

Reporting statements

Reporting statements is relatively easy. The most common verb used to report statements is tell.

As a general rule, the changes in the tense of the reported speech depend upon the tense of the reporting verb in the direct speech. Thus when the reporting verb is in the past tense, the tense of the reported verb also changes to past tense.

Example

He said, 'I want to go.'

He said that he wanted to go.

While reporting statements use a verb like tell.

Direct: He said, 'I may meet you tomorrow.'

Indirect: He said that he might meet you tomorrow.

Direct: He said, 'I will marry you only if you mend your ways.'

Indirect: He said that he would marry her only if she mended her ways.

Direct: He said, 'I have decided not to buy the house because it is off the main road.'

Indirect: He said that he had decided not to buy the house because it was off the main road.

Direct: He said, 'Ladies and gentleman, we must make this decision here and now.'

Indirect: He told his audience that they must / would have to make that decision there and then.

Direct: He said to his friend, 'I have been worried about my daughter for some time. She is getting thinner and thinner.'

Indirect: He told his friend that he had been worried about his daughter for some time and that she was getting thinner and thinner.

Exercise

1. He said, 'I'll be driving the car myself once I have got my license.'
2. She said, 'My father died a week ago. I am yet to recover from the shock.'

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3. My teacher often says to me, 'If you don't work hard, you will reach nowhere.'

4. 'Mother,' said John, 'I'll find a new job.'

Answers

1. He said that he would be driving the car himself once he had got his license.

2. She said that her father had died a week ago and that she was yet to recover from the shock.

3. My teacher used to tell me that if I didn't work hard I would reach nowhere.

4. John told his mother that he would find a new job.