

# UNIT 47

## Reported speech (1)

a) Study this example situation:

You want to tell someone else what Tom said. There are two ways of doing this:

You can repeat Tom's words (*direct speech*):  
Tom said 'I'm feeling ill'.

Or you can use *reported speech*:  
Tom said (that) he was feeling ill.

Compare the two sentences:

*direct* Tom said 'I am feeling ill'.

*reported* Tom said (that) he was feeling ill.

you use these to show it is direct speech

b) When we use reported speech, we are usually talking about the past. So verbs usually change to the past in reported speech. For example:

am/is → was    are → were    have/has → had    will → would    can → could  
do/want/know etc. → did/wanted/knew etc.

Study these examples. You met Tom. Here are some things he said to you:

Now you tell someone else what Tom said (in reported speech):

- Tom said (that) his parents **were** very well.
- Tom said (that) he **was** going to give up his job.
- Tom said (that) Ann **had** bought a new car.
- Tom said (that) he **couldn't** come to the party on Friday.
- Tom said (that) he **wanted** to go on holiday but he **didn't know** where to go.
- Tom said (that) he **was** going away for a few days and **would** phone me when he **got** back.

c) The past simple (I did) can usually stay the same in reported speech, or you can change it to the past perfect (I had done): did → did or had done

*direct* Tom said 'I woke up feeling ill and so I stayed in bed'.

*reported* Tom said (that) he **woke** (or **had woken**) up feeling ill and so he **stayed** (or **had stayed**) in bed.

For reported speech see also Units 48 and 50b.