

## 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*