

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