

Reported speech

- Direct speech: I like ice cream.
- Reported speech: She **said** (that) she **liked** ice cream.

Tense	Direct Speech	Reported Speech
present simple	I like ice cream	She said (that) she liked ice cream.
present continuous	I am living in London	She said (that) she was living in London.
past simple	I bought a car	She said (that) she had bought a car OR She said (that) she bought a car.
past continuous	I was walking along the street	She said (that) she had been walking along the street.
present perfect	I haven't seen Julie	She said (that) she hadn't seen Julie.
past perfect*	I had taken English lessons before	She said (that) she had taken English lessons before.
will	I'll see you later	She said (that) she would see me later.
would*	I would help, but...	She said (that) she would help but...
can	I can speak perfect English	She said (that) she could speak perfect English.
could*	I could swim when I was four	She said (that) she could swim when she was four.
shall	I shall come later	She said (that) she would come later.
should*	I should call my mother	She said (that) she should call her mother
might*	I might be late	She said (that) she might be late
must	I must study at the weekend	She said (that) she must study at the weekend OR She said she had to study at the weekend

* doesn't change.

Occasionally, 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.
- The direct question is the present simple of 'be'. We make the question form of the present simple of be by inverting (changing the position of) the subject and verb. So, we need to change them back before putting the verb into the past simple.
- Here are some more examples:

Direct Question	Reported Question
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

Direct Request	Reported Request
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':

- Direct speech: Please don't be late.
- Reported speech: She asked us **not** to be late.

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.

Time expressions in reported speech. Here's a table of some possible conversions:

now	then / at that time
today	yesterday / that day / Tuesday / the 27th of June
yesterday	the day before yesterday / the day before / Wednesday / the 5th of December
last night	the night before, Thursday night
last week	the week before / the previous week
tomorrow	today / the next day / the following day / Friday