

## REPORTED SPEECH

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



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.

**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.
- 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.