

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. ✅

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