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 |
| l 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 |
| l 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. |
| | |



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| 14:21 | |
|---|---|
| Present perfect simple | Past perfect simple |
| l'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) |
| l'd always wanted to go to Italy. | She said she' <mark>d</mark> always <mark>wanted</mark> to go to Italy. |
| Past perfect continuous | Past perfect continuous (no change) |
| I'd been discussing it with my boss. | He said he' <mark>d been discussing</mark> it with his boss. |
| Future simple | Would + bare infinitive |
| l'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' <mark>d be visiting</mark> 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' <mark>d have been working</mark> here for two years. |

Exception

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