

Reported speech 1 (He said that ...)

A

Study this example's structure.



I'm feeling ill.

You want to tell somebody what Paul said.
There are two ways of doing this:
You can repeat Paul's words (*direct speech*):
Paul said, 'I'm feeling ill.'
Or you can use *reported speech*:
Paul said that he was feeling ill.

Compare:

direct

Paul said,

'

am

feeling ill.'

In writing we use these quotation marks to show direct speech.

reported

Paul said that

he

was

feeling ill.

B

When we use reported speech, the main verb of the sentence is usually past: Paul said that ... / I told her that ... etc. The rest of the sentence is usually past too.

- Paul said that he was feeling ill.
- I told Lisa that I didn't have any money.

You can leave out that. So you can say:

- Paul said he was feeling ill.
- Paul said he was feeling ill.

In general, the present form of direct speech changes to the past form in reported speech:

am/is → was

do/does → did

will → would

are → were

have/has → had

can → could

want/like/love/hate etc. → wanted/liked/knew/went etc.

Compare direct speech and reported speech:

You met Jenny. Here are some of the things she said in *direct speech*.

'My parents are very well.'

'I'm going to learn to drive.'

'I want to buy a car.'

'John has a new job.'

'I can't come to the party on Friday.'

'I don't have much free time.'

'I'm going away for a few days. I'll call you when I get back.'



Jenny

Later you tell somebody what Jenny said. You use *reported speech*:

- Jenny said that her parents were very well.
- She said that she was going to learn to drive.
- She said that she wanted to buy a car.
- She said that John had a new job.
- She said that she couldn't come to the party on Friday.
- She said she didn't have much free time.
- She said that she was going away for a few days and would phone me when she got back.

C

The *past simple* (did/saw/knew etc.) can usually stay the same in reported speech, so you can change it to the *past perfect* (had done / had seen / had known etc.):

direct Paul said 'I woke up feeling ill, so I didn't go to work.'

reported Paul said that he woke up feeling ill, so he didn't go to work. or Paul said that he had woken up feeling ill, so he hadn't gone to work.