**5.1** **Reported speech**

**1 Tense changes**

• When we report somebody’s words we usually change the tense of any verbs.

'lts hot,' he said. He said that it was hot.

The normal pattern of tense changes in reported speech is:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| direct speech —> | reported speech |
| present simple | past simple |
| present continuous | past continuous |
| present perfect | past perfect |
| present perfect continuous | past perfect continuous |
| past simple |  |
| past perfect |
| past continuous | past perfect continuous |
| *(past perfect* | *past perfect)* |
|  |  |
| *will* | *would* |
| *may/might* | *might* |
| *must* | *must/had to* |
| *can* | *could* |

* We don’t normally change the tense when:

1. the reporting verb is present or present perfect.

'I like fast cars.'

She says she likes fast cars.

1. We are reporting a *past perfect* verb, *would, could, should* or *had better.*

'You should get some sleep.'

He said that I should get some sleep.

* We often omit the word *that* from the beginning of the reported speech clause:

He said (that) it was hot.

* There are often changes in words which refer to the people, time or place. These are dictated more by logic than by rules.

‘I’m coming here tomorrow,' she said.

She says she's coming here tomorrow. (reported on the same day, in the same place)

She says she's going there tomorrow. (reported on the same day, in a different place)

She said she was going there the next day. (reported later, in a different place)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| However, these time expressions frequently change in the following way: | |
| **direct speech—>** | **reported speech** |
| today | that day |
| tonight | that night |
| tomorrow | the next / following day |
| next week | the next / following week |
| … ago | … before |
| last week / month | the previous week / month |
| last week / month | the week / month before |

**2 *say* and *tell***

* The object of the verb *say* is always what was said. It is often a clause.

'It's late.' said Tom.

She said she would like to go home.

* If we want to mention the person who is addressed, we must use the preposition *to.*

‘I’m going now,' she said to her friend.

They said to me that they were tired.

* The object of the verb *tell* is usually the person who is addressed. We do not use the preposition *to.*

Have you told your parents?

They told me the shop was closed.

* We also use *tell +* noun in set phrases like *tell a lie, tell the truth, tell a story,* etc.

1. **Rewrite the reported speech as direct speech.**
2. Tony said that he had visited China the previous summer.
3. Tom told me that he’d like to study maths at university.
4. Harriet explained that she didn’t want to go swimming because she hadn’t been feeling very well.
5. Joe says he isn’t coming to the theatre with us this evening.
6. Martha complained that she had been waiting for two hours.
7. Trances says she’ll bring her new boyfriend to the party.
8. Martin told me he hadn’t lost a single match before his defeat last Saturday.
9. **Complete the sentences with the correct form *of say or tell.***
10. John … that he was hungry.
11. Did I … you that Jenny had had a baby boy?
12. Please … hello to George when you see him.
13. ‘Can you pass the salt,’ … Henry.
14. Chris … us all about his trip to Italy.
15. I don’t think Barnaby is … me the truth.

**5.2** **Reported questions**

* When we report questions, we use affirmative word order and verb forms after the

question word.

'What do you do for a living?' she asked him.

She asked him what he did for a living.

* To report a *yes/no* question (one that has no question word) we use *whether* or *if.*

'Is it snowing?' he asked.

He asked if it was snowing.

'Do you like tea with lemon?' she asked me.

She asked me whether I liked tea with lemon.

**1 Report the questions. Begin with *Jill asked me.***

1. ‘Where’s David going?’
2. ‘Would you like a cup of tea?’
3. ‘What have you been doing?’
4. ‘Could I borrow your car?’
5. ‘Why were you smiling?’
6. ‘Will you be eating at home this evening?’
7. ‘Do you like going to the beach in summer?’
8. ‘Why haven’t you done the washing up?

**5.3** **Reporting verbs**

1. **Reporting verbs**

We can use other verbs instead of say and tell when we report  
statements, e.g. *explain, admit, add, promise, warn, complain,  
boast, agree, confess, predict, deny, reveal, confirm, claim,  
argue, observe, answer, reply, swear.*

'My coffee is cold.'

He complained that his coffee was cold.

‘It’ll rain tomorrow for sure.'

He predicted that it would rain the next day.

1. **Other reporting structures**

We can use other structures when we report offers, promises,  
requests, commands, suggestions, etc.

* **verb + infinitive with *to***

*agree, offer, promise, refuse, threaten*

To make the infinitive negative we add *not* before *to.*

He agreed not to tell anyone else.

* **verb + object + infinitive with *to***

*tell, advise, ask, order, forbid, instruct, invite, encourage,  
remind, warn, persuade, beg, command, request, dare, urge*My mum reminded me to take my passport.

* **verb + *-ing* form**

*admit, deny, recommended, suggest, report, mention, propose*

These verbs can also be used with a *that* clause.

He admitted stealing the purse / that he'd stolen the purse.

* **verb + preposition + *-ing* form***apologise for, boast of, confess to, insist on*

The driver apologised for arriving late at the destination.

* **verb + object + preposition + *-ing* form**

*accuse sb of, warn sb against, congratulate sb on*

The police warned us against going into the par: at night.

* **verb + *that + should-clause***

*demand, insist, suggest, propose, recommend, request, advise*

I suggested that we should begin the meeting early.

In very formal English we also occasionally use the subjunctive with these verbs.

He insisted that she **leave.**

The minister proposed that all illegal immigrants **be** sent back to their country of origin.

**1 Report the sentences using the reporting verb in brackets.**

1. ‘Please don’t leave me!’ Simon said to Sue. (beg)

Simon begged Sue ...

1. ‘I’ll do the washing up,’ said Alex. (offer)
2. ‘I saw the car go through a red light,’ said the witness. (report)
3. ‘I’m sorry I was rude,’ said Susannah. (apologise)
4. ‘You borrowed my jacket without asking!’ Brenda said to Zoe. (accuse)
5. ‘Could you all please leave quietly?’ said the teacher to us. (request)
6. ‘I really think you should apply for the job,’ said Tom to Pat. (urge)
7. ‘We’ll plant bombs in all major cities,’ said the terrorists. (threaten)
8. ‘You shouldn’t walk home alone late at night,’ said Fred to Denise. (warn)
9. The doctor says it would be better if Sam eats less. (recommend + subjunctive)
10. ‘I think smoking should be banned in the restaurant,’ said the manager, (propose + subjunctive)