

Reported Speech

When we use reported speech, the main verb of the sentence is usually past. The rest of the sentence is usually past, too. In general, the present form in direct speech changes to the past form in reported speech: am/is – was, are – were, want/know/go, etc – wanted/knew/went, etc, does/do – did, have/has – had, will – would, can – could, did – had.

Lo usamos cuando el verbo principal está en pasado. Normalmente, el resto de la oración también se conjuga en pasado. El presente en diálogo directo se transforma a pasado.

He told me he made enough money to make ends meet.

Susan said she was having trouble at work.

Harry said his baby woke him up in the middle of the night.

It is not always necessary to change the verb in reported speech. If you report the situation has changed, you do not need to change the verb to the past. If you say who somebody is talking to, use tell, otherwise use say. We also use the infinitive (to do/to stay, etc.) in reported speech, especially with tell and ask.

Cindy told me to keep the secret.

What did you say to the governor?

Carolyn told me that she wanted to do volunteer work in Mexico.

Exercises

She said she was _____ her job. (quit)

Tom told me he was _____ a car for his vacation trip to Canada. (rent)

Sarah said she _____ in April. (get married)