

English B1 · Reported speech

Intermediate English for Chinese speakers; classroom examples, not official exam items.

A retelling, not a recording

Reported speech is a retelling, not a **recording**: the words move house, and everything steps back to fit the new address.

- — She said she was tired. Chinese keeps the verb; English steps it back.
- Pronouns and time words follow the new speaker: I → she, today → that day.

The step-back table

Direct	Reported
"I am tired."	She said she was tired.
"I am watching TV."	He said he was watching TV.
"I have finished."	She said she had finished.
"I ate noodles."	He said he had eaten noodles.
"I will call you." · "I can swim."	would call · could swim

Use the evidence

Still true right now? The step-back is optional: The teacher said the test is on Monday.

Your turn: step it back

Your turn

"I have finished," they said. → They said they ____.

- ☐ A. have finished
- ☐ B. had finished
- ☐ C. finished
- ☐ D. were finishing

say, tell, ask

Verb	The rule	Example
say	say something (to someone)	She said she was tired. She said to me...
tell	tell someone something	She told me she was tired.
ask	for questions	He asked (me) if I was OK.

Use the evidence

Never She told that she was tired; never She said me.

Your turn: which verb

Your turn

She ____ me that she was tired.

- A. said
- B. told
- C. say
- D. told to

The flip stays home

direct questions

"Are you tired?"

"Where do you live?"

reported questions

She asked if I was tired.

He asked me where I lived.

Your turn: the hat

Your turn

"Where do you live?" → He asked me ____.

- A. where did I live
- B. where I lived
- C. where do I live
- D. where I did live

Move the time words

- 1 **Yesterday she said** "I will call you today."
- 2 **Reported today** She said she would call me that day.
- 3 **The map** today → that day · tomorrow → the next day · here → there · this → that

Decision

Move the time words, or the calendar gets confused.

Say it aloud

"I am hungry." → She said she was hungry.



"I have never eaten durian." → He
said he had never eaten durian.



"I will finish the homework tonight." →
They said they would finish it that night.



"Can you swim?" → She asked me if I could swim.

Check yourself

- She said she was tired — am steps back to was.
- He said he would call me — will to would, you to me.
- He asked me where I lived — the flip stays home.
- She told me — tell needs its person; said would need to.