

# Reported speech

- We use reported speech to report (i.e. to tell another person) what someone said.
- When the reporting verb (*said, told, etc.*) is in the past tense, the tenses in the sentence which is being reported usually change like this:  
present > past  
will > would  
past simple / present perfect > past perfect
- Using **that** after *said* and *told* is optional.

## direct statements

'I **like** travelling.'

'I'm leaving **tomorrow**.'

'I'll always love **you**.'

'I **passed** the exam!'

'I've forgotten **my** keys.'

## reported statements

She said (that) **she liked** travelling.

He told her (that) **he was** leaving **the next day**.

He said (that) **he would** always love **me**.

She told me (that) **she had passed** the exam.

He said (that) **he had** forgotten **his** keys.

4 33))

- Some modal verbs change, e.g. *can*>*could*, *may*>*might*, *must*>*had to*. Other modal verbs stay the same, e.g. *could*, *might*, *should*, etc.

'I **can't** come.'

'I **may** be late.'

'I **must** go.'

She said (that) **she couldn't** come.

He said (that) **he might** be late.

She said (that) **she had to** go.

- You usually have to change the pronouns, e.g. 'I like jazz.' Jane said that **she** liked jazz.
- If you report what someone said on a different day or in a different place, some other time and place words can change, e.g. *tomorrow*>*the next day*, *here*>*there*, *this*>*that*, etc.  
'I'll meet you **here tomorrow**.' He said he'd meet me **there the next day**.



## say and tell

Be careful – after *said* don't use a person or an object pronoun:

He said he was tired. NOT He said me...

After *told* you must use a person or pronoun:

Sarah told Cally that she would call her. NOT Sarah told that she...

He told me he was tired. NOT He told he was...



## Reported questions

- When you report a question the tenses change as in reported statements.
- When a question doesn't begin with a question word, add *if* (or *whether*).  
*'Do you want a drink?' He asked me if / whether I wanted a drink.*
- You also have to change the word order to subject + verb, and not use *do / did*.

| direct questions     | reported questions (4 34))          |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 'Are you married?'   | She asked him if he was married.    |
| 'Did she phone?'     | He asked me whether she had phoned. |
| 'What's your name?'  | I asked him what his name was.      |
| 'Where do you live?' | They asked me where I lived.        |

## Activities

**a** Complete the sentences using reported speech.

'I'm in love with another woman.'

*My boyfriend told me he was in love with another woman.*

- 1 'I'm selling all my books.' My brother said \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 'I've booked the flights.' Emma told me \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 'Your new dress doesn't suit you.' My mother told me \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 'I may not be able to go to the party.' Matt said \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 'I won't wear these shoes again.' Jenny said \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 'I didn't buy you a present.' My girlfriend told me \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7 'I must get a dress for the party.' Rachel said \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8 'I haven't been to the gym for a long time.' Kevin said \_\_\_\_\_.
- 9 'I found a bargain in the sales.' My sister told me \_\_\_\_\_.
- 10 'I can't find anywhere to park.' Luke told me \_\_\_\_\_.



**b** Complete the sentences using reported speech.

'Why did you dump your girlfriend?' My friend asked me why I had dumped my girlfriend.

- 1 'When are you leaving?' My parents asked me \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 'Have you ever been engaged?' She asked him \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 'Will you be home early?' Anna asked Liam \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 'Where do you usually buy your clothes?' My sister asked me \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 'Did you wear a suit to the job interview?' We asked him \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 'Do you ever go to the theatre?' I asked Lisa \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7 'What time will you arrive?' He asked us \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8 'How much money did you spend in the sales?' I asked my girlfriend \_\_\_\_\_.
- 9 'Can you help me?' Sally asked the policeman \_\_\_\_\_.
- 10 'What size are you?' The shop assistant asked me \_\_\_\_\_.