

## REPORTED SPEECH

### 1.- WHAT IS REPORTED SPEECH?

In direct speech we repeat exactly what someone said:

*He said 'I don't like football'*

In reported speech, however, we tell what someone said without repeating his exact words.

*He said (that) he didn't like football.*

### 2.- TENSES IN REPORTED SPEECH

Tenses in reported speech are "more past" (because we're not talking at the same time as the speaker was).

#### DIRECT SPEECH

#### REPORTED SPEECH

Present simple

*'I like peaches.'*

Present progressive

*'Is it raining?'*

Past simple

*'I didn't recognize you.'*

Present perfect

*'You've annoyed the dog.'*

Past progressive

*'I was joking about the price.'*

Past perfect

*'I hadn't seen her before that day.'*

Shall/will

*'We'll be late.'*

Can, may

*'I can swim.'  
'It may rain.'*

Would, could, might, ought, should

*'You could be right.'  
'That should be interesting.'*

Must

*'I must go.'*

Past simple

*He said he liked peaches.*

Past progressive

*He asked if it was raining.*

Past perfect

*She explained that she hadn't recognized me.*

Past perfect

*I told her she'd annoyed the dog.*

Past progressive or past perfect progressive

*He said he was joking (or: had been joking) about the price.*

Past perfect

*'You said you hadn't seen her before that day.'*

Should/would

*'I was afraid we'd be late'*

Could, might

*She thought she could swim.  
They said it might rain.*

Would, could, might, ought, should

*I felt he could be right.  
She said it should be interesting.*

Must or Had to

*He said he must go. (or: ...or had to go)*

Note that we may have shall or should in direct speech, and would in reported speech (because of the difference of person).

*'I should be delighted to come.'*     *He said he would be delighted to come.*

### 3.- OTHER CHANGES IN REPORTED SPEECH

- this = that, the     *I found this watch on a train'*

- these = those, the     *He said that he had found that/the watch on a train.*

- Pronouns and possessive adjectives change from first or second person to third person, except when the speaker is reporting his own words.

*He said. I've forgotten the combination of my safe'*

*He said that he had forgotten the combination of his safe.*

but     *I said, 'I like my new house'*

*I said that I liked my new house.*

- Adverbs and adverbial phrases of time change as follows:

#### DIRECT SPEECH

*today*

*yesterday*

*the day before yesterday*

*tomorrow*

#### REPORTED SPEECH

*that day*

*the day before*

*two days before*

*the next day, the following day*

*the day after tomorrow*  
*next week/year etc.*  
*last month/year etc.*  
*a year etc. ago*

*in two days' time*  
*the following week/year etc.*  
*the previous month, year, etc.*  
*a year before/ the previous year*

- Here normally becomes there (however, when it isn't clear from the context what place is meant, it should be explained).

*We met at the bridge and he said, 'I'll be here again tomorrow'*

*We met at the bridge and he said that he would be there again the following day.*

but *She said, 'You can sit here, Tom'*

*She told Tom that he could sit beside her on the rug etc.*

#### 4. STATEMENTS

- With reported statements we normally use the conjunction that, which can be omitted.

*He said, 'I'm going home' = He said (that) he was going home.*

- We also normally use say and tell as reporting verbs. Remember that tell must be followed by the person addressed or a personal pronoun in object form.

*'I have forgotten my keys at home', he said.*

*He said (to me) that he had forgotten his keys at home.*

or *He told me that he had forgotten his keys at home.*

#### 5. QUESTIONS

- They don't have the same word-order (auxiliary verb before subject) as direct questions have. Do is not used. Questions marks are not used either.

*The nurse asked how I felt.*

*I wondered why my mother was driving so fast.*

*Mary asked if I needed another blanket.*

*He wanted to know if he would be in Edinburgh in time for the Festival.*

- Say can introduce a direct question, but not a reported question.

*She said, 'Do you want me to help you?'*

*She asked if I wanted her to help me.*

- When we have no interrogative words (in questions which should be answered yes or no) if or whether are used to introduce reported questions.

*The bus driver asked if/whether I wanted the town centre.*

Whether is more formal. It is also used when there's a choice.

*He asked me whether I wanted to stay or leave.*

#### 6. COMMANDS, REQUESTS, ADVICE, ETC.

They're all often reported by reporting verb + object pronoun + infinitive.

Commands: *'Be back before ten', my mother said.*

*My mother told (or ordered) me to be back before ten.*

Requests: *He said, 'Can you open the window, please?'*

*He asked me to open the window.*

Remember that if we ask for an object we don't need infinitives.

*'Can you lend me a pen?' he said.*

*He asked me for a pen.*

Offers: *'Shall I bring you some tea?'*

*He offered to bring me some tea.*

Invitations: 'Would you like to sit down?'  
My hostess invited me to sit down.

Advice: My friend said, 'if you travel abroad you should take traveller cheques with you'  
My friend advised me to take traveller cheques with me if I travelled abroad.

Warnings: 'Be careful of pickpockets', the policeman said to us.  
The policeman warned us to be careful of pickpockets.

Pleas: 'Please, please don't take any risks,' said his wife.  
His wife begged/implored him not to take any risks.

Encouragement: 'Go on, apply for the job,' said Jack.  
Jack urged/encouraged me to apply for the job.

Reminders: 'Don't forget to order the wine,' said Mrs Pitt  
Mrs Pitt reminded her husband to order the wine.

## 7. OTHER REPORTING VERBS

ACCEPT.- 'O.K. I'll do the job,' he said. = He accepted to do the job

ACCUSE.- 'You are a thief,' said the manager to him  
= The manager accused him of being a thief.

ADMIT.- 'Yes, I stole the money,' he said. = He admitted having stolen the money / that he had stolen...

AGREE.- 'You can use my flat while I'm away,' he said. = He agreed to let us use his flat while he was away.

APOLOGIZE.- 'Sorry, I'm late,' he said. = He apologized for being late.

CALL.- 'Ann, come.' = He called Ann.

'You are a liar, Henry,' he said. = He called Henry a liar.

COMPLAIN.- 'The price is too high,' he said. = He complained about the price. / He complained that the price was too high.

CONGRATULATE.- 'Congratulations on your success!' he said to me. = He congratulated me on my success.

DENY.- 'No, I didn't see her yesterday,' he said. = He denied having seen her the day before / that he had seen

EXCLAIM.- 'Ugh, there's a fly in my soup!' he said. = He exclaimed with disgust that there was a fly in his soup.

EXPLAIN.- 'In the USA, the speed limit is 55 m.p.h.' = He explained that in the USA the speed limit is 55 m.p.h.

GIVE.- 'Here's your money, John,' he said. = He gave John his money.

INTRODUCE.- 'Please, Peter, meet Tom.' = He introduced Peter to Tom.

POINT OUT.- 'There are a few mistakes in your essay,' the teacher said. = The teacher pointed out that there were a few mistakes in my essay.

PROMISE.- 'I will never smoke again,' he said. = He promised never to smoke again.

PROTEST.- 'I think the Government's work policy is unfair,' the union leader said. = The union leader protested about (against) the Government's work policy.

'It's long past bedtime, child,' said the father. 'Oh, please daddy,' said the child. = The child protested when his father told him to go to bed.

REFUSE.- 'I won't lend you any more money,' he said. = He refused to lend me any more money.

SUGGEST.- 'Why don't we take a holiday in the mountains?' he said. = He suggested taking a holiday in the mountains.

THANK.- 'Thank you for this splendid meal,' he said to his hostess. = He thanked his hostess for the meal.

THREATEN.- 'If you say another word I will punish you,' he said. He threatened his son to punish him if he said another word.

WISH.- 'I wish you good luck,' he said to me. = He wished me good luck

## REPORTED SPEECH: EXERCISES

### 1) Reported speech: statements

*Note appropriate to all reported speech exercises*  
*When the speaker says you, and the person spoken to is not identified, it is good practice for the student to assume that the remark was made to himself. you will then become I/me or we/us.*

Put the following statements into reported speech.

- 1.- 'I'm going out now, but I'll be in by nine,' he said. (Omit now.)
- 2.- 'I'm working in a restaurant, and don't much care for it,' she said.
- 3.- 'I can't live on my basic salary,' said Peter. 'I'll have to offer to do overtime.'
- 4.- 'My young brother wants to be a tax inspector,' said Mary. 'I can't think why. None of my family has ever been a tax inspector.'
- 5.- 'We're waiting for the school bus,' said the children. 'It's late again.'
- 6.- 'I've made a terrible mistake!' said Peter.
- 7.- 'You're always making terrible mistakes,' I said. 'You should be used to it by now.'
- 8.- 'We make £450 a week,' said one of the men, 'and send most of it home to our wives.'
- 9.- 'It's lonely being away from our families,' said another, 'but we earn three times as much in this factory as we would in our own country.'
- 10.- 'We've been here for two and a half years,' said the man who had spoken first, 'and we're going to stay another six months.'
- 11.- 'I've got a job on an oil-rig,' said Paul. 'That'll be very hard work,' I said. 'I know it'll be hard,' he replied, 'but I don't mind hard work, and it'll be a good experience.'
- 12.- 'The ice will soon be hard enough to skate on,' said Tom. 'I'll look for my skates when I get home,' Ann said.
- 13.- 'I'm living with my parents at present,' she said, 'but I hope to have a flat of my own soon.'
- 14.- 'I'm leaving tomorrow,' she said, 'by the 4.30 from Victoria.' 'We'll come and see you off,' we said.
- 15.- 'I've just bought a car,' said Peter, 'but it's not insured yet so I can't take you for a drive.'
- 16.- 'I'd like to speak to Susan,' said Mary, 'but I'm bathing the babies and they will drown if I leave them alone in the bath while I go to the phone.'
- 17.- 'Mary has just received a postcard from Ann, beginning, 'I'm coming up to London next week. I hope you and Jack will meet me for lunch one day.' (Imagine that Mary is reading this card to Jack. Begin: Ann says...)
- 18.- 'Nothing ever happens in the village,' she said. 'It's like a dead village. All the young people have drifted away to the towns.'
- 19.- 'I've missed my train,' said Bill. 'Now I'll be late for work and my boss will be furious.'
- 20.- 'We'll wait for you if you are late,' they said.
- 21.- 'They are supposed to be landing at London airport,' I said. 'but if the fog gets any thicker the plane may be diverted.'
- 22.- 'If you lend me the chainsaw,' said Mary, 'I'll bring it back the day after tomorrow.'
- 23.- 'I hate getting up on dark mornings,' grumbled Peter. 'It is horrible,' agreed his wife, 'but the mornings will be lighter soon and then it won't be quite so bad.'
- 24.- 'The sales are starting tomorrow,' said the typist. 'As soon as we finish work the thole typing pool is going to make a dash for the shops.'
- 25.- 'I wish I had something to eat,' said Peter. 'You've only had lunch,' said his sister. 'I don't know how you can be hungry again so soon.'

### 2.- Reported speech: SAY OR TELL?

Use the correct form of SAY and TELL in these sentences.

1. She ..... me she didn't agree.
2. He ..... 'Have we met before?'
3. I ..... them I wasn't happy with their work.
4. She ..... me a story about her parents.
5. He ..... 'Are you feeling OK?'
6. She smiled, and ..... to me, 'I'm very pleased to meet you.'
7. I didn't hear: what did she .....?
8. Could you ..... me the time, please?
9. They ..... me they were going to a meeting.
10. I ..... the policeman my address.
11. I ..... I wanted to buy a magazine.
12. He ..... he wasn't interested in politics.
13. Could you ..... me your name again, please?
14. Do you think he's ..... the truth?
15. Would you ..... them to come early tomorrow?
16. If he ..... that again there'll be trouble.
17. I ..... them it was dangerous to swim here.
18. Did you ..... anything to him about your problems at work?
19. .... me what happened.
20. I think he was ..... lies.

### 3) Reported speech: questions

Put the following questions into reported speech.

- 1.- 'Who has been using my typewriter?' said my mother.
- 2.- 'Do you want to see the cathedral?' said the guide.
- 3.- 'Do you mind working on the night shifts?' he asked.
- 4.- 'Would you like to come with us?' she said.
- 5.- 'Who did you give the money to?' asked Ann.
- 6.- 'How long does it take to get to Edinburgh by coach?' asked the tourist.
- 7.- 'How much do you think it will cost?' he said.
- 8.- 'What did you miss most when you were in prison?' Mary asked the ex-convict.
- 9.- Another passenger came in and said, 'Is this seat taken?'
- 10.- 'How do you get on with your mother-in-law?' said Paul.
- 11.- 'How did you get into the house?' They asked him.
- 12.- 'What were you doing with these skeleton keys?' said Mr Jones. 'Where you trying to get at the secret files?'
- 13.- 'Did you sleep well?' asked my hostess.
- 14.- 'Have you been here long?' the other students asked him.
- 15.- 'Can you tell me why Paul left the university without taking his degree?' Paul sister's asked.
- 16.- 'How many people know the combination of the safe?' said the detective.
- 17.- 'Are there any letters for me?' said Mary.
- 18.- 'How long have you been learning English?' the examiner said.
- 19.- 'Why aren't you taking the exams?' said Paul.
- 20.- 'Are these free-range eggs?' said the customer.
- 21.- 'Where are you going for your summer holidays?' I asked them.
- 22.- 'Will it be all right if I come in a little later tonight?' asked the au pair girl.
- 23.- 'Have you ever seen a flying saucer?' said the man.
- 24.- 'Where can I park my caravan?' she asked the policeman.
- 25.- 'Would you like a lift?' said Ann. 'Which way are you going?' I said.
- 26.- 'Who do you want to speak to?' said the telephonist.
- 27.- 'Does anyone want tickets for the boxing match?' said Charles.
- 28.- 'What are you going to do with your old car?' asked him.

- 29.- 'Do you grow your own vegetables?' I asked.  
 30.- 'What train are you going to get?' my friend inquired.  
 31.- 'Could you change a five-pound note? I'm afraid I haven't got anything smaller,' said the passenger to the conductor.

**4) Reported speech: commands, requests, invitations, advice.**

Put the following sentences into indirect speech, using tell / order / urge / ask / beg / advise / warn / remind + object + infinitive, or ask (+ object) + for, or, in some cases, ask + infinitive.

- 1.- 'Don't put sticky things in your pockets,' said his mother.
- 2.- 'Please, please don't do anything dangerous,' said his wife.
- 3.- 'Go on -apply for the job,' said my friend. 'It would just suit you.'
- 4.- 'I should say nothing about it if I were you,' said my brother.
- 5.- 'Would you please wait in the lounge till your flight number is called?' she said.
- 6.- 'Don't lend Harry any money,' I said to Ann. 'He never pays his debts.'
- 7.- 'Could you please ring back in half an hour?' said the secretary.
- 8.- 'Would you mind moving your case?' said the other passenger. 'It's blocking the door.'
- 9.- 'Remember to book a table,' said Ann.
- 10.- 'Get into the right lane,' said the driving instructor.
- 11.- 'Avoid Marble Arch,' said the policeman. 'There's going to be a big demonstration there.'
- 12.- 'Hold the ladder,' he said. 'It's rather unsteady.' 'Why don't you tie it at the top?' I said?' I said. 'It's much safer that way.'
- 13.- 'Read the questions twice,' said the teacher, 'and don't write in the margin.'
- 14.- 'You'd better not leave your money lying about,' said one of the students.
- 15.- 'Why don't you open a bank account?' said another. (Use advise.)
- 16.- 'Would you like to have lunch with me today?' said Tom. 'I'm afraid I couldn't; I can't leave the office,' said the girl.
- 17.- 'Don't take more than two of these at once,' said the doctor, handing a bottle of pills.
- 18.- 'Could I speak to Albert, please?' I said. 'He's still asleep,' said his mother. 'Then wake him,' I said. 'I have news for him.'
- 19.- 'I'd buy the big tin if I were you,' said the grocer.
- 20.- 'You're being exploited,' said the other au pair girls. 'You ought to leave your job.'
- 21.- 'Fasten your seat belts; there may be a little turbulence,' said the air hostess.
- 22.- 'Don't drive through fog with only a fog light on,' he said, 'or oncoming drivers may take you for a motorcycle.'
- 23.- 'Could I see your driving licence?' said the policeman.
- 24.- 'You'd better sweep up that broken glass,' I said.
- 25.- 'The bathroom's empty now,' she said. 'Will you put the light out when you've finished?'
- 26.- 'Remember to insure your luggage,' my father said.
- 27.- 'Please don't drink any more,' said his wife. 'Don't forget that we have to drive home.'
- 28.- 'Do go to a dentist, Tom, before your toothache gets any worse,' I said.
- 29.- 'Why don't you cut your hair?' he said. 'You'd find it much easier to get a job if you looked tidy.'
- 30.- 'Could I have some more pudding, please?' said the boy.

**5) Reported speech: mixed types.**

Put the following into indirect speech, avoiding as far as possible the verbs say, ask and tell and choosing instead from the following: *accept, accuse, admit, advise, agree,*

*apologize, assure, beg, call (=summon), call (+ noun/pronoun + noun), complain, congratulate, deny, exclaim, explain, give, hope, insist, introduce, invite, offer, point out, promise, protest, refuse, remark, remind, suggest, thank, threaten, warn, wish.*

- 1.- He said, 'don't walk on the ice; it isn't safe.'
- 2.- 'Miss Brown, this is Miss White. Miss White, Miss Brown,' he said.
- 3.- 'Here are the car keys. You'd better wait in the car,' he said to her.
- 4.- 'Please, please, don't tell anyone, she said.
- 5.- 'Would you like my torch?' I said holding it out.
- 6.- Tom: I'll pay. Ann: Oh, no, you mustn't! Tom: I insist on paying!
- 7.- 'Come in and look round. There's no obligation to buy,' said the shopkeeper.
- 8.- 'If you don't pay the ransom, we'll kill the boy,' said the kidnappers.
- 9.- 'I won't answer any questions,' said the arrested man.
- 10.- 'He expects a lot of work for very little money,' complained one of the typists. 'Yes, he does,' agreed the other.
- 11.- 'I wish it would rain,' she said.
- 12.- 'You pressed the wrong button,' said the mechanic. 'Don't do it again. You might have a nasty accident.'
- 13.- 'Your weight's gone up a lot!' I exclaimed. 'I'm afraid it has,' she said sadly.
- 14.- 'I hope you'll have a good journey,' he said. 'Don't forget to send a card when you arrive.'
- 15.- 'Hurrah! I've passed the first exam!' he exclaimed. 'Congratulations!' I said, 'and good luck with the second.'
- 16.- 'All right, I'll wait a week,' she said. (Omit all right)
- 17.- 'Many happy returns of your birthday!' we said.
- 18.- 'Your door is the shabbiest in the street,' said the neighbour. 'It is,' I said.
- 19.- 'Cigarette?' - 'Thanks,' I said.
- 20.- 'I'll sell the TV set if you keep quarrelling about the programme,' said the mother. 'No, don't do that! We won't quarrel any more,' said the children.
- 21.- 'I'll give you £500 to keep your mouth shut,' he said to me.
- 22.- 'I'll wait for you, I promise,' he said to me.
- 23.- 'I'm sorry I'm late,' she said. 'The bus broke down.'
- 24.- 'You've been leaking information to the Press!', said his colleagues. 'No, I haven't,' he said. 'Liar!' said Tom.
- 25.- 'I'll drop you from the team if you don't train harder,' said the captain.
- 26.- 'If the boys do anything clever, you call them your sons,' complained his wife. 'But if they do anything stupid, you call them mine.'
- 27.- 'Let's have a rest,' said Tom. 'Yes, let's,' said Ann.
- 28.- 'Ugh! There's a slug in my lettuce. Waiter!' he cried.