



Time and Place in Reported Speech

When we report something, we may need to make changes to:

- time (now, tomorrow)
- place (here, this room)

| direct speech | reported speech |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| She said, "I saw Mary yesterday." | She said she had seen Mary the day before. |
| He said: "My mother is here." | He said that his mother was there. |

Don't confuse **time** with **tense**. "Tense" is the grammatical form of the verb that in the reported clause we sometimes shift back (backshift). "Time" refers to the actual time that something happens, such as "today" or "now" or "5 weeks ago".

Time words

If we report something around the same time, then we probably do not need to make any changes to time words. But if we report something at a different time, we need to change time words. Look at these example sentences:

- He said: "It was hot yesterday." → He said that it had been hot the day before.
- He said: "We are going to swim tomorrow." → He said they were going to swim the next day.

Here is a list of common time words, showing how you change them for reported speech:

| direct speech | reported speech |
|-----------------|---|
| now | then, at that time |
| today | that day, on Sunday, yesterday |
| tonight | that night, last night, on Sunday night |
| tomorrow | the next day/ the following day, on Sunday, today |
| yesterday | the day before/ the previous day, on Sunday |
| last night | the night before/ the previous night, on Sunday night |
| this week | that week, last week |
| last month | the month before/ the previous month, in May |
| next year | the following year, in 2014 |
| two minutes ago | two minutes before |
| in one hour | one hour later |

Place words

If we are in the same place when we report something, then we do not need to make any changes to place words. But if we are in a different place when we report something, then we need to change the place words. Look at these example sentences:

- He said: "It is cold in here." → He said that it was cold in there.
- He said: "How much is this book?" → He asked how much the book was.

Here are some common place words, showing how you change them for reported speech:

| direct speech | indirect speech |
|---------------|---|
| here | there, in Starbucks |
| this | that |
| this book | the book, that book, <i>War and Peace</i> |
| in this room | in the room, in that room, in the kitchen |