

Reported Speech

1. Reporting Verbs

1.1 Statements	
1.2 Questions	
1.3 Orders	
1.4 Requests	
1.5 Advice	
1.6 Suggestion	
1.7 Promise	

2. Changes in Tenses

When the reporting verb is in the past simple we use a different tense in reported speech than we used in direct speech. This is known as the 'backshift of tenses'.

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
Present simple <i>Fiona to her friend: "I buy a newspaper every day."</i>	
Present progressive <i>Fiona: "I'm having a bath."</i>	
Present Perfect Simple <i>Fiona: "I've just written a poem."</i>	
Present Perfect Progressive <i>Fiona: "I've been reading quite a lot."</i>	
Past Simple <i>Fiona: "My brother went to the races."</i>	
Past Progressive <i>Fiona: "I was thinking of going by bus."</i>	
Past Perfect <i>Fiona: "Sarah had forgotten her purse."</i>	
will <i>Fiona: "I promise I will not let you down."</i>	
can <i>Fiona: "I can't always understand New Yorkers."</i>	
may <i>Fiona: "May I go out?"</i>	
would, could, might, should, ought to <i>Fiona: "Why shouldn't I just apply for the job?"</i>	

3. Changes in Pronouns

Changes in pronouns depend on the point of view of the person who is reporting.

Example: *Fiona: "Can **I** borrow **your** book, Patrick?"*
*Patrick: "Fiona asked **me** if **she** could borrow **my** book."*
*Siobhan: "Fiona asked Patrick if **she** could borrow **his** book."*

3. Changes in Phrases of Place

Changes in phrases of place depend on the context.

Example: *Patrick (in Dublin): "I've just arrived **here**."*
*Fiona (in Kilkenny): Patrick told me that he had just arrived **there**.*
*Fiona (in Kilkenny): Patrick told me that he had just arrived **in Dublin**.*

4. Changes in Phrases of Time

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
now	
today	
this week	
yesterday	
three days ago	
last week	
tomorrow	
next month	

Example: *Fiona: "I'll be back tomorrow."*
Fiona remarked she would be back the next day.

Exercise: Put the following sentences into reported speech using an appropriate reporting verb in the past simple. For each sentence use a different reporting verb!

1. Christine: "I'm staying in Bristol now."

2. Sarah to me: "My car was stolen yesterday."

3. Mel: "Don't jump into the river."

4. Fiona: "Rachel and Mark are getting married next month."

5. Tom: "You can come and stay at my place if you're ever in London."

6. The reporter to the musician: "When will the new album be released?"

7. Jenny to her: "Clear the table!"

8. Martin: "My sister has had a baby."

9. My mother: "I think it's going to get warmer."

10. Sylvia: "I have been reading a lot today."

11. Jerry: "Let's go by train."

12. My father to me: "If I were you, I would take a rucksack."

13. Robert: "Will I ever be a famous poet?"

14. "I was reading a book when the phone rang."

15. Our teacher to Sam: "Could you please turn on the lights?"

Reported Speech

1. Reporting Verbs

1.1 Statements to say (to sb) that ...
 to tell sb that ...

to add, to mention, to report, to explain, to answer, to reply, to continue, to exclaim, to remark, to notice, to realise, to think, to believe, to admit, to agree, to complain, etc.

1.2 Questions to ask ... if / whether ...
 want to know ... why, how many, etc. ...
 to wonder
 to inquire

1.3 Orders to tell sb (not) to do sth
 to order sb (not) to do sth
 want sb (not) to do sth

1.4 Requests to ask sb (not) to do sth
 would like sb to do sth
 to request that (sb should do sth)

1.5 Advice to advise sb (not) to do sth
 to warn sb not to do sth
 to recommend that (sb should do sth)

1.6 Suggestion to suggest that (*or* + -ing)
 to propose that (*or* + -ing)

1.7 Promise to promise that (sb would do sth)

2. Changes in Tenses

When the reporting verb is in the past simple we use a different tense in reported speech than we used in direct speech. This is known as the 'backshift of tenses'.

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
Present simple <i>Fiona to her friend: "I buy a newspaper every day."</i>	Past Simple <i>Fiona told her friend that she bought a newspaper every day.</i>
Present progressive <i>Fiona: "I'm having a bath."</i>	Past Progressive <i>Fiona said that she was having a bath.</i>
Present Perfect Simple <i>Fiona: "I've just written a poem."</i>	Past Perfect Simple <i>Fiona explained that she had just written a poem.</i>
Present Perfect Progressive <i>Fiona: "I've been reading quite a lot."</i>	Past Perfect Progressive <i>Fiona added that she had been reading quite a lot.</i>
Past Simple <i>Fiona: "My brother went to the races."</i>	Past Perfect Simple <i>Fiona mentioned that her brother had gone to the races.</i>
Past Progressive <i>Fiona: "I was thinking of going by bus."</i>	Past Perfect Progressive <i>Fiona continued she had been thinking of going by bus.</i>
Past Perfect Simple/Progressive <i>Fiona: "Sarah had forgotten her purse."</i>	Past Perfect Simple/Progressive <i>Fiona complained that Sarah had forgotten her purse.</i>
will <i>Fiona: "I promise I will not let you down."</i>	would <i>Fiona promised that she would not let her down."</i>
can <i>Fiona: "I can't always understand New Yorkers."</i>	could <i>Fiona answered she couldn't always understand New Yorkers."</i>
may <i>Fiona: "May I go out?"</i>	might <i>Fiona asked if she might go out.</i>
would, could, might, should, ought to <i>Fiona: "Why shouldn't I just apply for the job?"</i>	would, could, might, should, ought to <i>Fiona wondered why she shouldn't just apply for the job.</i>

3. Changes in Pronouns

Changes in pronouns depend on the point of view of the person who is reporting.

Example: *Fiona: "Can **I** borrow **your** book, Patrick?"*
*Patrick: "Fiona asked **me** if **she** could borrow **my** book."*
*Siobhan: "Fiona asked Patrick if **she** could borrow **his** book."*

3. Changes in Phrases of Place

Changes in phrases of place depend on the context.

Example: *Patrick (in Dublin): "I've just arrived **here**."*
*Fiona (in Kilkenny): Patrick told me that he had just arrived **there**.*
*Fiona (in Kilkenny): Patrick told me that he had just arrived **in Dublin**.*

4. Changes in Phrases of Time

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
now	then, at that time
today	that day (yesterday, last Monday, etc.)
this week	that week
yesterday	the day before (last Friday, etc.)
three days ago	three days before/earlier
last week	the week before (the previous week)
tomorrow	the next/following day
next month	a month later (in June, etc.)

Example: *Fiona: "I'll be back tomorrow."*
Fiona remarked she would be back the next day.

Exercise: Put the following sentences into reported speech using an appropriate reporting verb in the past simple. For each sentence use a different reporting verb!

1. Christine: "I'm staying in Bristol now."
Christine said that she was staying in Bristol then.
2. Sarah to me: "My car was stolen yesterday."
Sarah told me that her car had been stolen a day before.
3. Mel: "Don't jump into the river."
Mel warned me not to jump into the river.
4. Fiona: "Rachel and Mark are getting married next month."
Fiona explained that Rachel and Marc were getting married the following month.
5. Tom: "You can come and stay at my place if you're ever in London."
Tom added I could come and stay at his place if I ever was in London.
6. The reporter to the musician: "When will the new album be released?"
The reporter asked the musician when the new album would be released.
7. Jenny to her: "Clear the table!"
Jenny ordered her to clear the table. or Jenny wanted her not to clear the table.
8. Martin: "My sister has had a baby."
Martin mentioned that his sister had had a baby.
9. My mother: "I think it's going to get warmer."
My mother thought it was going to get warmer.
10. Sylvia: "I have been reading a lot today."
She answered that she had been reading a lot that day.
11. Jerry: "Let's go by train."
Jerry suggested taking the train. or Jerry suggested that we should take the train.
12. My father to me: "If I were you, I would take a rucksack."
My father advised me to take a rucksack.
13. Robert: "Will I ever be a famous poet?"
Robert was wondering if he would ever be a famous poet.
14. "I was reading a book when the phone rang."
(S)he admitted that (s)he had been reading a book when the phone had rung.
15. Our teacher to Sam: "Could you please turn on the lights?"
Our teacher asked Sam to turn on the lights.