

132 Direct speech and reported speech

1 Direct speech

Look at these examples of direct speech.

*Trevor: **I'm tired.***

*Wasn't it Greta Garbo who said, **'I want to be alone'?***

*'**But I don't love you, Henry,**' replied Claire.*

We can show that words are direct speech by putting them in quotation marks (' '). See page 373. Sometimes the words are put after the speaker's name, in the script of a play or film, for example. In a picture we can put the words in a speech bubble.



2 Reported speech

In reported speech we give the meaning of what was said rather than the exact words.

*Trevor says **he's tired.***

*Wasn't it Greta Garbo who said **that she wanted to be alone?***

*Claire replied **that she didn't love Henry.***

The actress Melissa Livingstone and supermarket owner Ron Mason have announced that they are getting married next month. Melissa is sure they will be happy together, she told reporters.

In reported speech we often change the actual words, e.g. *'I'm tired'* → *he's tired*.

Sometimes the verb tense changes, e.g. *I want* → *she wanted* (see Unit 134).

In reporting we use verbs such as **announce, answer, explain, mention, promise, reply, say, suggest, tell, warn**. The most common of these are **say** and **tell** (see 3). We can also report thoughts.

*We **think** the meal was expensive. Nick **knew** Rita wanted to be with someone else.*

When we report statements, we often use **that**, but we can sometimes leave it out.

*You promised (**that**) you wouldn't be late. Sarah was saying (**that**) there's a problem.*

3 Tell or say?

TELL

We use **tell** if we want to mention the hearer (the person spoken to).

*Sarah's boss **told her** she could leave early.*

NOT *Sarah's boss ~~told she~~ could leave early.*

*Daniel **tells me** he's ready.*

We use **tell** without an indirect object (e.g. **her, me**) only in the expressions **tell a story, tell the truth** and **tell a lie**.

SAY

When we do not mention the hearer, we use **say**.

*Sarah's boss **said** she could leave early.*

NOT *Sarah's boss ~~said her~~ she could leave early.*

*Daniel **says** he's ready.*

We sometimes use **to** after **say**, especially when the words are not reported.

*The boss wanted to **say something to** Sarah.*

*What did Matthew **say to** you?*

Practice

A Reported speech (2)

Why are these people at the doctor's? What do they say is wrong with them?



▶ I get pains in my leg.



1 I can't sleep.



2 I've hurt my back.



3 I feel sick all the time.



4 I fell over and hurt myself.

▶ She says she gets pains in her leg.

- | | |
|------------------|---------|
| 1 She says | 3 |
| 2 He says | 4 |

B Reported speech (2)

Who said what? Match the words to the people and report what they said.

If you can't match them, look at the answers at the bottom of the page.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| ▶ Mrs Thatcher | a) 'All the world's a stage.' |
| 1 Stokeley Carmichael | b) 'Black is beautiful.' |
| 2 Galileo | c) 'Big Brother is watching you.' |
| 3 Shakespeare | d) ' <u>There is no such thing as society.</u> ' |
| 4 George Orwell | e) 'The earth moves round the sun.' |

▶ Mrs Thatcher said that there is no such thing as society.

- | |
|---------|
| 1 |
| 2 |
| 3 |
| 4 |

C Tell or say? (3)

Put in *tell* or *say*.

- ▶ All the experts say the earth is getting warmer.
- ▶ Did you tell Mark and Sarah how to find our house?
- 1 The Sales Manager is going to everyone about the meeting.
- 2 Vicky, why don't you just what the matter is?
- 3 They they're going to build a new Disney World here.
- 4 What did Natasha about her holiday plans?
- 5 Could you me the way to the train station, please?
- 6 The company should its employees what's going on.
- 7 You shouldn't lies, you know, Matthew.
- 8 Did you anything to Melanie about the barbecue?