

Reported speech

Reported speech (or indirect speech) is used to report what someone has said without quoting them.

Changing direct speech to reported speech

If the reporting verb (say, tell, know, think, learn, mention, claim ...) is in the past tense (which it most commonly is), the tense of the reported speech changes:

simple present → simple past	"I walk the dog every day." → Sally said (that) she walked the dog every day.
present progressive → past progressive	"I am walking the dog." → Sally told me that she was walking the dog.
future → conditional	"I will walk the dog every day." → Sally mentioned that she would walk the dog every day.
simple past → past perfect	"I walked the dog last night." → Sally answered that she had walked the dog the night before.
past progressive → past perfect progressive or past progressive	"I was walking the dog." → Sally said she had been walking/was walking the dog.
simple present perfect → simple past perfect	"I have walked the dog today." → Sally said that she had walked the dog that day.
present perfect progressive → past perfect progressive	"I have been walking the dog." → Sally replied that she had been walking the dog.
past perfect → past perfect	"I had walked the dog." → Sally said that she had walked the dog.
Questions follow the same tense changes as statements. Note the word order in reported speech:	"Where did you park the car?" → The policeman asked the man where he had parked the car. "Is this your car?" → The policeman asked the man whether it was his car.
For requests use ask + object + infinitive	"Could you take me to the movies?" → Billy asked his brother to take him to the movies.
Imperatives become infinitives (with 'to') in reported speech:	"Hurry up!" → Jenny told Michael to hurry up. "Don't shout like that!" → Jenny told Michael not to shout that way.
'suggest + verb + -ing' or 'suggest that + pronoun + infinitive'.	"Let's go to the cinema." → Alex suggested going to the cinema. → Alex suggested that we go to the cinema.
Some adverbs of time and place also change in reported speech, for example:	now → then yesterday → the day before/the previous day here → there last year → the year before/the previous year today → that day tomorrow → the next day
If the reporting verb is in the present, present perfect or future tense, the tense stays the same.	"Watching TV is bad for your eyes!" → Mr Jones says that watching TV is bad for our eyes.
Statements involving truths and facts do not have to change.	My teacher said: "Isaac Newton discovered the principles of gravity." → My teacher said that Isaac Newton discovered the principles of gravity.