

Unit 47

Reported speech (1)

a Study this situation:



You want to tell someone else what Tom said. There are two ways of doing this:

You can repeat Tom's words (*direct* speech):
Tom said 'I'm feeling ill'.

Or you can use *reported* speech:
Tom said (that) he was feeling ill.

Compare the two sentences:

direct

Tom said 'I am feeling ill'.

↓ ↓

you use these to show
it is direct speech

b When we use reported speech, we are usually talking about the past. So verbs usually change to the past in reported speech. For example:

am/is → **was** are → **were** have/has → **had** will → **would** can → **could**

do/want/know etc. → **did/wanted/knew** etc.

Study these examples. You met Tom. Here are some things he said to you:

My parents are very well.
Ann has bought a new car.
I'm going to give up my job.
I can't come to the party on Friday.
I'm going away for a few days.
I'll phone you when I get back.
I want to go on holiday but I don't know where to go.



Now you tell someone else Tom said (in reported speech):

- Tom said (that) his parents **were** very well.
- Tom said (that) he **was** going to give up his job.
- Tom said (that) Ann **had** bought a new car.
- Tom said (that) he **couldn't** come to the party on Friday.
- Tom said (that) he **wanted** to go on holiday but he **didn't know** where to go.
- Tom said (that) he **was** going away for a few days and **would** phone me when he **got** back.

c The past simple (I **did**) can usually stay the same in reported speech, or you can change it to the past perfect (I **had done**): did → **did** or **had done**

direct

Tom said 'I **woke** up feeling ill and so I **stayed** in bed'.

reported

Tom said (that) he **woke** (or **had woken**) up feeling ill and so he **stayed** (or **had stayed**) in bed.

For reported speech also **Units 48** and **50b**.

Ann has bought a new car.
I'm going to give up my job.
I can't come to the party.

