

Reported speech

Use

To report what someone else said

Example

My dad said that he'd **written** a song.

Form

Direct speech

present simple

'I **want** to build a new house,' said Jill.

Reported speech

past simple

Jill said she **wanted** to build a new house.

present continuous

'We **are making** a dress,' they said.

past continuous

They said they **were making** a dress.

present perfect continuous

'I **have been drawing** all day,' said Debbie.

past perfect continuous

Debbie said she **had been drawing** all day.

past simple

'Jim **made** a card for me yesterday,' Amy said.

past perfect simple

Amy said Jim **had made** a card for her the day before.

past continuous

'I **was writing** a poem,' said Tina.

past perfect continuous

Tina said she **had been writing** a poem.

will

'I **will** make you a scarf,' my grandma said.

would

My grandma said she **would** make me a scarf.

am/is/are going to

'They **are going to** make a new one,' said Joe.

was/were going to

Joe said they **were going to** make a new one.

can

'I **can** draw quite well,' Emma said.

could

Emma said she **could** draw quite well.

must / have to

'You **have to** visit the fashion show,' she said.

had to

She said we **had to** visit the fashion show.

may

'I **may** visit the White House next week,' said Polly.

might

Polly said she **might** visit the White House the following week.

Helpful hints

We often have to change other words apart from the verb form.

pronouns

- I → he/she
- you → I/me/they/them
- we → they
- us → them
- my → his/her
- your → my/their

time and place

- here → there
- now → then/at that moment
- tomorrow → the next day
- tonight → that night

- next week → the following week
- yesterday → the day before
- last week → the week before
- ago → before

Watch out!

- We only make tense changes when the reporting verb (say, etc) is in the past.
✓ Tony **says** he **is going** to study architecture.
✗ Tony **says** he **was going** to study architecture.
- We don't change the past perfect simple and the past perfect continuous.
✓ 'I **had seen** the picture before.' → He said **he had** seen the picture before.
- We also don't change would, should, could and might.
✓ 'I **might** take up painting.' → She said she **might** take up painting.
- We can use verbs like apologise, deny, promise, refuse and suggest in reported speech.
✓ Jan **apologised for** losing the picture. ✓ Charlotte **refused to** let me see her painting.
✓ He **denied** breaking the statue. ✓ My dad **suggested going** to an art gallery.
✓ Terence **promised to** help me decorate the house.

A Choose the correct answer.

- 1 'I'm a big fan of U2,' Derek said.
Derek said he a big fan of U2.
A was
B has been
C had been
- 2 'We're watching TV,' said the twins.
The twins said they TV.
A watched
B were watching
C had watched
- 3 'You've been annoying me all day!' my mum said.
My mum said I her all day.
A annoyed
B was annoying
C had been annoying
- 4 'The dog ate my homework!' said Ivan.
Ivan said the dog his homework.
A was eating
B had eaten
C has eaten
- 5 'At one o'clock, I was having lunch,' said Molly.
Molly said she lunch at one o'clock.
A had been having
B has had
C is having
- 6 'You'll get wet without an umbrella,' Dad said.
Dad said I wet without an umbrella.
A will be getting
B got
C would get
- 7 'He can juggle five balls!' said Angie.
Angie said he five balls.
A juggled
B would juggle
C could juggle
- 8 'You must give me your essays,' Mrs Vine said.
Mrs Vine said we give her our essays.
A were having to
B had to
C would have to

B Complete using the words and phrases in the boxes.

his • their • them • there

before • that night • the day before • the next day

- 1 'I'm seeing Simon tomorrow,' Mary said.
Mary said she was seeing Simon
- 2 'We moved into the area two years ago,' Bella said.
Bella said they had moved into the area two years
- 3 'Our teacher is giving us a test!' said Michelle.
Michelle said their teacher was giving a test.
- 4 'My dad gave me fifty pounds!' said Neil.
Neil said dad had given him fifty pounds.
- 5 'I scored a great goal yesterday,' Marina said.
Marina said she had scored a great goal
- 6 'We saw our cousin at the fair,' said Ben.
Ben said they had seen cousin at the fair.
- 7 'I left my wallet here,' Frank said.
Frank said he had left his wallet
- 8 'I'll sleep well tonight!' said Arnie.
Arnie said he would sleep well

C Underline the mistake in each second sentence and write the correct words.

- 1 'There's a mouse in the kitchen!' said Martha.
Martha said there had been a mouse in the kitchen.
- 2 'We've won every match this year,' Amy said.
Amy said they won every match that year.
- 3 'I broke my leg two weeks ago,' said Spencer.
Spencer said he had broken his leg two weeks ago.
- 4 'We'd heard the song before,' Rory said.
Rory said he had heard the song before.
- 5 'I've been working since four o'clock,' said Dad.
Dad said he was working since four o'clock.
- 6 'We're spending tomorrow by the swimming pool,' Belinda said.
Belinda said they have spent the next day by the swimming pool.

D Complete each second sentence using the word given, so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence. Write between two and five words.

- 1 'I'm going to bake a cake,' said Mum. **she**
Mum said to bake a cake.
- 2 'Richard has passed his driving test,' Andy said. **passed**
Andy said his driving test.
- 3 'We're staying in tonight to watch TV,' Jim said. **that**
Jim said they to watch TV.
- 4 'I'm thinking of going on a diet,' said George. **he**
George said of going on a diet.
- 5 'My sister lived in Russia for a year,' Carol said. **lived**
Carol said in Russia for a year.
- 6 'I went snowboarding last year,' Jill said. **year**
Jill said she before.
- 7 'I'll call you tomorrow,' Karl said to me. **next**
Karl said he day.
- 8 'We're flying home next week,' said Arthur. **the**
Arthur said they week.

E Rewrite the sentences in reported speech using the verb given.

- 1 'I'm sorry I told everyone your secret,' my sister said. **apologised**
.....
- 2 'I didn't give the money to John,' said Ali. **denied**
.....
- 3 'I'll love you forever!' Francis said to Elizabeth. **promised**
.....
- 4 'No, I won't open the door!' said Mandy. **refused**
.....
- 5 'Why don't we give Jenny a call?' Albert said. **suggested**
.....