

3 Other changes in reported speech

We usually change pronouns and time and place words in reported speech:

PRONOUNS AND POSSESSIVES		WORDS FOR TIME AND PLACE	
direct	reported	direct	reported
I	he/she	today	that day
me	him/her	tonight	that night
my	his/her	tomorrow	the next day the following day
mine	his/hers	next (week, month, etc.)	the next/the following (week, month, etc.)
you	ll/we	ago	before
your	my/our	yesterday	the day before/ the previous day
yours	mine/ours	last (week, month, etc.)	the last/the previous (week, month, etc.)
we	they	now	then
us	them	here	there
our	their	this (place)	that (place)
ours	theirs		

Paul said, 'I arrived **here** an hour **ago**.' → Paul said **he** had arrived **there** an hour **before**.

Angelique and Etienne said, 'We're starting **our** course at the college **next month**.'

→ They said **they** were starting **their** course at the college **the following month**.

FORMALITY CHECK We do not usually repeat *yes* and *no* in reported speech, except in informal speech for emphasis:

'Yes, we decided earlier today.' → He said that they had decided earlier that day.

→ (informal) Anyway, he said that yes, they had decided earlier that day.

4 Reasons for not changing the tense

There are times when we can choose not to change the tense of verbs in reported speech.

- When the situation or feelings/opinions in the original speech are still true:

*My three sisters **have** bright red hair.* → He told me his three sisters **have** bright red hair.

*I really **like** your friend.* → She said she really **likes** you.

Compare:

*We're **leaving** tomorrow at 6.30.*

→ They said they're **leaving** tomorrow at 6.30. (reported on the same day as the original)

→ They said they **were leaving** the next day at 6.30. (reported some days after the original)

- When the verb follows the linking words *after* or *because*:

*I locked the door **after** I finished cleaning.*

→ She told him she'd **locked** the door **after** she **finished** cleaning.

OR She told him she'd **locked** the door **after** she'd **finished** cleaning.

*I'm annoyed **because** I was **talking** and you **interrupted** me.*

→ She said she was annoyed **because** she **was talking** and I **interrupted** her.

OR She said she was annoyed **because** she **had been talking** and I **had interrupted** her.