There are two ways to report what someone says or thinks:

1. **Direct speech** shows a person’s exact words. Quotation marks (“….”) are a sign that the words are the EXACT words that a person used.

   **Direct speech:**
   Maria asked, “Where are you going?”
   John replied, “I’m going home.”

2. **Reported speech** puts the speaker’s words or ideas into a sentence without quotation marks. Noun clauses are usually used. (In reported speech, the reader does not assume that the words are the speaker’s exact words; often, they are a paraphrase of the speaker’s words.

   **Reported speech:**
   Maria asked John where he was going.
   John said he was going home.

Note: Use of the word “that” is optional in reported speech. Both of the following sentences are correct:
The boy said *that* he was lost.  The boy said he was lost.

**VERB TENSE IN REPORTED SPEECH**

When you report what someone said in the past, you usually shift back a verb tense from the tense the speaker used. These are some examples of verb shifts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple Present</th>
<th>Simple Past</th>
<th>Will</th>
<th>Would</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>Past Perfect</td>
<td>Can</td>
<td>Could</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Perfect</td>
<td>Past Perfect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quotation**

“I *am* hungry.”
She stated that she *was* hungry

“I *saw* them leave.”
Pat said he *had seen* them leave.

“Where *have* they *gone*?”
James wondered where they *had gone*.

“Will you *help* me?”
I asked Alex if he *would help* me.

“I *can’t remember* your name.”
Lisa said she *couldn’t remember* my name.

**Reported speech**

Note: If the reported information is still true, you may use the same tense.

“The exam *will be* next week.”
Dr. Park said the exam *will be* next week.
**QUESTIONS IN REPORTED SPEECH**

**Word order:** The word order in a reported question is the same as in a statement. The subject comes before the verb.

- **Question:** Are you ready?
- **Statement:** I am ready
- **Question in reported speech:** She wanted to know if I was ready.

**Punctuation:** If the sentence is a statement, end it with a period (.) even if it contains a reported question.

- **Statement containing a reported question:**
  She asked me what I thought of the book.

- **Question containing a reported question:**
  Did she ask what you thought of the book?

**YES/NO QUESTIONS**

To change a yes/no question to a noun clause in reported speech, introduce the noun clause with *if* or *whether*. *Whether or not* may also be used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Reported Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Did you turn off the coffee pot?”</td>
<td>I asked Amy <em>if</em> she had turned off the coffee pot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Is supper ready?”</td>
<td>Eli wanted to know <em>whether</em> supper was ready.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Will you be at the party?”</td>
<td>Paul asked me <em>whether or not</em> I would be at the party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Should I tell her the news?”</td>
<td>Jack wondered <em>whether</em> he should tell Maria the news.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jack wanted to know <em>if</em> he should tell Maria the news.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jack asked <em>whether or not</em> he should tell Maria the news.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INFORMATION QUESTIONS**

To change an information question to a noun clause in reported speech, *begin the noun clause with the question word*, and remember to use *sentence word order*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Reported Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Where do they live?”</td>
<td>Abdul wanted to know <em>where they live</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What time is it?”</td>
<td>Do you know <em>what time it is?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Why did you say that?”</td>
<td>Pedro asked me <em>why I had said that</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Where will you stay?”</td>
<td>Have you decided <em>where you will stay</em>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The person who is reporting what someone said is usually different from the person who made the original statement. As a result, pronouns in reported speech often change.

**Quotation**

“I am hungry.”

“Where will you be?”

“How you seen my glasses?”

**Reported Speech**

Ciara said she was hungry.

Anne wanted to know where I would be.

David asked me if I had seen his glasses.

Changes in the situation between direct and reported speech can result in changes to words indicating place and time.

**Quotation**

“I don’t like this book.”

“I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“*spoken on Thursday*”

**Reported Speech**

Jaime said he didn’t like that book.

Michiko said she would see me yesterday.

(reported on Saturday)

The subjunctive, or base, form of the verb (no tense, without to) is used in reported speech when the main verb is recommend or suggest.

**Quotation**

“You should arrive early.”

“Don’t wait to apply.”

“Kathy should call me.”

**Reported Speech**

John recommended that we arrive early.

Anna recommended that I not wait to apply.

I will suggest that Kathy call you.”
Infinitives (to + the simple form of the verb) may sometimes be used instead of noun clauses, especially in commands and in requests for action or permission.

**Commands** can be reported two ways:
1. A noun clause with a modal (usually should)
2. An infinitive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Reported Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Call me when you get home.”</td>
<td>Mom said we <em>should call</em> her when we get home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mom said <em>to call</em> her when we get home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Plan ahead.”</td>
<td>My father told me that I <em>should plan</em> ahead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My father told me <em>to plan</em> ahead.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Requests for action or permission** can be reported two ways:
1. A noun clause with *if*
2. An infinitive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Reported Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Will you carry the box for me?”</td>
<td>She asked me <em>if I would carry</em> the box for her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>She asked me <em>to carry the</em> box for her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Can I make an appointment?”</td>
<td>Jim asked <em>if he could make</em> an appointment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jim asked <em>to make</em> an appointment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>