**Statements in Reported Speech**

If you use a statement in Reported Speech, follow the steps described on our page [Reported Speech – Summary](https://www.englisch-hilfen.de/grammar/reported_aussagen.htm).

* changing of the person, backshift of tenses, shifting of expressions of time/place

**1. The introductory sentence**

**1.1. The introductory sentence in the Simple Present**

If the introductory sentence is in the Simple Present, there is no backshift of tenses.

* Direct Speech → Susan, “**Mary** **works** in an office.”
* Reported Speech → **Susan says** (that)\* **Mary** **works** in an office.

The introductory sentence is here: Susan **says** ... → this sentence is in the Simple Present, so there is **no backshift** of tenses.

**1.2. The introductory sentence in the Simple Past**

If the introductory sentence is in the Simple Past, there is mostly backshift of tenses.

* Direct Speech → Susan, “**Mary** **works** in an office.”
* Reported Speech → **Susan said** (that)\* **Mary** **worked** in an office.

The introductory sentence is here: Susan **said** ... → this sentence is in the Simple Past, so there is **backshift** of tenses.

**1.3. Types of introductory sentences**

The word *say* in introductory sentences can be substituted with other words, e.g.

* add
* decide
* know
* mention
* remark
* tell \*
* think

**2. Change of persons/pronouns**

The person/pronoun used in Direct Speech may be adapted in Reported Speech, depending on the situation.

Emily and John are talking about fashion at school. Emily says to John:

* Emily, “**I** **like** **your** new T-shirt.”

**Possibility 1:**

John says to his friend Max in the afternoon:

* Emily said (that) **she** **liked** **my** new T-shirt.

**Possibility 2:**

Emily says to her friend Julia in the afternoon:

* I said (that) **I** **liked** **his** new T-shirt.

**3. Backshift of tenses**

If the introductory sentence in in the Simple Past, there is *backshift of tenses* in Reported Speech. We shift the tense used in Direct Speech one step back in Reported Speech. If we use Past Perfect or the modals would, could, should, might, must, ought to and needn't in Direct Speech there is possibility to shift the tense back in Reported Speech.

**3.1. Simple Present → Simple Past**

| **Direct Speech** | **Reported Speech** |
| --- | --- |
| Peter, “I **work** in the garden.” | Peter said (that) he **worked** in the garden. |

**3.2. Simple Past, Present Perfect, Past Perfect → Past Perfect**

| **Direct Speech** | **Reported Speech** |
| --- | --- |
| Peter, “I **worked** in the garden.” | Peter said (that) he **had worked** in the garden. |
| Peter, “I **have worked** in the garden.” |
| Peter, “I **had worked** in the garden.” |

**3.3. Auxiliaries, Modals**

| **Direct Speech** | **Reported Speech** |
| --- | --- |
| Peter, “I **will work** in the garden.” | Peter said (that) he **would work** in the garden. |
| Peter, “I **can work** in the garden.” | Peter said (that) he **could work** in the garden. |
| Peter, “I **may work** in the garden.” | Peter said (that) he **might work** in the garden. |
| Peter, “I **would work** in the garden.”   * **could** * **might** * **should** * **ought to** | Peter said (that) he **would work** in the garden.   * **could** * **might** * **should** * **ought to** |

**3.4. Present Progressive → Past Progressive**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct Speech** | **Reported Speech** |
| Peter, “I**'m working** in the garden.” | Peter said (that) he **was working** in the garden. |

**3.5. Past Progressive, Present Perfect Progressive, Past Perfect Progressive → Past Perfect Progressive**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct Speech** | **Reported Speech** |
| Peter, “I **was working** in the garden.” | Peter said (that) he **had been working** in the garden. |
| Peter, “I **have been working** in the garden.” |
| Peter, “I **had been working** in the garden.” |

**4. Shifting/Conversion of expressions of time and place**

If there is an expression of time/place in the sentence, it my be shifted, depending on the situation.

Emily is at school, writing in her workbook. She misses her red pen at lunchtime. Emily says to John:

* “I lost my red pen **here** **this morning**.”

**Possibility 1:**

John says to his friend Max who is in the same room.

* Emily said (that) she had lost her red pen **here** **this morning**.

**Possibility 2:**

One day later, John sees his friend Gerry at his house. They talk about school.

* John says to Gerry → Emily said (that) she had lost her red pen **at our school** **that morning**.
* John says to Gerry → Emily said (that) she had lost her red pen **there** **yesterday morning**.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct Speech** | **Reported Speech** |
| **this** evening | **that** evening |
| **to**day/**this** day | **that** day |
| **these** days | **those** days |
| **now** | **then** |
| a week **ago** | a week **before** |
| **last** weekend | the weekend **before** / the **previous** weekend |
| **next** week | the **following** week |
| **tomorrow** | **the next/following day** |
| **here** | **there** |

\* Do not forget the *person* after the word *tell*:

* She told *me* (that) ...
* She told *George* (that) ...