

Reported Speech (2)

A

It is not always necessary to change the verb when you use reported speech. If you report something and it is still true, you do not need to change the verb:

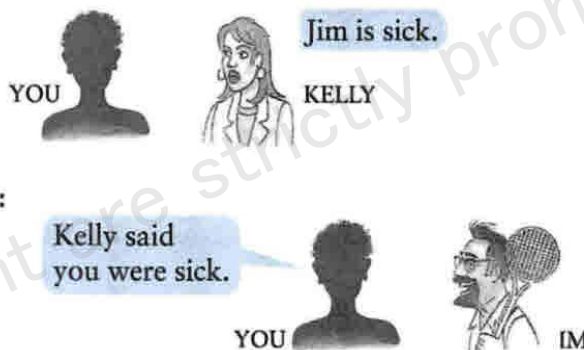
- *direct:* Tom said, "New York is more exciting than London."
reported: Tom said that New York is more exciting than London.
(New York is still more exciting. The situation hasn't changed.)
- *direct:* Ann said, "I want to go to New York next year."
reported: Ann said that she wants to go to New York next year.
(Ann still wants to go to New York next year.)

Note that it is also correct to change the verb into the past:

- Tom said that New York was more exciting than London.
- Ann said that she wanted to go to New York next year.

But you must use a past form when there is a difference between what was said and what is really true. Study this example situation:

You met Kelly a few days ago.
She said, "Jim is sick." (*direct speech*)



Later that day you see Jim. He is looking fine and carrying a tennis racquet. You say:
"I didn't expect to see you, Jim.
Kelly said you were sick."
(*not* "Kelly said you are sick," because obviously he is not sick)

B

Say and tell

Use **tell** when you say who you are talking to:

- Kelly told me that you were sick. (*not* Kelly said me) **TELL SOMEBODY**
- What did you tell the police? (*not* say the police)

Otherwise use **say**:

- Kelly said that you were sick. (*not* Kelly told that . . .) **SAY SOMEBODY**
- What did you say?

But you can say something to somebody:

- Ann said good-bye to me and left. (*not* Ann said me good-bye)
- What did you say to the police?

C

Tell/ask somebody to do something

We also use the *infinitive* (to do / to stay, etc.) in reported speech, especially with **tell** and **ask** (for orders and requests):

- *direct:* "Stay in bed for a few days," the doctor said to me.
reported: The doctor told me to stay in bed for a few days.
- *direct:* "Don't shout," I said to Jim.
reported: I told Jim not to shout.
- *direct:* "Please don't tell anybody what happened," Ann said to me.
reported: Ann asked me not to tell anybody what (had) happened.

Exercises

45.1 Here are some things that Ann said to you:



ANN

I've never been to South America.

I don't have any brothers or sisters.

I can't drive.

Rosa is a friend of mine.

I don't like fish.

Dave is lazy.

I'm working tomorrow night.

Rosa has a very well-paid job.



YOU

But later Ann says something different to you. What do you say?

1. Dave works very hard.
2. Let's have fish for dinner.
3. I'm going to buy a car.
4. Rosa is always short of money.
5. My sister lives in Tokyo.
6. I think Buenos Aires is a great place.
7. Let's go out for dinner tomorrow night.
8. I've never spoken to Rosa.

But you said he was lazy.

45.2 Complete the sentences with say or tell in the correct form. Use only one word each time.

1. Ann *said* _____ good-bye to me and left.
2. _____ us about your vacation. Did you have a good time?
3. Don't just stand there! _____ something!
4. I wonder where Sue is. She _____ she would be here at 8:00.
5. Jack _____ me that he was fed up with his job.
6. The doctor _____ that I should rest for at least a week.
7. Don't _____ anybody what I _____. It's a secret just between us.
8. "Did she _____ you what happened?" "No, she didn't _____ anything to me."
9. Jason couldn't help me. He _____ me to ask Kate.

45.3 The following sentences are direct speech:

Don't wait for me if I'm late.

Will you marry me?

Hurry up!

Can you open your bag, please?

Mind your own business.

Please slow down!

Don't worry, Sue.

Could you give me a hand, Tom?

Now choose one of these to complete each sentence below. Use reported speech (see Section C).

1. Bill was taking a long time to get ready, so I *told him to hurry up* _____.
2. Sarah was driving too fast, so I asked _____.
3. Sue was very nervous about the situation. I told _____.
4. I couldn't move the piano alone, so I _____.
5. The customs officer looked at me suspiciously and _____.
6. I didn't want to delay Ann, so I _____.
7. John was in love with Maria, so he _____.
8. He started asking me personal questions, so _____.