

Reported speech

Nikita said "I like art very much."

Nikita said **he liked** art very much.

We often move the tense of a verb one step back in reported speech because the original words happened before the reported speech:

original words	reported speech
<i>'I'm sorry. I can't do that.'</i>	<i>She said she couldn't.</i>
present tense	past tense

Original words	Reported speech
<p>Present simple / present continuous: <i>'I'm going to the supermarket to buy food for the party.'</i></p>	<p>Past simple / past continuous: <i>She said she was going shopping.</i></p>
<p>Past simple / past continuous: <i>'He went in to work late yesterday.'</i></p>	<p>Past perfect simple / continuous: <i>She told me he'd gone into work late yesterday.</i></p>
<p>Present perfect simple / continuous: <i>'I've had a terrible cold, but I'm better now.'</i></p>	<p>Past perfect simple / continuous: <i>She said she'd had a really bad cold.</i></p>
<p>Past perfect simple / continuous: <i>'I'd been having loads of trouble with my washing machine so I finally got the plumber in yesterday.'</i></p>	<p>Past perfect simple / continuous: <i>She told me she'd been having trouble with her washing machine but she's had it fixed now.</i></p>
<p>Will: <i>'My mother will water my plants whilst I'm away.'</i></p>	<p>Would: <i>She told me her mother would look after her plants until she gets back.</i></p>
<p>Be going to + verb: <i>'They're going to have a big celebration.'</i></p>	<p>Was / were going to + verb: <i>She said they were going to have a big party.</i></p>

In general, the *present* form in direct speech changes to the *past* form in reported speech:

am/is → was

do/does → did

will → would

are → were

have/has → had

can → could

want/like/know/go etc. → wanted/liked/knew/went etc.

direct speech → reported speech

here → there now → then

this/these → that/those

today → that day

yesterday → the day before/
the previous day

tomorrow → the next/following day

next week/month/year →
the following week/
month/year

last week/month/year →
the previous week/
month/year

three days ago → three days before/
earlier