

REPORTED SPEECH

Section A

AIM

– to highlight the features of reported speech

DISCOVERY

1. Copy and hand out – or project – the following jumbled dialogue. Alternatively, copy the dialogue and cut it up into its individual lines. Give each group a set of lines so that they can physically unjumble them.

She: I'm too busy to talk.
She: You don't talk, you whine!
She: Jack was talking to *me*.
She: No, I'm not. Why?
He: I'm also talking to you!
He: You won't talk to me.
He: You don't seem to be too busy to talk to Jack.
He: Are you mad at me?

2. Check the task. The most likely order is the following:

He: Are you mad at me?
She: No, I'm not. Why?
He: You won't talk to me.
She: I'm too busy to talk.
He: You don't seem to be too busy to talk to Jack.
She: Jack was talking to *me*.
He: I'm also talking to you!
She: You don't talk, you whine!

3. Ask two students to take the different roles and to read the dialogue aloud.

4. Now, hand out – or project – the following skeleton of the dialogue:

He asked her if
She said that and asked him why.
He complained that
She replied that
He pointed out that
She explained that
He reminded her that
Cruelly, she told him that

5. Ask the class for ideas as to how they would complete the first and second lines. For example:

He asked her if *she was mad at him*.

She said that *she wasn't* and asked him why.

6. Use these examples to demonstrate three principles of reporting speech (when the reporting verbs are in the past), ie,

1. tense "backshift": *are* → *was*

2. pronoun shift: *you* → *she*; *me* → *him*

3. lack of inversion in questions: *are you mad* → *(if) she was mad*

7. Ask students, working in pairs, to complete the rest of the description of the conversation, using reported speech. Check this with the whole class. A possible version of the answer might be:

He asked her if *she was mad at him*.

She said that *she wasn't* and asked him why.

He complained that *she wouldn't talk to him*.

She replied that *she was too busy to talk*.

He pointed out that *she didn't seem to be too busy to talk to Jack*.

She explained that *Jack had been talking to her*.

He reminded her that *he was also talking to her*.

Cruelly, she told him that *he didn't talk, he whined*.

8. Ask students to cover up the original dialogue and/or mask it on the board. Then, working in pairs, they should try and reconstruct it, using the reported speech version as an aid.

CONSOLIDATION

1. Organise the class into pairs or small groups. Ask each group to write a short (6 to 8-line) dialogue, in direct speech, of a similar type to the one in *Discovery*, ie, of a couple either having an argument, or, after an argument, making up.
2. They then exchange their dialogues with another group and transpose these into reported speech.
3. The new versions of the dialogue are returned to the original group for checking and commentary.

USE

1. Organise the class into groups of three. Nominate a topic, such as *Daily routine* or *Free-time activities* or *Favourite movie*. Two students in each group then have a short conversation - half a minute is probably enough - while the third student listens.

2. Ask selected "listeners" to briefly report to the class on the conversation that they were the observers of, using reported speech.
3. Continue the activity, this time changing the topic, and the roles, so that there is a new listener in each group. Repeat a third time, so that everyone has had a chance to listen and report.

Section B

LEAD-IN ACTIVITIES

• Quotation from a young adult novel

Read out the following text to your students.

Jeff, a high school student, visits Ellen, a classmate, to apologise for his rude behaviour towards her at school.

'Hey, Ellen, I said, '... listen Ellen, don't cry. Listen... I... I'm sorry. I didn't mean what I said.'

'Yes, you did,' she said. 'You did mean it.'

'No, I didn't,' I lied. 'It was just a lousy day for me. You know how it is sometimes. You have a lousy day, and you just say stupid things that you don't mean. Honestly, Ellen, I didn't mean it.'

Marilyn Sachs. *The Fat Girl*, Corgi Freeway 1987, p.45

• Personalising the topic

1. Talk about a situation in which you said something different from what you thought or felt.
2. Ask your students what the reason for your behaviour might have been and note their ideas on the board. For example:

• Interaction

1. Ask your students to write down key words for a situation in which what they said was different from what they thought.
2. Ask them to share their recollections in groups of four.

SECOND RECONSTRUCTION

1. Hand out copies of the jumbled text below.
2. Working individually, students put it in the correct order.

Variation

Put the text on an OHP or on the board for students to copy.

Jumbled text B

*when she explained all the details,
when she showed me her new machine,
But I felt good about my lies
but I thought that
I said 'how interesting'
playing chess with a machine was awful.
because she is such a lovely girl.
but I thought that a computer was
I said 'wow'
I said 'marvellous'
when she played a game on the screen,
but I thought that the view from her room was nice.
the last thing I would buy for myself.*

Model text B

I said 'how interesting'

*when she showed me her new machine,
but I thought that a computer was
the last thing I would buy for myself.*

I said 'marvellous'

*when she explained all the details,
but I thought that the view from her room was nice.*

I said 'wow'

*when she played a game on the screen,
but I thought that
playing chess with a machine was awful.*

But I felt good about my lies

because she is such a lovely girl.

TEXT CREATION

1. Following the model, your students write their own texts. Allow about fifteen minutes.
2. Students read their texts out loud.