

Reported Speech / Indirect Speech

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Why do we use it?

To “report” someone’s words.

To present a situation that happened previously in our own words.



Basic Information

Parts of each sentence

John **says**: "I want to eat a burger."

- says: reporting verb in **present simple**
- "I want to eat a burger": direct speech

John **said**: "I want to eat a burger."

- says: reporting verb in **past simple**
- "I want to eat a burger": direct speech

You know that tenses change.

When?

Reporting verb in
present simple
"says"

Reporting verb in
past simple
"said"

Reporting Verb in Present Tenses

Just a few changes:

John says: "I want to eat a burger"

—> John says **that he wants** to eat a burger.

The teacher is saying: "My students are always talking too loudly!"

—> The teacher is saying **that his/her** students are always talking too loudly.

Reporting Verb in Past Tenses

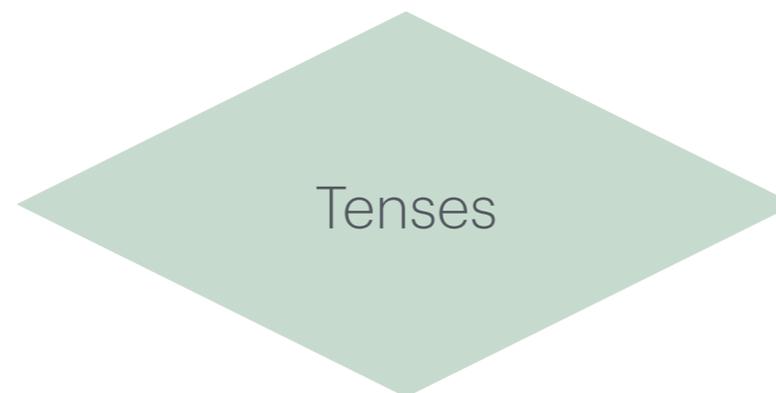
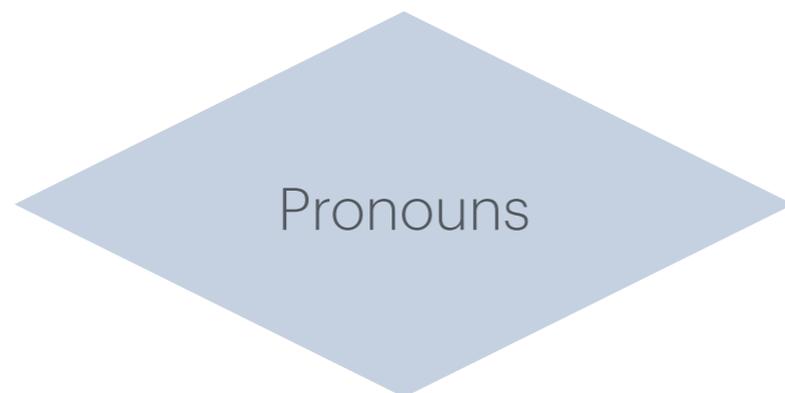
Lots of things change.

John **said**: “I want to eat a burger”

—> John said **that he wanted** to eat a burger.

The teacher **told** the parents: “The students **didn’t study** for the exam!”

—> The teacher told the parents **that** the students **hadn’t studied** for the exam.



What you **should** change (I):

- All the present tenses become the equivalent past tense, except Past Perfect Simple or Continuous.

Present Simple / Cont. —> Past Simple / Cont.

Present Perfect Simple / Cont. —> Past Perfect Simple / Cont.

Future (will) —> would

Past Simple / Cont. —> Past Perfect Simple / Cont.

Modals (can, may, must) —> could / might / had to

Imperative (Do!) —> to do / not to do

First Conditional —> Second Conditional

What you shouldn't change:

- Past Perfect Tenses
- Could / should / would / might / ought to / must (for deductions)
- Second and third conditionals
- Facts and states*
- When “unreal past” is used with:
 - **It's time** someone **did** something.
 - I **would rather** someone **did** something.
 - Someone does something **as if** they **were** X.
 - Someone does something **as though** they **were** X.
 - I **wish** someone **were** Y.

Examples I

- Matt said that Veronica had worked in the field of medicine for fifteen years.
- Marie said that it had snowed heavily.
- Jeff told us that we were going to be late.
- My boss told me to take my time.
- Mum asked us not to waste our time.
- Milly told me that if I took her advice, I would be fine.
- Renata told me that she might send her CV to the shipping company.
- Karen told Paula that she is staying with her grandparents at the moment.

What you **should** change (II):

- The following **time expressions** need to be changed because when we report something that happened in the past, the **POV** (point of view) is different. For example, when someone tells someone else “Come here” and I have to report this, I need to mention that A had to go there etc.
- Today / Tonight → that day / that night
- Yesterday → the day before / the previous day
- Tomorrow → the following day / the next day / the day after
- Next week / month / year → the following week / month / year
- Last week / month / year → the previous week / month / year
- A week ago → the week ago
- Here → there
- Now → then
- This / these → that / those
- Come → go

Reporting Questions

YES / NO

“Do you want to go out tonight?”

John asked Mary **if** she **wanted** to go out **that** night.

Reporting verb
+
If / whether
+
Subject - verb* etc.

WH-Word

“**Where** do you want to go tomorrow?”

John asked Mary **where** she **wanted** to go **the following day**.

Reporting verb
+
wh-word
+
Subject - verb* etc.

Reporting Commands

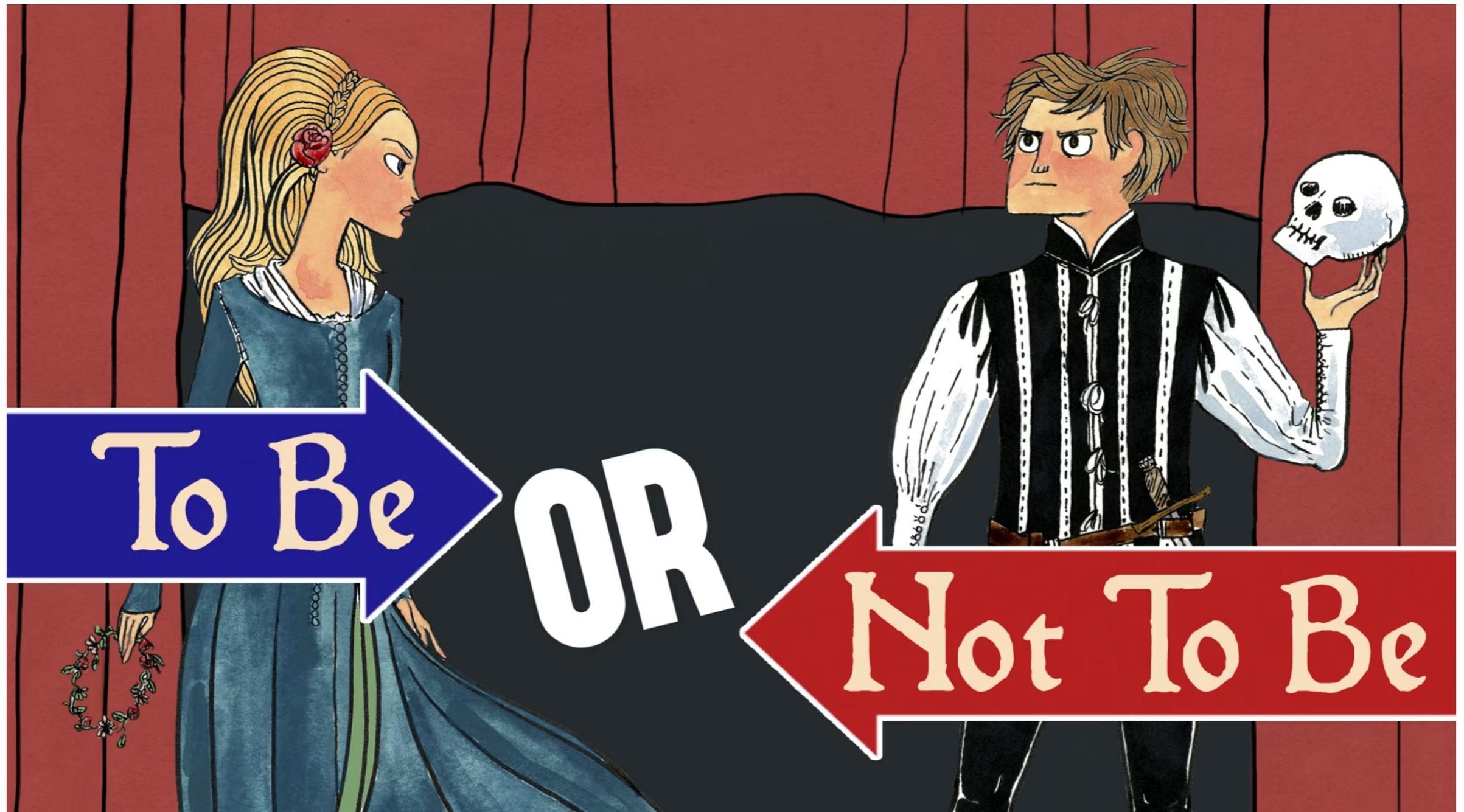
Me in the mirror vs Me in photos



“**Smile!** **Don't make** this face!”

My best friend *told* me **to smile**.

My best friend *ordered* me **not to make** that face.



William told me **to study**.

William told me **not to watch** videos on TikTok.

Can we report without using
all the previously mentioned
rules?

Absolutely.



He asked her **if** she *felt* anything for him and she **replied that** she *felt* sorry for him.

She assured him that she felt sorry for him.

He understood that she felt sorry for him.

That moment when you're about to join the Revolution and you realise you'd promised to take kids to the park

