

There are two ways to report what someone says or thinks:

1. **Direct speech** shows a person's exact words. Quotation marks ("...") are a sign that the words are the EXACT words that a person used.

e.g :

Maria asked, "Where are you going?"
ahmed replied, "I'm going home."

2. **Reported speech** puts the speaker's words or ideas into a sentence without quotation marks. Noun clauses are usually used. (In reported speech, the reader does not assume that the words are the speaker's exact words; often, they are a paraphrase of the speaker's words.)

e.g

Maria asked ahmed where he was going.
ahmed said he was going home.

Note: Use of the word "*that*" is optional in reported speech. Both of the following sentences are correct:
The boy said *that* he was lost. The boy said he was lost.

Reported Statements

When do we use reported speech? Sometimes someone says a sentence, for example "I'm going to the cinema tonight". Later, maybe we want to tell someone else what the first person said. Here's how it works:

We use a reporting verb like 'say' or 'tell'. If this verb is in the present tense, it's easy. We just put 'she says' and then the sentence:

Direct speech: I **like** ice cream.

Reported speech: She says she **likes** ice cream.

We don't need to change the tense, though probably we do need to change the 'person' from 'I' to 'she', for example. We also may need to change words like 'my' and 'your'.

On the other hand, if the reporting verb is in the past tense, then usually we change the tenses in the reported speech:

Direct speech: I **like** ice cream.

Reported speech: She said she **liked** ice cream.

Tense

The tenses generally move backwards in this way (the tense on the left changes to the tense on the right):

present simple I'm a teacher.

past simple He said he was a teacher

present continuous I'm having lunch with my parents.

past continuous He said he was having lunch with his parents.

present perfect simple I've been to France three times.

past perfect simple He said he had been to France three times.

present perfect continuous I've been working very hard.

past perfect continuous He said he had been working very hard.

past simple I bought a new car.

past perfect He said he had bought a new car.

past continuous It was raining earlier.

past perfect continuous He said it had been raining earlier.

past perfect The play had started when I arrived.

past perfect NO CHANGE POSSIBLE

past perfect continuous I'd already been living in London for five years.

past perfect continuous NO CHANGE POSSIBLE

will "I'll see you later"

She said she would see me later.

would* "I would help, but..."

She said she would help but...

can "I can speak perfect English"

She said she could speak perfect English.

could* "I could swim when I was four"

She said she could swim when she was four.

shall "I shall come later"

She said she would come later.

should* "I should call my mother"

She said she should call her mother

might* "I might be late"

She said she might be late

must "I must study at the weekend"

She said she must study at the weekend OR She said she

had to study at the weekend

we don't need to change the present tense into the past if the information in direct speech is still true (but this is only for things which are general facts, and even then usually we like to change the tense):

Direct speech: The sky **is** blue.

Reported speech: She said that the sky **is/was** blue.

QUESTIONS IN REPORTED SPEECH**'YES / NO' QUESTION**

To change a yes/no question to a noun clause in reported speech, introduce the noun clause with *if* or *whether*. *Whether or not* may also be used.

E.g ;

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| “Did you turn off the coffee pot?” | I asked Amina <i>if</i> she had turned off the coffee pot. |
| “Is supper ready?” | ali wanted to know <i>whether</i> supper was ready. |
| “Will you be at the party?” | ahmed asked me <i>whether or not</i> I would be at the party. |
| “Should I tell her the news?” | amine wondered <i>whether</i> he should tell Maria the news. |
| | ali wanted to know <i>if</i> he should tell Maria the news. |
| | ali asked <i>whether or not</i> he should tell Maria the news. |
| “Have you ever been to Mexico?” | She asked me if I had ever been to Mexico. |
| “Are you living here?” | She asked me if I was living here. |

INFORMATION QUESTIONS

To change an information question to a noun clause in reported speech, *begin the noun clause with the question word*, and remember to use *sentence word order*.

e.g :

- “Where do they live?” Abdul wanted to know *where they live*.
- “What time is it?” Do you know *what time it is*?
- “Why did you say that?” ahmed asked me *why I had said that*.
- “Where will you stay?” Have you decided *where you will stay*?
- Where do you live? She asked me where I lived.**
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|-------------------------------------|---|
| “Where is the Post Office, please?” | She asked me where the Post Office was. |
| “What are you doing?” | She asked me what I was doing. |
| “Who was that fantastic man?” | She asked me who that fantastic man had been. |

Reported Requests

There's more! What if someone asks you to do something (in a polite way)? For example:

Close the window, please.

Could you close the window please?

Would you mind closing the window please?

All of these requests mean the same thing, so we don't need to report every word when we tell another person about it. We simply use 'ask me + to + infinitive':

Reported speech: She asked me to close the window.

Here are a few more examples:

“Please help me”. She asked me to help her.

“Please don't smoke”. She asked me not to smoke.

“Could you bring my book tonight?” She asked me to bring her book that night.

“Could you pass the milk, please?” She asked me to pass the milk.

“Would you mind coming early tomorrow?” She asked me to come early the next day.

To report a negative request, use 'not':

Please don't be late. She asked us not to be late.

Reported Orders : how about if someone doesn't ask so politely? We can call this an 'order'

in English, when someone tells you very directly to do something. For example: **Sit down!**

we make this into reported speech in the same way as a request. We just use 'tell' instead of 'ask':

Reported speech: **She told me to sit down.**

Direct Order Reported Order

“Go to bed!” He told the child to go to bed.

“Don't worry!” He told her not to worry.

“Be on time!” He told me to be on time.

“Don't smoke!” He told us not to smoke.