

86 Reported statements



1 Verb changes in reported statements

We use reported statements when we tell someone what another person has said.

We usually use a past tense verb to report them:

I'm getting the 9.30 train. → *She said that she was getting the 9.30 train.*

After the past tense *said*, we usually change the tense of the person's words.

	THE PERSON'S WORDS		THE REPORTED STATEMENT
present simple	'I'm really hungry.' 'I have a gun.'	past simple	She said that she was really hungry. He said that he had a gun.
present continuous	'The team's playing badly.'	past continuous	He said that the team was playing badly.
can will must	'I can do that.' 'I will use the gun.' 'You must be quiet!'	could would must/had to	She said that she could do that. He said that he would use the gun. She said that we must/had to be quiet.

Some verbs do not change in reported statements: *could*, *should*, *ought to*, *would*, *might*.

'I might go shopping later.' → *She said she might go shopping later.*

2 Reporting the past simple and present perfect

After the past simple and present perfect, we often use *had* + the *-ed* (past participle) form of the verb, e.g. *had/hadn't finished*. (This is called the past perfect tense.)

	THE PERSON'S WORDS	THE REPORTED STATEMENT
past simple	'It snowed a lot in the winter.'	They said that it had snowed a lot in the winter.
present perfect	'Anna hasn't arrived yet.'	He said that Anna hadn't arrived yet.

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3 Pronoun changes in reported statements

	CHANGES TO	EXAMPLES
pronouns and possessives	<i>I</i> → <i>he/she</i>	'I'm cold.' → Dave said that he was cold.
	<i>me</i> → <i>him/her</i>	'They need me.' → She said that they needed her.
	<i>my</i> → <i>his/her</i>	'That's my book.' → He said that it was his book.
	<i>ours</i> → <i>theirs</i>	'Those seats are ours.' → Alice said that those seats were theirs.

Also: *we* → *they*, *us* → *them*, *our* → *their*, *you* → *I/we*, *you* → *me/us*, *your* → *my/our*, *yours* → *mine/ours*