There are two ways to report what someone says or thinks:

1. **Direct speech** shows a person’s exact words. Quotation marks (“….”) are a sign that the words are the EXACT words that a person used.

   **Direct speech:**
   Maria asked, “Where are you going?”
   John replied, “I’m going home.”

2. **Reported speech** puts the speaker’s words or ideas into a sentence without quotation marks. Noun clauses are usually used. (In reported speech, the reader does not assume that the words are the speaker’s exact words; often, they are a paraphrase of the speaker’s words.

   **Reported speech:**
   Maria asked John where he was going.
   John said he was going home.

Note: Use of the word “that” is optional in reported speech. Both of the following sentences are correct:

   The boy said *that* he was lost.      The boy said he was lost.

---

### VERB TENSE IN REPORTED SPEECH

When you report what someone said in the past, you usually shift back a verb tense from the tense the speaker used. These are some examples of verb shifts:

- simple present → simple past
- past → past perfect
- present perfect → past perfect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Reported Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I am hungry.”</td>
<td>She stated that she was hungry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I saw them leave.”</td>
<td>Pat said he had seen them leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Where have they gone?”</td>
<td>James wondered where they had gone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Will you help me?”</td>
<td>I asked Alex if he would help me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I can’t remember your name.”</td>
<td>Lisa said she couldn’t remember my name.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: If the reported information is still true, you may use the same tense.

   “The exam will be next week.”      Dr. Park said the exam will be next week.
**QUESTIONS IN REPORTED SPEECH**

**Word order:** The word order in a reported question is the same as in a statement. The subject comes before the verb.

Question: Are you ready?
Statement: I am ready
Question in reported speech: She wanted to know if I was ready.

**Punctuation:** If the sentence is a statement, end it with a period (.) even if it contains a reported question.

Statement containing a reported question:
She asked me what I thought of the book.

Question containing a reported question:
Did she ask what you thought of the book?

**YES/NO QUESTIONS**

To change a yes/no question to a noun clause in reported speech, introduce the noun clause with *if* or *whether*. *Whether or not* may also be used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Reported Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Did you turn off the coffee pot?”</td>
<td>I asked Amy <em>if</em> she had turned off the coffee pot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Is supper ready?”</td>
<td>Eli wanted to know <em>whether</em> supper was ready.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Will you be at the party?”</td>
<td>Paul asked me <em>whether or not</em> I would be at the party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Should I tell her the news?”</td>
<td>Jack wondered <em>whether</em> he should tell Maria the news.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jack wanted to know <em>if</em> he should tell Maria the news.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jack asked <em>whether or not</em> he should tell Maria the news.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INFORMATION QUESTIONS**

To change an information question to a noun clause in reported speech, *begin the noun clause with the question word*, and remember to use *sentence word order*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Reported Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Where do they live?”</td>
<td>Abdul wanted to know <em>where they live</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What time is it?”</td>
<td>Do you know <em>what time it is</em>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Why did you say that?”</td>
<td>Pedro asked me <em>why I had said that</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Where will you stay?”</td>
<td>Have you decided <em>where you will stay</em>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The person who is reporting what someone said is usually different from the person who made the original statement. As a result, pronouns in reported speech often change.

**Quotation**                    **Reported Speech**

“I am hungry.”                   Ciara said she was hungry.
“Where will you be?”             Anne wanted to know where I would be.
“Have you seen my glasses?”      David asked me if I had seen his glasses.

**PLACE AND TIME**

Changes in the situation between direct and reported speech can result in changes to words indicating place and time.

**Quotation**                **Reported Speech**

“I don’t like this book.”       Jaime said he didn’t like that book.
“I’ll see you tomorrow.”        Michiko said she would see me yesterday.
   (spoken on Thursday)        (reported on Saturday)

**RECOMMEND & SUGGEST**

The subjunctive, or base, form of the verb (no tense, without to) is used in reported speech when the main verb is recommend or suggest.

**Quotation**                **Reported Speech**

“You should arrive early.”      John recommended that we arrive early.
“Don’t wait to apply.”          Anna recommended that I not wait to apply.
“Kathy should call me.”        I will suggest that Kathy call you.”
Infinitives (to + the simple form of the verb) may sometimes be used instead of noun clauses, especially in **commands** and in **requests for action or permission**.

**Commands** can be reported two ways:
1. A noun clause with a modal (usually should)
2. An infinitive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Reported Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| "Call me when you get home."
| Mom said we *should call* her when we get home.
| Mom said *to call* her when we get home.

| "Plan ahead."
| My father told me that I *should plan* ahead.
| My father told me *to plan* ahead.

**Requests for action or permission** can be reported two ways:
1. A noun clause with *if*
2. An infinitive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Reported Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| "Will you carry the box for me?"
| She asked me *if I would carry* the box for her.
| She asked me *to carry the* box for her.

| "Can I make an appointment?"
| Jim asked *if he could make* an appointment.
| Jim asked *to make* an appointment. |