

Reported speech

7 Match reported speech 1–7 with the quotations a–h. One reported version is used twice.

Telling a friend about the conversation later:

She said (that) ...

- 1 ... she did that.
- 2 ... she would do that.
- 3 ... she had done that.
- 4 ... she was doing that.
- 5 ... she might do that.
- 6 ... she could do that.
- 7 ... she must do that.

The actual words she spoke:

- a) 'I'm doing that.'
- b) 'I'll do that.'
- c) 'I've done that.'
- d) 'I did that.'
- e) 'I do that.'
- f) 'I can do that.'
- g) 'I may do that.'
- h) 'I must do that.'

8 Put a tick (✓) if the sentence is possible, and a cross (X) if it is impossible. Think about if you are reporting something which is still true.

- 1 He said he would be here this afternoon. I need to speak to him.
- 2 He said he will be here this afternoon. I need to speak to him.
- 3 He said he would be here this afternoon. But his secretary has just called to say that he can't make it.
- 4 He said he will be here this afternoon. But his secretary has just called to say that he can't make it.

9 Read the actual words spoken then underline the correct words in bold in the reported version.

Actual words spoken on Monday:

'We'll give you our answer tomorrow.'

Reporting to a colleague on Tuesday:

She said that **we'd** / **they'd** give **you** / **me** **our** / **their** answer **tomorrow** / **today**.

When you report what someone said earlier, the original verb tense moves back in time:

- present simple → past simple, etc. (see Exercise 7 above)
- will → would

Both the past simple and present perfect change to the past perfect. There is no change for *must*, *should*, *might*, *could*, *would*.

You don't have to change the verb tense if the statement is still true.

Sometimes a pronoun or time expression changes as well.

Reporting verbs: say/tell/ask

10 Underline the correct form in bold.

- 1 She **said** / **told** that she would do that.
- 2 She **said me** / **told me** that she would do that.
- 3 She **said to me** / **told to me** that she would do that.
- 4 She asked me **that** / **what** I would do.
- 5 She asked me **that** / **if** I would do that.
- 6 She asked me what **I was doing** / **was I doing**.
- 7 She asked me when **I would arrive** / **would I arrive**.

You *say* something.

You *tell* somebody.

You *say* something to somebody.

To report a question you use *ask* + a question word (*what*, *when*, etc.) or *if*.

The word order of a reported question is like a normal statement, not like a question.

Other reporting verbs

There are many other verbs to report what people say. Study the table.

- Verbs like *say*, followed by 'something':
admit, *announce*, *claim*, *explain*, *imply*, *reply*, *state*.
NOT *She explained us the situation*.
- Verbs like *tell*, followed by 'somebody':
assure, *inform*, *persuade*, *reassure*, *remind*.
NOT *She informed that the situation was under control*.
(Correct: *informed me that*)
- A few verbs can be followed by 'something' or 'somebody': *guarantee*, *promise*.
She guaranteed (us) that the goods would be here.

11 Report the phrases in bold using the verbs in brackets. Include the word *me* where possible.

- 1 'It's a really good deal – you won't find this price anywhere on the market.'
(persuade)
He *persuaded me that it was a really good deal* _____.
- 2 'We're stopping all production until we discover the cause of the pollution in the river.'
(announce)
She _____.
- 3 'Don't worry, we have fitted new filters to make sure that the system is clean and safe.'
(reassure)
He _____.
- 4 'Do you want to know what we can do about this situation? We can do absolutely nothing.'
(reply)
She _____.