

Grammar 2: reported speech

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About the language

Reported speech and reporting verbs

- If the reporting verb is in the past, the verb in reported speech usually 'goes back' one tense into the past.
- The two most common reporting verbs are **tell** and **say**.

*When we use **tell** we use an object.*

*When we use **say** we do not use an object.*

*You **said** (that) you would get tickets for the concert.*

*He **told us** (that) he hadn't seen her for several months.*

- Other common reporting verbs include: **admit, explain, suggest, deny, remind** and **warn**:

*She **admitted** (that) she had sent the letter.*

*He **explained** (that) he wouldn't be able to come.*

*She **suggested** having a surprise party for Sam.*

*We **denied** cheating in the test.*

*Sonia **reminded** me to set my alarm clock.*

*Her mother **warned** her not to walk through the wood.*

Reported questions

- In **reported wh-** questions, the word order is: question word + subject + verb.

*She asked me **why** Simone was crying.*

- In **reported Yes/No questions**, we use: **if/whether** + subject + verb.

*She asked me **if/whether** he still lived in Hollywood.*

Typical mistakes

He said ~~me~~ that he was going.

She suggested ~~me to change~~ ^{changing} it.

She asked me how ~~was~~ ^{I was} I feeling.

They asked us ~~did we go~~ ^{if we had gone} there.

1 Use the correct tense to complete these reported speech sentences.

0 'I love chocolate,' she said.

She said she **loved** chocolate.

1 'They are hoping to be here by noon,' she said.

She said there by noon.

2 'We played really well last week,' he said.

He said the week before.

3 'We were planning to buy a house together,' he said.

.....

4 'I've bought Dimitra a present', she told me.

.....

5 'I've been waiting for you for over an hour,' she said.

.....

6 'I'll finish the assignment by Monday,' she said.

.....

7 'I'm going to stay with some friends on Saturday night,' she said.

.....

8 'I can pick Angelou up at the airport,' he said.

.....

2 Use reporting verbs from the box to rewrite these sentences in reported speech.

admit deny suggest explain
remind warn

0 'Don't forget to buy some more batteries!'

He *reminded me to buy some more batteries.*

1 'OK! I did borrow your digital camera without asking.'

She

2 'We weren't anywhere near the house when it was burgled.'

The accused man

3 'I had to go to the dentist so I couldn't come to the meeting.'

He

4 'Don't walk home alone at night.'

The camp director the girls

5 'Why don't we have a picnic at the beach?'

Eva

3 Change these direct questions from an interview into reported questions.

0 'Could I ask you where you live?'

She asked me where I lived.

1 'Have you always lived there?'

.....

2 'I'd like to know what you are studying at the moment.'

.....

3 'Could you tell me what you did during the summer?'

.....

4 'Did you enjoy yourself?'

.....

5 'Would you mind telling me if you have got any special plans for the future?'

.....

6 'What are you going to do when you finish studying?'

.....

4 Use of English: key word transformations

Complete the second sentence so that has a similar meaning to the first sentence. Use the word in bold and other words.

0 'I did not speak to your girlfriend!' shouted the boy

deny

The boy *denied speaking* to my girlfriend.

1 'Do you think that 'Superman' is a better film than 'Spider Man'?

if

He asked me than 'Spider Man'.

2 'I can't come to your party tomorrow,' said Sarah.

couldn't

Sarah said that

3 'The telephone company still hasn't fixed our connection,' Jay complained to Ela.

told

Jay their connection.

4 'I stole the money,' said the man.

admit

The man the money.

5 'You'll get burnt if you don't use some sunscreen,' said Sophie.

warned

Sophie

6 'When will you write to your grandmother?' asked my father.

would

My father