

REPORTED SPEECH: STATEMENTS

B1 | Teens / Adults | Grammar Practice | 35-45 minutes

Learn and practise | Report what someone said using common tense changes.

1. READ: News from a colleague

Read the conversation. Notice the bold grammar and how the speakers use it.

Uma: Did you speak to Jo after the interview yesterday?

Cal: Yes. She **said she was** pleased with how it went.

Uma: Did they offer her the job?

Cal: Not yet. They **told her they would call** on Friday.

Uma: That's a long wait.

Cal: She **said she had** another interview first, so she's keeping busy.

2. GRAMMAR: Reporting a past conversation

After said or told in a past report, we often move the original tense one step back.

Use / form	Pattern	Example
Present -> past	am/is -> was; have -> had	She said she was pleased.
Will -> would	will -> would	They said they would call.
Reporting verb	say something; tell someone	They told her the news.

Pronouns: Jo: 'I am tired.' -> Jo said she was tired.

Other changes: can -> could; present continuous -> past continuous.

That is optional. Backshift is not always necessary when information is still true.

A. CHOOSE

Circle the correct option. Use the usual backshift for past reports.

- Jo said / told that she was busy.
- She said / told me she was tired.
- He said he will / would call later.
- They said they are / were leaving then.
- Jo said she can / could help the next day.
- He told me / to me he had a car.
- She said that / me she liked it.
- They said they need / needed more time.

Read each answer aloud. Explain which meaning or time clue helped you.

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Use it | Complete a context, write sentences and speak with a partner.

B. COMPLETE: After an interview

Complete the past report. Use the usual backshifted form.

1. Jo said she _____ (be) nervous about the interview.
2. She told me she _____ (want) the job.
3. She said she _____ (prepare) her answers at that time.
4. The manager said they _____ (will / call) on Friday.
5. Jo said she _____ (can / start) the following month.
6. She told me she _____ (have) another interview that week.

C. CHANGE THE SENTENCES

1-2: Report using She said and backshift.

Example: Jo: "I'm busy." **She said she was busy.**

1. Jo: "I like the office."

2. Jo: "I'm waiting outside."

3-4: Report using He told me and backshift. Example: Ben: "I can help." **He told me he could help.**

3. Ben: "I will call you."

4. Ben: "I have a new job."

D. WRITE ABOUT YOU

Report three things a friend told you recently. Change pronouns and use past-report forms.

Example: **My friend said she was busy. She told me she would call later.**

E. SPEAK WITH A PARTNER

Tell your partner two imaginary pieces of news. Your partner reports them to you.

Check **said / told**, pronouns and verb forms; then swap roles.

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Answer key | Keep this page separate during student practice.

1. READ: News from a colleague

Sample target language from the conversation:

Cal: Yes. She **said she was** pleased with how it went.

Cal: Not yet. They **told her they would call** on Friday.

Cal: She **said she had** another interview first, so she's keeping busy.

A. CHOOSE

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. said | 2. told |
| 3. would | 4. were |
| 5. could | 6. me |
| 7. that | 8. needed |

B. COMPLETE: After an interview

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1. was | 2. wanted |
| 3. was preparing | 4. would call |
| 5. could start | 6. had |

C. CHANGE THE SENTENCES

1. She said she liked the office.
2. She said she was waiting outside.
3. He told me he would call me.
4. He told me he had a new job.

D. WRITE ABOUT YOU / E. SPEAK

Personal answers will vary. Check the target grammar.

Sample: Jo said she was moving. She told me she needed help. She said she would call on Friday.

Teacher note: The exercise instructions request backshift. In real use, unchanged tenses may be appropriate for still-true information; explain rather than treating all as errors.