



# 27 Reported speech

## Say and tell

1 Some examples of **reported speech** sentences with **say** and **tell**:

*I said that I wanted two tickets.*  
*I told him he was wrong.*

2 When we report things that people say, we often use the past simple form **said** and change the tense of the verb the speaker used, in this way:

ACTUAL WORDS	REPORTED SPEECH
present simple 'I need a drink.'	→ past simple He said (that) he <b>needed</b> a drink.
present continuous 'I'm feeling ill.'	→ past continuous She said (that) she <b>was feeling</b> ill.
past simple / present perfect 'I enjoyed the party.'	→ past perfect (had + past participle) He said (that) he <b>had enjoyed</b> the party.
will 'I'll phone later.'	→ would She said (that) she <b>would phone</b> later.
am/is/are going to 'I'm going to buy it.'	→ was/were going to He said (that) he <b>was going to buy</b> it.
can 'I can't come.'	→ could She said (that) she <b>couldn't come</b> .

It is not necessary to use **that** in a reported speech sentence.

TIP

3 We use **say** and **tell** in these patterns:

<b>say (that) ...</b>	<i>She said (that) she was leaving.</i>
<b>tell + object pronoun (that) ...</b>	<i>She told me (that) she was leaving.</i>

We cannot use an object with **say**:  
 NOT *She said me (that) she was leaving.*

We must use an object with **tell**:  
 NOT *She told (that) she was leaving.*

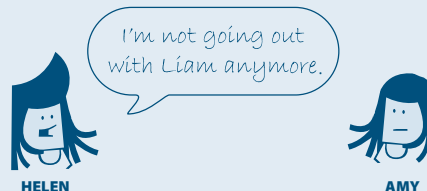
### Grammar in action

1 We use **reported speech** when we are speaking or writing about something that another person said:

*I saw Tom yesterday. He said (that) he was enjoying his new job.*

2 We use **said** when we are simply reporting someone's words. We use **said** when it is clear or not important who the person was speaking to:

*I saw Helen yesterday. She said that wasn't going out with Liam any more. (= we know that she said this to 'me')*



We use **told + object pronoun** when we want to make clear who the person was speaking to:

*Helen told Amy that wasn't going out with Liam any more. (= Helen told another person and this is an important piece of information)*

### A Train problem

A train stopped in a tunnel and it didn't move for a long time. Report what the people said, using the correct reported speech forms of the words in brackets.

- The driver said that he was sorry for the delay. ('I'm sorry')
- The driver said that ..... the cause of the problem. ('I don't know')
- The woman next to me said ..... it. ('I can't believe')
- I said that ..... ('I'm going to complain')
- The man opposite me said that ..... late for a meeting. ('I'll be')
- Some children said ..... to get out. ('We want')

- 6 Another passenger said that ..... to get angry. ('I'm beginning')
- 7 Someone said ..... for 20 minutes. ('The train hasn't moved')
- 8 Another passenger said that ..... on her last journey. ('The same thing happened')

**B Carol's new job**

Two old friends, Carol and Alex met in the street one morning. Report what they said to each other, using the correct reported speech verb forms.

ALEX Hi Carol. How are you?  
 CAROL I'm really happy. I've started a new job and I'm having a great time there. The work is interesting and the people are very friendly.  
 ALEX What's the job?  
 CAROL I'm doing market research. I love it.  
 ALEX I'm pleased for you. Listen, I have to go, but we can meet soon. It'll be nice to have a long chat about things.  
 CAROL Yes, I haven't seen you for ages. How about next week?  
 ALEX We can't meet next week because I'm going to be away. I won't be back until Friday.  
 CAROL Well, I'll give you a ring on Saturday.  
 ALEX Great. I'll wait for you to call me.

Carol said the she .....<sup>0</sup> *was* ..... really happy. She said that she .....<sup>1</sup> a new job and that she .....<sup>2</sup> a great time there. She said that the work .....<sup>3</sup> interesting and that the people .....<sup>4</sup> very friendly.

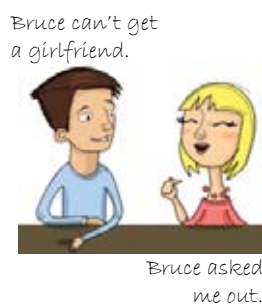
Carol said that she .....<sup>5</sup> market research and she .....<sup>6</sup> it. Alex said that he .....<sup>7</sup> pleased for her. He said that he .....<sup>8</sup> but that they .....<sup>9</sup> soon. He said that it .....<sup>10</sup> nice to have a long chat about things. Carol said that she .....<sup>11</sup> Alex for ages.

Alex said that they .....<sup>12</sup> next week because he .....<sup>13</sup> away. He said that he .....<sup>14</sup> back until Friday. Carol said she .....<sup>15</sup> him a ring on Saturday. Alex said he .....<sup>16</sup> for her to call him.

**C Student gossip**

Some students were talking about each other in the college café. Report what they said using *told* and the correct reported speech verb forms. Use *that* in each sentence.

- 0 Anne told me that she wasn't going out with Ian any more.
- 1 I ..... surprised to hear that.
- 2 Wendy ..... well in the exams.
- 3 Mary ..... studying hard.
- 4 George ..... a girlfriend.
- 5 Elaine ..... her out.
- 6 Diane ..... a new dress.
- 7 Oliver ..... her.



**WORD FOCUS**

Which word in exercise C is used in two phrases connected with relationships? If you are going ..... with someone, you are someone's boyfriend/girlfriend. If you ask someone ....., you ask someone to go somewhere with you because you want to start a relationship as boyfriend/girlfriend.

# 27

## Reported speech

### Tell and ask

**4** Some examples of **reported speech** sentences with **tell** and **ask**:

- I told them what I wanted.*
- She asked me what my name was.*
- I asked him whether he was feeling ill.*
- She told me to wait for her.*

**5** We can use **tell** and **ask** in this pattern:

**tell/ask + object + question word + subject + reported speech verb**

- She told her friends where she was going.*
- I asked the assistant how much it cost.*

Notice that after *what, when, where, how*, etc. we use the pattern of a statement (*she was going, it cost*), not the pattern of a question (NOT *was she going, did it cost*).

**6** We can use **ask** in this pattern:

**ask + object + if/whether + subject + reported speech verb**

- She asked me whether I was enjoying my course.*

Notice that after *if/whether* we use the pattern of a statement (*I was enjoying*), not the pattern of a question (NOT *was I enjoying*).

**7** We can use **tell** and **ask** in this pattern:

**tell/ask + object (+ not) + to infinitive**

- The teacher told them to be quiet.*
- The teacher told them not to make a noise.*

### Grammar in action

**3** We use **tell + object + question word** to report what someone said when answering a question or to report information that someone gave:  
*I told my teacher why I was late.*  
(= I said: 'I'm late because ...')

**4** We use **ask + object + question word** to report questions that ask for information:  
*The taxi driver asked me where I wanted to go.*  
(= He said: 'Where do you want to go?')

**5** We use **ask + object + if/whether** to report questions that ask for the answer **Yes** or **No**:  
*He asked me if/whether I could hear him.*  
(= He said: 'Can you hear me?')

**6** We use **tell + object + to infinitive** to report an order or an instruction:  
*His father told him to go and play outside.*  
*His father told him not to play computer games all day.*



**7** We use **ask + object + to infinitive** to report a request:  
*She asked him to listen. She asked him not to speak.*  
(= She said: 'Please listen. Please don't speak.')

### D The job interview

Report what happened in this job interview, using question words (*what, where, when, etc.*) and the correct reported speech verb forms.

**Things the interviewer asked me:**

- Why did you apply for the job?
- When can you start work?
- What are your ambitions?
- How much are you earning in your present job?

**Things I told the interviewer:**

- I saw the advert in the local paper.
- I won't be able to start until September because I'm going on holiday.
- I'm going to get back from my holiday on 2 September.

**0** He asked me why I had applied for the job.

**1** He asked me ..... work.

**2** He asked me .....

**3** He asked me ..... in my present job.

**4** I told him ..... the advert.

**5** I told him ..... start until September.

**6** I told him ..... from my holiday.

**E Tourist enquiries**

Rosemarie works in a tourist office. She is reporting questions that tourists asked her at work. Complete what she says, using *if/whether* or a question word and the correct reported speech verb forms.

Questions people asked me today:

- |                                       |   |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Can you find a hotel for me?          | 0 | Someone asked me <u>if/whether I could find</u> a hotel for him. |
| What time does the museum open?       | 1 | Someone asked me .....   |
| Will the shops be open on Sunday?     | 2 | Someone asked me ..... open on Sunday.                           |
| How much does a travel card cost?     | 3 | Someone asked me .....   |
| Did I leave my umbrella here earlier? | 4 | Someone asked me ..... her umbrella here earlier.                |
| Has the festival started?             | 5 | Someone asked me .....   |
| Where can I find a good restaurant?   | 6 | Someone asked me ..... a good restaurant.                        |
| Is it going to stop raining soon?     | 7 | Someone asked me ..... raining soon.                             |
| Do you like dealing with tourists?    | 8 | Someone asked me ..... dealing with tourists!                    |

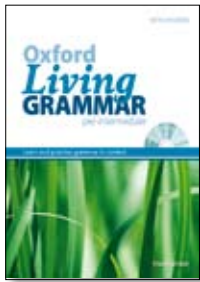
**F Problems with a neighbour**

Complete the rewritten story about an argument between neighbours, using the correct reported speech forms. Use *say (that) ...*, *tell + object (that) ...*, *ask + object + to infinitive*, or *tell + object + to infinitive*.

My neighbour was having a party and the music was very loud. I said 'Please turn the music down. It's causing me a problem. I can't sleep because of it.' He said 'Shut up!' I said 'Don't be so unpleasant. And please don't make so much noise.' He said 'I'm not going to turn it down.' I said 'I'll call the police.' He said 'I don't care. Go away.' I phoned the police and said 'Please come.' They knocked on his door and said 'Don't disturb the neighbours.' He smiled and said 'I don't want to upset anyone.' He turned the music down and I went to sleep. I'm not going to talk to him again.

My neighbour was having a party and the music was very loud. I asked him to turn<sup>0</sup> the music down. I told him (that) it was causing<sup>0</sup> me a problem. I said .....<sup>1</sup> because of it. He told .....<sup>2</sup>. I told .....<sup>3</sup> so unpleasant. Again, I asked .....<sup>4</sup> so much noise. He told .....<sup>5</sup> it down. So I told .....<sup>6</sup> the police. He said .....<sup>7</sup>. He told .....<sup>8</sup>. I phoned the police and asked .....<sup>9</sup>. They knocked on his door and asked .....<sup>10</sup> the neighbours. He smiled and said .....<sup>11</sup> to upset anyone. He turned the music down and I went to sleep. I'm not going to talk to him again.



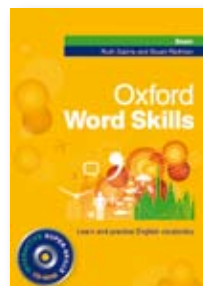


Answers:  
**Oxford Living  
Grammar  
Pre-intermediate**

## 27 Reported speech

- A**
- he didn't know
  - (that) she couldn't believe
  - I was going to complain
  - he would be
  - (that) they wanted
  - he/she was beginning
  - (that) the train hadn't moved
  - the same thing had happened
- B**
- |               |                  |      |
|---------------|------------------|------|
| 1 had started | 7 was            | 13 w |
| 2 was having  | 8 had to go      | 14 w |
| 3 was         | 9 could meet     | 15 w |
| 4 were        | 10 would be      | 16 w |
| 5 was doing   | 11 hadn't seen   |      |
| 6 loved       | 12 couldn't meet |      |
- C WORD FOCUS** out
- told Anne that I was
  - told Mary that Neil wouldn't do
  - told Wendy that Neil was going to start
  - told Elaine that Bruce couldn't get
  - told George that Bruce had asked
  - told Oliver that Kate had bought
  - told Diane that Kate's new dress didn't suit
- D**
- when I could start
  - what my ambitions were
  - how much I was earning
  - where I had seen
  - why I wouldn't be able to
  - when I was going to get back
- E**
- what time the museum opened
  - if / whether the shops would be
  - how much a travel card cost
  - if / whether she had left
  - if / whether the festival had started
  - where he / she / they could find
  - if / whether it was going to stop
  - if / whether I liked

- F**
- (that) I couldn't sleep
  - me to shut up
  - him not to be
  - him not to make
  - me (that) he wasn't going to turn
  - him (that) I would call
  - (that) he didn't care
  - me to go away
  - them to come
  - him not to disturb
  - (that) he didn't want



Answers:  
**Oxford Word Skills  
Basic**

## Unit 50

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1 1 another place | 5 another place |
| 2 inside          | 6 inside        |
| 3 inside          | 7 another place |
| 4 inside          | 8 inside        |
| 2 1 go            | 6 spend         |
| 2 collects        | 7 go            |
| 3 play            | 8 does          |
| 4 does            | 9 makes         |
| 5 play            |                 |