

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'.

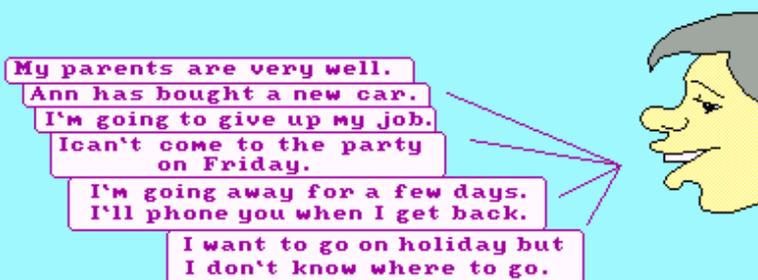
you use these to show it is direct speech

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:



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.

