Reported speech

Reported speech, also known as indirect speech, is a way of reporting what someone else has said without quoting their exact words. In reported speech, the speaker conveys the information, thoughts, or statements of another person in their own words.

Reporting Verbs:

- Reported speech often begins with a reporting verb. Common reporting verbs include **"said," "told," "explained," "asked," "suggested,"** and **"informed."**

Changes in Pronouns:

- In reported speech, pronouns may change to reflect the perspective of the reporting speaker. The pronoun changes are as follows:
- **Direct Speech:** He said, "**I** am coming."
- **Reported Speech:** He said that **he** was coming.

Backshift of Time:

- In reported speech, when reporting past events or statements, it's common to shift the reported statement's time frame one step back in time.
- **Direct Speech:** "I **will** call you tomorrow," he said yesterday.
- **Reported Speech:** He said that he **would** call me the next day.

- **Present simple ➡ Past simple**
- **Present continuous ➡ Past continuous**
- **Present perfect ➡ Past perfect**
- **Past simple ➡ Past perfect**
- **Will ➡ Would**
- **Can ➡ Could**



However, certain reporting verbs like "**say**" and "**tell**" often don't change the tense of the reported statement if the information is still true or relevant.

- **Direct Speech:** He said, "**I** live in New York."
- **Reported Speech:** He said that **he** lives in New York. (When the information remains true.)

Reporting Statements:

Statements in reported speech typically use the word "**that**" to introduce the reported speech clause.

- **Example:** She said that she was tired.

Reporting Questions:

When reporting questions, the word order often changes, and question words like **"who," "what," "where," "when," "why,"** and **"how"** may be used.

- **Direct Speech:** She asked, "Where is John? **" Reported Speech:** She asked **where** John was.

When reporting questions, the reporting verb can be followed by an introductory phrase like "**asked if**" or "**wondered whether**."

- **Example:** She asked **if** I was coming.

Reporting Commands and Requests:

Commands and requests in reported speech are often expressed using verbs like "**ask**," "**tell**," or "**order**," followed by an infinitive verb (with or without "to").

- **Example:** He ordered me to sit down.

Reported speech exercise 1:

Choose the correct answer

1. He said, "I have been to Mexico." In reported speech:
a) He said that he had been to Mexico.
b) He said that he has been to Mexico.
c) He said that he have been to Mexico.

2. She said, "I'll come to the party if I can." In reported speech:
a) She said that she will come to the party if she can.
b) She said that she would come to the party if she can.
c) She said that she would come to the party if she could.

3. They asked, "Did you see the news?" In reported speech:
a) They asked if you saw the news.
b) They asked if you have seen the news.
c) They asked if you had seen the news.

4. She said, "I am going to the store." In reported speech, it becomes:
a) She said that she is going to the store.
b) She said that she went to the store.
c) She said that she was going to the store.

5. "Can you help me with this?" he asked. In reported speech, it becomes:
a) He asked if I can help him with that.
b) He asked if I could help him with that.
c) He asked if I can help him with this.

6. "I won't be late," he promised. In reported speech:
a) He promised that he won't be late.
b) He promised that he wouldn't be late.
c) He promised that he isn't late.

7. "Where is the nearest gas station?" she asked. In reported speech, it becomes:
a) She asked where is the nearest gas station.
b) She asked where was the nearest gas station.
c) She asked where the nearest gas station was.

8. "Why are you so sad?" she asked. In reported speech, it becomes:
a) She asked why was I so sad.
b) She asked why I am so sad.
c) She asked why am I so sad.

9. What is the correct form for the negative question of "He would swim in the ocean"?
a) Did he swim in the ocean?
b) He would not swim in the ocean?
c) Would he not swim in the ocean?

10. "I should study more," he admitted. In reported speech, it becomes:
a) He admitted that he should study more.
b) He admitted that he should have studied more.
c) He admitted that he will study more.

Reported speech exercise 2:

Complete the sentences/questions with the correct form of the reports speech.

1. She said, "I am reading a book." Reported Speech: She said that _____.

2. "I will call you later," he promised. Reported Speech: He promised that _____.

3. "Why are you late?" she asked. Reported Speech: She asked why _____.

4. "I had dinner at 7 PM," she mentioned. Reported Speech: She mentioned that _____.

5. "I'm not feeling well today," she mentioned. Reported Speech: She mentioned that _____.

6. "I don't like broccoli," he admitted. Reported Speech: He admitted that he _____ broccoli.

7."Why didn't you call me?" she wondered. Reported Speech: She wondered why _____ her.

8. "I'm meeting Julia for lunch," she said. Reported Speech: She said that _____.

9. "Let's go for a walk in the park," she suggested _____.

10. "I can swim," she boasted. Reported Speech: She boasted that she _____ swim.

Reported speech: answer key

Grammar practice · B1 Intermediate

Where two or more answers are given, any of them is correct.

Exercise 1

1. a) He said that he had been to Mexico.
2. c) She said that she would come to the party if she could.
3. c) They asked if you had seen the news.
4. c) She said that she was going to the store.
5. b) He asked if I could help him with that.
6. b) He promised that he wouldn't be late.
7. c) She asked where the nearest gas station was.
8. a) She asked why I was so sad.
9. c) Would he not swim in the ocean?
10. a) He admitted that he should study more.

Exercise 2

1. she was reading a book
2. he would call you later / he would call me later
3. you were late / I was late
4. she had had dinner at 7 PM / she had dinner at 7 PM
5. she was not feeling well today / she was not feeling well that day
6. did not like
7. you had not called / I had not called
8. she was meeting Julia for lunch
9. that we went for a walk in the park / we went for a walk in the park / that we go for a walk in the park / we go for a walk in the park / that we should go for a walk in the park / we should go for a walk in the park / going for a walk in the park
10. could

Corrections to the printed pages

Exercise 1, item 8: option a) should read: She asked why I was so sad.