

Grammar: REPORTED SPEECH

As in Italian, reported speech is used to report what other people say. We use reporting verbs like *say*, *tell* and *ask* to:

- Report words just said
 - In this case the situation is still present
*The boss **says** she **wants** to see you immediately*
- Report words said in the past
 - Words that are said in one place at one particular time may be reported in another place at another time. Because of the change in time there may be a change of tense or modal auxiliary. A different pronoun is used to suit the context

Actual words

"We are not going to panic"

"I left my briefcase at work"

"I've already spoken to her"

"We won't know before Friday"

"I can't give you a lower price"

Reported words

He said they were not going to panic

She said she (had) left her briefcase at work

He said he had already spoken to her

She said they wouldn't know before Friday

He said he couldn't give me a lower price

- *Would*, *could* and *should* do not change

"I would tell you if I could"

She said she would tell me if she could

- *Say* versus *tell*
 - We do not usually use a person object (me, us, etc,) after *say*
*She **said** she would come later* (NOT *She said me...)
 - But after *tell*, we indicate who receives the information
*She **told** me she would come later*
 - We can use *that* directly after *say*, but not directly after *tell*
*He **said** that he understood the reason* (NOT *He told that...)
 - *Tell* also means "to inform" or "to instruct"
*He **told** me he was interested in my proposal*
- Reporting questions
 - We use *ask* (with or without an object) to report questions
 - Note the word order: 1) question word 2) subject 3) verb
*He **asked** (her) **when she wanted** to take her vacation*
*He asked (her) **if/whether she wanted** to take her vacation in July*

Practice the reported speech always remembering that:

DIRECT SPEECH —————> **REPORTED SPEECH**

Verb tense changes

Simple Present

Present Continuous

Simple Past

Present Perfect

Will

Can

Must

Simple Past

Past Continuous

Past Perfect

Past Perfect

Would

Could

Had to

Time phrases

Today/tonight

This morning

Tomorrow

Yesterday

Last week

Next week

that day/that night

that morning

the following day

the day before

the week before

the following week

Place

Here

there