

11.1 Reported speech

GR11.1)))

- 1 'I arrived at 6.00 p.m.'
He told me **he'd arrived** at 6.00 p.m.
- 2 'Have you always lived in Edinburgh?'
He **asked** me if **I'd always lived** in Edinburgh.
- 3 'When did you learn to drive?'
She wanted to know when **I'd learnt** to drive.

We can report what someone says using the verbs *say* and *tell*. We use an indirect object, e.g. *me*, *them*, after *tell* and we do not use an indirect object after *say*.

He **said** he never watched TV. He **told me** he never watched TV.

- We can use *that* after the reporting verbs.
He said he was hungry. or *He said that he was hungry.*
- When we are reporting, we generally use the past tense of the reporting verb, e.g. *said/told*, and we usually change the verb by moving it back one tense into the past. For example:
present tense → past tense
past tense/present perfect → past perfect
will/can/must → *would/could/had to*
We've been shopping. → *He said they'd been shopping.*
I'll be there at 6.30 p.m. → *He told us he'd be there at 6.30 p.m.*
- However, if what the person says is still true, relevant or important, we often do not change the tense.
I don't like action films. → *She said she doesn't like action films.*
- We can also use the reporting verb in the present. When the reporting verb is present, we don't change the tense.
I'm going to be a bit late. → *Sarah says that she's going to be a bit late.*
- We sometimes need to change time references
(e.g. *yesterday* → *the day before/the previous day*, *tomorrow* → *the next day/the following day*, *next week* → *the week after*).
I spoke to Alex yesterday. → *He said he'd spoken to Alex the previous day.*

Reported questions

We can report questions using verbs such as *ask*, *want to know* and *wonder*. We generally use an indirect object after *ask*.

They **wanted to know** how old I was.

Paula **was wondering** why you left the party so early.

Note that the word order is different from direct questions; the subject comes before the verb and we do not use the auxiliary verb *do*.

- The rules described above for changing or not changing the tense of the reporting verb and the words being reported are generally the same for reporting questions.

I asked Oliver why he hadn't replied to my email.

Eva asked me what time the film starts.

Sam wants to know what's for dinner.

- We use *if* or *whether* to report yes/no questions.
Michelle asked us if she could come with us to the cinema.

- 1 Report the comments and questions. Add an indirect object where necessary and use an appropriate tense for the words you report.

- 1 'I'm from Washington.'
She said _____
- 2 'There are too many commercial breaks on TV.'
He says _____
- 3 'I'm going to Moscow next week.'
Harold told _____
- 4 'My plane has been delayed.'
Jasmina says _____
- 5 'I'll call you later.'
Vera says _____
- 6 'I'm going to be late for work tomorrow.'
Karen said _____
- 7 'What time does the film start?'
Charles wants _____
- 8 'Will you help me later?'
Milos asked _____
- 9 'How long have you worked here?'
She wanted _____
- 10 'What are you going to say to him?'
Renata is asking _____

- 2 Report these questions and answers from an interview with actor James Jones. Add an indirect object and change the tense of the words you report.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Where are you from?
She asked _____
I'm originally from Texas.
He said _____ |
| 2 | Have you always wanted to be an actor?
She asked _____
Yes. For as long as I can remember.
He said _____ |
| 3 | Is acting your only job?
She wanted _____
I've been a full-time actor for about five years now.
He told _____ |
| 4 | What kind of roles do you prefer?
She wondered _____
I'm happy to play all different kinds of roles.
He said _____ |
| 5 | Where do you see yourself in five years' time?
She wondered _____
In five years' time, I'll be a household name.
He said _____ |

11.2 Reporting verbs

GR11.2)))

- 'I ate the last biscuit.'
He **admitted that** he'd eaten the last biscuit.
- 'The course is full.'
She **informed us that** the course was full.
- 'Don't touch it – it's hot!'
He **warned me not to touch it**.
- 'I won't tidy my room.'
She **refused to tidy** her room.
- 'I didn't lose the key.'
He **denied losing** the key.
- I'm sorry I broke the glass.'
She **apologized for breaking** the glass.
- 'The accident was Molly's fault.'
He **blamed Molly for causing** the accident.

We can use reporting verbs to report the nature or attitude of what was said, e.g. *He promised ...*, *She offered ...*, *He suggested ...*. Reporting verbs are followed by a number of different structures.

- verb + (that) + clause: *add, admit, argue, claim, complain, deny, explain, mention, predict, promise, suggest, tell, think, warn*
Helen promised (that) she wouldn't be late.
- verb + person + (that) + clause: *assure, convince, inform, promise, reassure, remind, warn*
She reassured me that everything was OK.

When we use a reporting verb followed by a (that) clause, we usually change the verb by moving it back one tense.
The room is too small. → *He complained that the room **was** too small.*

I think they'll win 2-0. → *He predicted they'd win 2-0.*

- verb + to + infinitive: *agree, ask, demand, offer, promise, refuse, threaten*
*Jana **agreed to come** with us.*
- verb + person + to + infinitive: *advise, convince, encourage, invite, order, persuade, remind, tell, warn*
*Xavier **advised me** to talk to my boss.*
- verb + (preposition) + -ing: *admit, apologize for, deny, insist on, suggest*
*He **didn't apologize for being** late.*
- verb + person + preposition + -ing: *accuse ... of, blame ... for, congratulate ... on/for, praise ... for, thank ... for, warn ... against*
*Did **you** thank Claire **for helping** you?*
- Note that some verbs can be followed by more than one structure.
*He **admitted that** he had broken the window. OR*
*He **admitted breaking** the window.*
*Erica **promised she would be on time.** OR*
*Erica **promised to be on time.***

- 1 Complete the news extracts using the past tense of the reporting verbs in the box.

persuade reassure remind suggest

- The prime minister's advisors _____ holding the election in May.
- Gareth's parents _____ him to hand himself in to the police.
- The hospital _____ Miss Williams that she would make a full recovery.
- The judge _____ the witness that lying in court was an offence.

admit insist predict warn

- The court was told that Harry Palmer _____ on paying for everything.
- Susan Evans _____ stealing the coat and was fined £500.
- Ashley _____ that Rotherham United would win 2-0.
- The minister _____ Mr Jones against saying too much.

- 2 Report the comments, beginning with the words given.

- 'Don't forget to watch the news this evening.'
She reminded _____
- 'I'll pay you back tomorrow. I promise.'
He promised _____
- 'I'm really sorry I missed the meeting.'
Maya apologized _____
- 'I'm not going to do it!'
Magda refused _____
- 'I can have a look at your computer if you like.'
Diana has offered _____
- 'Your tickets will arrive in time. Don't worry.'
She assured _____
- 'You should do it. You won't regret it.'
Dina tried to convince _____
- 'I didn't tell anyone about it.'
Yvette completely denies _____

- 3 Report these famous quotations. Change the tense of the verbs.

- 'I never turn on the news over the weekend.'
US entertainer Rush Limbaugh claimed _____
- 'There's no such thing as good news in America.'
Pop singer Morrissey once suggested _____
- 'I never think about the future.'
Albert Einstein once admitted _____