

# Reported speech

# Reported speech

You met Anna. Here are some of the things she said in *direct* speech:

My parents are fine.  
I'm going to learn to drive.  
  
I want to buy a car.  
John **has** a new job.  
I **can't** come to the party on Friday.  
I **don't** have much free time.  
I'm going away for a few days.  
I'll phone you when I **get** back.



ANNA

Later you tell somebody what Anna said. You use *reported* speech:

- Anna said that her parents **were** fine.
- She said that she **was** going to learn to drive.
- She said that she **wanted** to buy a car.
- She said that John **had** a new job.
- She said that she **couldn't** come to the party on Friday.
- She said she **didn't** have much free time.
- She said that she **was** going away for a few days and **would** phone me when she **got** back.

# Reported speech 1

▶ Past simple

▶ 'I **wasn't** there.'

▶ Past continuous

▶ 'I **was working**.'

▶ Present perfect

▶ 'I've **been** ill.'

▶ Past perfect

▶ 'I **had drunk** the pill before.'

Past perfect

He said (that) he **hadn't been** there.

Past perfect continuous

He said (that) he **had been working**.

Past perfect

She said (that) she **'d been** ill.

Past perfect

He said (that) he **had taken** the pill before.

# Reported speech 2

► **PAST SIMPLE** can usually stay the same:

Joe said: “I woke up feeling ill, so I didn’t go to work.”

Joe said that he woke up feeling ill, so he didn’t go to work.

OR

Joe said that he had woken up feeling ill, so he hadn’t gone to work.

# Reported speech 3

- ▶ You don't need to change the verb tense if the **situation is still the same**:

Paul said: "My new job is boring."

Paul said that his new job is boring. (i.e. it is still boring)

You **can** change the verb to the past:

Paul said that his new job was boring.

If **the situation has changed or finished**, you **MUST** change the verb.

Paul has left his job. He said that it was boring.

# Reported speech 4

- ▶ We also use **the infinitive** in reported speech, especially with **TELL** and **ASK** (for orders and requests).

“Drink plenty of water,” the doctor said to me.  
The doctor **told** me **to drink** plenty of water.

“Don’t smoke,” he said to me.  
He **told** me **not to smoke**.

“Can you help me, please,” she said to me.  
She **asked** me **to help** her.

# Reported speech 5

## ► Reporting WH-Questions

“What **do** you **mean**?” he asked me.

He asked me what I **meant**.

“Where **did** you **go**?” she asked.

She asked me where I **had been**.

## ► Reporting Yes/No Questions

“**Do** you **know** that doctor?” he asked me.

He asked me if I **knew** that doctor.