

# Reported Speech – Complete Lesson

## 1. What Is Reported Speech?

Reported speech (also called indirect speech) is used when we want to repeat what someone said without using their exact words.

✓ We do not use quotation marks.

✓ We often change **pronouns**, **time** expressions, and **verb tense**.

✓ It is very common in journalism, academic writing, and formal communication.

Example:

Direct: “I am tired,” she said.

Reported: She said that she was tired.

## 2. Structure of Reported Speech

### A. Reporting Verb + Clause

The most common verbs:

said, told, explained, reported, announced, added, stated

Structure:

Subject + reporting verb + (that) + clause

Example:

Direct: "We need more data."

Reported: The researcher said that they needed more data.

("that" is optional.)

### **3. Changes When Reporting Speech**

When the reporting verb is in the past (said, told...), we shift the tense back one step.

This is called backshifting.

#### ***A. Tense Changes (Backshift)***

Direct Speech    Reported Speech

present simple → past simple

present continuous → past continuous

past simple → past perfect

present perfect → past perfect

future (will) → would

can → could

may → might

must → had to

## **Examples**

### **1. Present simple → Past simple**

Direct: "The weather is cold."

Reported: He said that the weather was cold.

### **2. Present continuous → Past continuous**

Direct: "I am studying."

Reported: She said that she was studying.

### **3. Past simple → Past perfect**

Direct: "We saw the accident."

Reported: They said that they had seen the accident.

### **4. Present perfect → Past perfect**

Direct: "I have finished my work."

Reported: He said that he had finished his work.

### **5. Will → Would**

Direct: "We will call you tomorrow."

Reported: They said that they would call me the following day.

## 4. Pronoun Changes

Pronouns must change to fit the perspective of the reporter.

Direct   Reported

I → he / she

we → they

my → his / her

our → their

you → I / we / they (depending on context)

Example:

Direct: "I lost my keys," she said.

Reported: She said that she had lost her keys.

## 5. Time and Place Changes

Direct   Reported

today → that day

yesterday → the previous day

tomorrow → the following day

now → then

here → there

this → that

these → those

Example:

Direct: "We will finish this tomorrow."

Reported: They said that they would finish that the following day.

## **6. Reporting Questions**

### **A. Yes/No Questions**

Use if / whether.

Direct: "Did you see the report?"

Reported: He asked if I had seen the report.

### **B. Wh- Questions**

Keep the question word but remove the question form.

Direct: "Where are they going?"

Reported: She asked where they were going.

## **7. Reporting Commands (Imperatives)**

Use: told + object + to + verb

Direct: "Wear a mask."

Reported: He told people to wear a mask.

Negative:

Direct: "Don't touch this."

Reported: She told him not to touch it.

## **8. Reporting Verbs (Useful for Journalists)**

said

told

reported

announced

explained

admitted

denied

warned

confirmed

claimed

added

stressed / emphasized