

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# REPORTED SPEECH



*I am flying now.*

*Mr Owl said that he was flying then.*



## 1. Tenses

• When the reporting verb is in the past (e.g. he said, you told me), the tense in reported speech normally 'moves back'.

Verbs in the present change into the past.

| SPEAKERS WORDS                      | REPORTED SPEECH                                 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <i>'I'm <b>going</b> home.'</i>     | <i>He said he <b>was going</b> home.</i>        |
| <i>'I <b>want</b> to stop.'</i>     | <i>You told me you <b>wanted to</b> stop.</i>   |
| <i>'I <b>don't like</b> tea.'</i>   | <i>She said she <b>didn't like</b> tea.</i>     |
| <i>'Sally <b>has finished</b>.'</i> | <i>You said that Sally <b>had finished</b>.</i> |



Verbs already in the past, change into the past perfect or they do not change.

|                                  |                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>'I <b>spoke</b> to them.'</i> | <i>I said I <b>had spoken</b> to them. I said I <b>spoke</b> to them.</i>          |
| <i>'We <b>arrived</b> late.'</i> | <i>They said they <b>had arrived</b> late. They said they <b>arrived</b> late.</i> |

Verbs already in the past perfect, do not change.

|                                             |                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>'I <b>had seen</b> the film before.'</i> | <i>I told you I <b>had seen</b> the film before.</i> |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|



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## 2. Modal Verbs

- Note the past forms of these modal verbs: **can** → **could**; **will** → **would**; **shall** → **should**

| SPEAKERS WORDS               | REPORTED SPEECH                             |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 'I <b>can</b> swim.'         | He said that he <b>could</b> swim.          |
| 'I <b>will</b> be at home.'  | She said that she <b>would</b> be at home.  |
| 'We <b>may</b> go by train.' | They told me they <b>might</b> go by train. |

- The past modals **could**, **would**, **should** and **might** do not change in reported speech.

|                                   |                                            |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 'You <b>could</b> be right.'      | I said you <b>could</b> be right.          |
| 'You <b>should</b> see the film.' | They told me I <b>should</b> see the film. |

- **Must** either does not change or it take the past form (of have to) had to.

|                     |                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 'I <b>must</b> go.' | He said he <b>must</b> go.   |
|                     | He said he <b>had to</b> go. |

- We do not always change tenses in reported speech when we use a past reporting verb. If we report something that is still true now, we sometimes use the same tense as the speaker.

| SPEAKERS WORDS                         | REPORTED SPEECH                                   |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 'Rome <b>is</b> the capital of Italy.' | He said that Rome <b>is</b> the capital of Italy. |
| 'I <b>live</b> in Brighton.'           | She told me that she <b>lives</b> in Brighton..   |

But even when something is true, we often change the tense in reported speech.

- He said that Rome **was** the capital of Italy.

We always change the tense when there is a difference between what was said and what is true.

- She said that she **was** 18 years old, but in fact she's only 16.



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### 3. Pronouns, adjectives, adverbs etc.

- Pronouns (e.g. *I, me*) and possessive adjectives (e.g. *my, your*) often change in reported speech.

| SPEAKERS WORDS                                           | REPORTED SPEECH                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Tom said, 'I'm on holiday with <b>my</b> friend'.</i> | <i>Tom said (that) <b>he</b> was on holiday with <b>his</b> friend.</i> |

- People use words like *here, now, today* to talk about the place where they are speaking and the time they are speaking. If we report these words in a different place or time, they often change.

| SPEAKERS WORDS     | REPORTED SPEECH                          |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <i>here</i>        | <i>there</i>                             |
| <i>this</i>        | <i>that/the</i>                          |
| <i>now</i>         | <i>then</i>                              |
| <i>today</i>       | <i>that day</i>                          |
| <i>tonight</i>     | <i>that night</i>                        |
| <i>tomorrow</i>    | <i>the next day / the following day</i>  |
| <i>yesterday</i>   | <i>the day before / the previous day</i> |
| <i>next Monday</i> | <i>the following Monday</i>              |
| <i>last Monday</i> | <i>the previous Monday</i>               |

- The way these words change depends on the situation. If someone was speaking yesterday and they said 'I'll see you **tomorrow**.' , we could now say He said he would see me **today**.

|                                      |                                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <i>'I'm <b>here</b> on holiday.</i>  | <i>She said she was <b>there</b> on holiday.</i>    |
| <i>I'll see you <b>tomorrow</b>.</i> | <i>He said he would see me <b>the next day</b>.</i> |

### 4. That

- We often use *that* to join a reported speech clause to the rest of the sentence.

*'I said **that** I was feeling tired.'*  
*You told me **that** you would be careful.*

After *say* and *tell* (+ person), we often leave out *that*, especially in an informal style.

- *I **said** I was feeling tired.*
- *You **told** me you would be careful.*



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**Change the following sentences into reported speech.**

1. 'I can't swim very well,' I told her.

2. 'Mr. Jones is out,' the receptionist told me.

3. 'I don't want to go swimming,' Andrew said.

4. 'We're leaving on Friday,' we said.

5. 'Can you call me later?' I asked George.

6. "When are we watching a movie?" my best friend asked me.



**It is evening now and Sally is telling her mother about her day. Complete what Sally says using reported speech.**

This is what some people said to Sally today:

The manager of the bank where Sally works: 'You'll get a pay rise later in the year.'

An optician: 'There is nothing wrong with your eyes. You don't need to wear glasses.'

Sally's boyfriend, Peter: 'I'd like a big family. I want at least five children.'

Sally's father: 'I've done the shopping. I'll be home at about seven.'

Sally's driving instructor: 'You drove very well, You're making good progress.'

A man who works in a dry-cleaner's: 'Your skirt will be ready on Saturday.'



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I went to the dry-cleaner's at lunchtime. The man there said my skirt would be ready on Saturday.



And what about the optician? What did she say?



Oh, she told me <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ eyes and that I  
<sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ glasses.



Oh, that's good. And what about your driving lesson? How did that go?



Oh, fine. My instructor told me that I <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ and that I  
<sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ progress.



That's very good. And what about Peter? Did you see him today?



No, but he phoned me at work. He made me laugh. He said he  
<sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ and that he <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
children.



Five! Well, I hope you can afford them.



Oh, yes. That reminds me. I was speaking to the manager at work and she said that I  
<sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_.



Oh, that's good.



Yes. Oh, and before I forget. Dad phoned. He said he <sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
and that he <sup>9</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ seven.