

UNIVERSIDAD DE MURCIA

UNIT 13. REPORTED SPEECH

REVIEW OF BASIC ASPECTS OF REPORTED SPEECH

- 1) Tense of the reporting verb and time expression changes
- 2) Say and tell
- 3) How to report modal verbs
 - 3.1. Will/shall
 - 3.2. Could do/could have done
 - 3.3. May do/might do; may have done/might have done
 - 3.4. Should do/ought to do; should have done
 - 3.5. Must do/have to do; must have done

Sections 1 and 2 of this document have been adapted from:

- -Murphy, R. (2004). English Grammar in Use with Answers. A Self-study Reference and Practice Book for Intermediate Students of English. (3rd revised edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [henceforth referred to as EGU]
- -Vince, M. (2009). First Certificate Language Practice: English Grammar and Vocabulary. With Key (4th ed.). Oxford: MacMillan [henceforth referred to as FCLP]

See also Unit 13.2 in Capel, A. & Sharp, W. (2008). *Objective. First Certificate. Self-study Student's Book. With CD-ROM.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 86-87, 203 for reporting verbs and reported questions. Do not forget "tell/ask somebody to do something" (*EGU* Unit 48, section D)





1) TENSE OF THE REPORTING VERB AND TIME EXPRESSION CHANGES

- 1.a.) Tenses are moved into the past after a past tense reporting verb:
 - "I'm leaving". Jane said she was leaving.
- 1.b.) Sometimes the reporting verb does not come in the past:
 - 1.b.1.) Present tense reports
 Brenda says she's arriving at about 6:00.
 - 1.b.2.) Past tense reports
 - If the reported words are "always true", there is no change.
 Harry told me that he still likes you.
 - If a message is being repeated immediately, there is no change.

Mary said she's too busy to come.



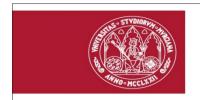


1.c)The past simple can usually stay the same in reported speech, or you can change it into the past perfect:

DIRECT: Tom said: "I woke up feeling ill, so I didn't go to work".

REPORTED: Tom said (that) he woke up feeling ill, so he didn't go to work.

REPORTED: Tom said (that) he had woken up feeling ill, so he hadn't gone to work.





1.d) Certain time expressions often change:

DIRECT \rightarrow REPORTED

Today that day

Tomorrow the next day

Next (week) the following (week);

the (week) after

the (week) before

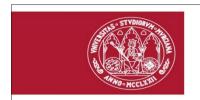
that

there

Last (week)

This

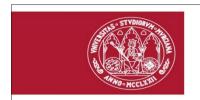
Here



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2) SAY AND TELL

- We say something and we tell somebody.
- Also, we tell somebody that... and we say to somebody / we say that...
 - I said I could meet you this evening, but I'm really busy.
 - I told you I could meet you this evening, but I'm really busy.
 - I said to him that I'd meet him this evening.



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3) HOW TO REPORT MODAL VERBS 3.1) WILL / SHALL

What's the function of these modals in the following sentences?

I will be there. (Future time; maybe used as a promise)

I shall be there. (Future time; formal speech/writing; emphasizing a promise or a fact)

Shall I help? (Offer)

O How would you transform the sentences above into indirect speech statements?

She said/told me that she would be there.

She said/told me that she would be there.

She asked if she should help.





3.2) COULD DO / COULD HAVE DONE

What's the function of these modal verbs in the following sentences?

- A) I'm so hungry. I could eat a horse. (Present possibility not real in this case)
- B) I was so hungry. I could have eaten a horse. (Past possibility –not real in this case)

How would you turn sentences A) and B) into reported speech if uttered some time after they were said?

- A) He said (that) he was so hungry that he could have eaten a horse.
- B) He said (that) he was so hungry that he could have eaten a horse.



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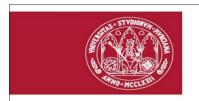
3.3) MAY DO / MIGHT DO; MAY HAVE DONE / MIGHT HAVE DONE

What's the function of these modals in the following sentences?:

- It may/might be Samantha. (Possibility about a present/future event).
- I can't find my handbag anywhere. I may/might have left it in the shop. (Possibility about a past action).

How would you turn the sentences above into reported speech statements if uttered some time after the original ones were said?:

- She said that it may/might have been Samantha.
- She said that she couldn't find her handbag anywhere and that she may/might have left it in the shop.



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3.4) SHOULD DO / OUGHT TO DO; SHOULD HAVE DONE

What's the function of these modal verbs in the following sentences?

- I think you should see a doctor. (Advice, recommendation)
- You ought not to continue. (Advice, polite instruction)
- You should have posted the letter yesterday. (Obligation regarding a past event; maybe a criticism)
- You shouldn't have told me the answer. (Negative obligation regarding a past event; maybe a criticism)

How would you turn the sentences above into reported speech statements?

- He told me that I should see a doctor.
- He told me that I ought not to continue.
- He told me that I should have posted the letter yesterday/the day before. (Depending on the time period of the reported speech sentence).
- He told me that I shouldn't have told him the answer.



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3.5) MUST DO / HAVE TO DO; MUST HAVE DONE

3.5.1) What's the function of these modal verbs in the following sentences?

We must go home. (Personal obligation)
We have to take the exam again. (External obligation)

How would you turn the sentences above into reported speech statements?

We had to go home. We had to take the exam again.

3.5.2.) What's the function of the modal verb in the second sentence below?

I can't find my bag anywhere. I must have left it in the shop. (Certainty about a past action)

How would you turn the sentence above into a reported speech statement? I can't find my bag anywhere. I must have left it in the shop.