GRAMMAR. What did she say?



REPORTED SPEECH

There are two ways of reporting what a person says:

Direct Speech reports the exact words the speaker says. Use quotations marks ('...') before and after the speaker's statement.

I said, 'I don't want to know it'

Indirect Speech (also 'reported speech') refers to a sentence reporting what someone has said.

I said that I didn't want to know it.

REPORT STRUCTURES

A report structure consists of two parts:

One part is the reporting clause, which **contains the reporting verb:**

She told me that nothing was going to happen to him.

The other part is the **reported clause.**

Mike said **that he wanted to come back home.**

REPORTED STATEMENTS WITH NO CHANGE OF TENSE

If the reporting (i.e. say, says, has told) verb of the sentence is present, present perfect or future, there is no change of tense in the reported statement.

He says, 'I'm not staying' / He says he isn't staying.

He's told her: 'I don't like going to parties' / He's told her he doesn't like going to parties.

He will tell you, 'I haven't got any bread' / He'll tell you he hasn't got any bread.

REPORTED STATEMENTS WITH CHANGE OF TENSE

But if the reporting verb (i.e. said) is in the past, the reported clause will be in a past form. This form is usually one step back into the past from the original.

SPEAKER'S WORDS	REPORTED STATEMENT
will	**would**
Michael: 'I will work in the office.'	Michael said that he would work in the office.
is going to	**was going to**
Michael: 'I'm going to work in the office.'	Michael said that he was going to work in the office.
present simple	**past simple**
Michael: 'I work in the office.'	Michael said that he worked in the office.
present continuous	**past continuous**
Michael: 'I'm working in the office.'	Michael said that he was working in the office.
Past simple, present perfect or past perfect	**past perfect**
Michael: 'I worked in the office.' Michael: 'I have worked in the office.' Michael: 'I had worked in the office.'	Michael said that he had worked in the office.
must	**had to**
Michael: 'I must work in the office.'	Michael said that he had to work in the office.
can	**could**
Michael: 'I can work in the office.'	Michael said that he could work in the office.

Important points

1. **If we report something which is still true, it is not necessary to change the verb.**

   DIRECT SPEECH: 'My car **is** bigger than yours.'
   REPORTED SPEECH: He said his car **is / was** bigger than mine.

2. **When we are reporting past tenses, and we see the events from the same viewpoint as the original speaker, it is not necessary to change the tense.**

    DIRECT SPEECH: 'The earthquake **happened** at half past seven.'
    REPORTED SPEECH: The radio said that the earthquake **happened** at half past seven.

3. **Modal verbs *could, might, would, should, ought, had better* usually do not change in reported speech.**

    DIRECT SPEECH: 'I should go to the dentist.'
    REPORTED SPEECH: He said that he should go to the dentist.

REPORTING STATEMENTS AND THOUGHTS. USE OF THAT

If you want to report a statement or someone's thoughts, you use a reported clause beginning with the conjunction **'that'**.

He said **that** the police had arrested them the day before yesterday.

In informal speech and writing, the conjunction 'that' is commonly omitted.

They said I had to see a doctor first.

'That' is often omitted when the reporting verb refers simply to the act of saying or thinking. You usually include 'that' after a verb which gives more information, such 'explain'.

I explained that they would have to stay in bed.

REPORTED SPEECH. SAY and TELL

Tell has a personal direct object (me, you, us, him, her...)

She **told me** (that) she was going to be on time

Say never has a personal direct object:

She **said** she was going to be on time.

but the indirect object is used instead (to him, to her, to them...)

‘I don't want to stay there’, she **said to me** quietly.

REPORTED SPEECH. OTHER CHANGES

As well as tense changes, other words in Direct Speech need to be changed when they are reported. Here are some examples:

tomorrow	**the following day / the next day**
today	**that day**
last month	**the previous month**
now	**then**
yesterday	**the day before/ the previous day**
next week	**the following week**
tonight	**that night**
this morning	**that morning**
ago	**before / previously**

and also:

here	**there**
this	**that**

REPORTED SPEECH. ORDERS

Reported commands use a personal **direct object** and **the infinitive**:

The teacher told the children to be quiet.

He told them to be quiet.

The negative uses **not** before **to** + infinitive

Don't shout! He told them not to shout.

REPORTED SPEECH. IF/ WHETHER AND WH-QUESTIONS

Reported **Wh-Questions** change the word order of the original question:

How is your father?

He asked how my father was.

If the reported questions do not start with **Wh-Questions**, **IF or WHETHER** are used.

Did you see the film?

He asked if I had seen the film.

REPORTED SPEECH. REPORTING CONVERSATIONS: SUMMARIZING

Remember that you do not normally report everything that is said, only you have to select the most important parts of the speech.

This is part of a 'phone conversation':

MARY: How's your new job, Jane?

JANE: It's fine.

MARY: Do you work on Saturdays?

JANE: No, I don't. I work from Monday to Friday.

First of all, answer the questions. Then join the answers together to write the composition:

What was the first question that Mary asked Jane? She asked how her new job was.

What did she say? She said that it was fine.

What did Mary ask Susan about her job?

What did Jane finally answer? She answered that she didn't work on Saturdays, she worked from Monday to Friday.

Now summarize the answers:

Mary asked Jane how her new job was. She said that it was fine. Mary asked Jane if she worked on Saturdays. She answered that she didn't work on Saturday, but she worked from Monday to Friday.