

# 68 Reported statements

Our members voted earlier today. The result will be available later this afternoon. I can't say any more than that.

The union leader said that **their** members **had voted** earlier and that the result **would be** available later in the afternoon, but he added that **he couldn't** say any more.

## 1 Reporting speech

When we repeat another person's words, we can use **direct speech** or **reported speech**.

- For direct speech, we use the exact words and we put quotation marks ("") or inverted commas (‘’) around them:

*'I'm really hungry because I haven't eaten since breakfast,' said Annabel.*

- When we report speech with a **reporting verb** (e.g. *say*) in the present, we use the same tenses, but we have to change the pronouns and verb forms when necessary:

*Annabel says (that) she's really hungry because she hasn't eaten since breakfast.*

- When we report another person's words some time after he/she said them, we usually use a past tense verb to introduce them, and we change the tense of the verbs as well:

*Annabel said (that) she was really hungry because she hadn't eaten since breakfast.*

- We can use *that* after *said* but we often leave it out:

*Jake said he would meet us here.*

## 2 Tense changes in reported speech

ORIGINAL WORDS	REPORTED STATEMENT
Present simple: 'We <b>work</b> for the town council.'	Past simple: → They said they <b>worked</b> for the town council.
Present continuous: 'I'm <b>doing</b> the washing.'	Past continuous: → She said she <b>was doing</b> the washing.
Past simple: 'We <b>decided</b> to leave earlier today.'	Past perfect: → He said they <b>had decided</b> to leave earlier that day.
Past continuous: 'I <b>wasn't telling</b> the truth.'	Past perfect continuous: → She admitted she <b>hadn't been telling</b> the truth.
Present perfect simple: 'My guests <b>haven't arrived</b> yet.'	Past perfect simple: → She said her guests <b>hadn't arrived</b> yet.
Present perfect continuous: 'We've <b>been waiting</b> for ages!'	Past perfect continuous: → They complained (that) they <b>had been waiting</b> for ages.
<i>be going to</i> : 'They're <b>going to</b> stay at home tonight.'	<i>was/were going to</i> : → They said they <b>were going to</b> stay at home that night.
Most modal verbs (e.g. <i>can, will, must</i> ): 'I <b>can't</b> say any more.' 'The result <b>will</b> be available later.' 'You <b>must</b> stop writing!'	<i>could, would, had to</i> : → He added that he <b>couldn't</b> say any more. → He said that the result <b>would</b> be available later. → She said we <b>had to/must</b> stop writing.

Some verb forms don't change.

- Past perfect: *'I **hadn't met** your sister before.'* → He said (that) he **hadn't met** my sister before.
- Modal verbs *could, would, should* and *mustn't*:  
*'We **could** go to France for the day.'* → Len suggested (that) we **could** go to France for the day.  
*'You **mustn't** talk during the exam.'* → He insisted (that) we **mustn't** talk during the exam.