Reported speech

Introduction



She said (that) she lived in London.

Definition

When we tell someone what another person said earlier, we don't usually repeat the direct speech that we heard.

She said, "I live in London."

She said (that) she lived in London.

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Construction

In reported speech, we use one tense back in time from the tense in the direct speech.

Direct speech	Reported [indirect] speech
Present simple	Past simple
I prefer coffee.	She said she preferred coffee.
Present continuous	Past continuous
I'm reading a great book.	He told me he was reading a great book.
Past simple	Past perfect simple
I went to Japan.	She said she'd been to Japan.
Past continuous	Past perfect continuous
We were watching TV.	She said they'd been watching TV.

Present perfect simple	Past perfect simple
I've finished the report.	He told me he'd finished the report.
Present perfect continuous	Past perfect continuous
I've been writing a report.	He said he'd been writing a report.
Past perfect simple	Past perfect simple (no change)
I'd always wanted to go to Italy.	She said she'd always wanted to go to Italy.
Past perfect continuous	Past perfect continuous (no change)
I'd been discussing it with my boss.	He said he'd been discussing it with his boss.
Future simple	Would + bare infinitive
I'll email you.	He told me he'd email me.
Future continuous	Would be + present participle
We'll be visiting the new plant.	She said they'd be visiting the new plant.
Going to	Was going to + bare infinitive
I'm going to buy a new car.	He said he was going to buy a new car.
Present continuous for future	Past continuous
I'm having lunch with friends.	She said she was having lunch with friends.
Future perfect simple	Would have + past participle
I'll have finished it by 4 o'clock.	She said she'd have finished it by 4 o'clock.
Future perfect continuous	Would have been + present participle
By May, I'll have been working here for two years.	He said that by May, he'd have been working here for two years.

Exception

1) It isn't necessary to change the tense if something is still true or relevant.