usually past too:

- ☐ Paul **said** that he **was** feeling ill.
- ☐ I **told** Lisa that I **didn't have** any money.

You can leave out **that**. So you can say:

- ☐ Paul **said that** he was feeling ill. or Paul **said** he was feeling ill.

In general, the *present* form in direct speech changes to the *past* form in reported speech:

am/is → was	do/does → did	will → would
are → were	have/has → had	can → could
want/like/know/go etc. → wanted/liked/knew/went etc.		

Compare direct speech and reported speech:

You met Anna. Here are some of the things she said in *direct* speech:

My parents **are** fine.
I'm going to learn to drive.

I **want** to buy a car.
John **has** a new job.
I **can't** come to the party on Friday.
I **don't** have much free time.
I'm going away for a few days.
I'll phone you when I **get** back.



ANNA

Later you tell somebody what Anna said.
You use *reported* speech:

- ☐ Anna said that her parents **were** fine.
- ☐ She said that she **was** going to learn to drive.
- ☐ She said that she **wanted** to buy a car.
- ☐ She said that John **had** a new job.
- ☐ She said that she **couldn't** come to the party on Friday.
- ☐ She said she **didn't** have much free time.
- ☐ She said that she **was** going away for a few days and **would** phone me when she **got** back.

C

The *past simple* (**did/saw/knew** etc.) can usually stay the same in reported speech, or you can change it to the *past perfect* (**had done / had seen / had known** etc.):

- ☐ direct Paul said 'I **woke** up feeling ill, so I **didn't go** to work.'
- ☐ reported Paul said (that) he **woke** up feeling ill, so he **didn't go** to work. or
Paul said (that) he **had woken** up feeling ill, so he **hadn't gone** to work.

Exercises

47.1 Yesterday you met a friend of yours, Steve. You hadn't seen him for a long time. Here are some of the things Steve said to you:

1 I'm living in London.


2 My father isn't very well.

3 Rachel and Mark are getting married next month.

4 My sister has had a baby.

5 I don't know what Joe is doing.

6 I saw Helen at a party in June and she seemed fine.



Steve

7 I haven't seen Amy recently.

8 I'm not enjoying my job very much.

9 You can come and stay at my place if you're ever in London.

10 My car was stolen a few days ago.

11 I want to go on holiday, but I can't afford it.

12 I'll tell Chris I saw you.

Later that day you tell another friend what Steve said. Use reported speech.

- 1 Steve said that he was living in London.
- 2 He said that
- 3 He
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12

47.2 Somebody says something to you which is not what you expected. Use your own ideas to complete your answers.

- 1 A: It's quite a long way from the hotel to the station.
B: Is it? The man on the reception desk said it was only five minutes' walk.
- 2 A: Sue is coming to the party tonight.
B: Is she? I saw her a few days ago and she said she
- 3 A: Sarah gets on fine with Paul.
B: Does she? Last week you said each other.
- 4 A: Joe knows lots of people.
B: That's not what he told me. He said anyone.
- 5 A: Jane will be here next week.
B: Oh, really? When I spoke to her, she said away.
- 6 A: I'm going out tonight.
B: Are you? I thought you said home.
- 7 A: John speaks French quite well.
B: Does he? He told me any other languages.
- 8 A: I haven't seen Ben recently.
B: That's strange. He told me last weekend.