



The News Behind the News

How the same event can sound completely different depending on who tells it

B2

Reading

Grammar

40 min

Lesson Objectives

- Read two contrasting news reports about the same event
- Learn vocabulary related to media and journalism
- Use reported speech for statements, questions and commands
- Understand tense shifts and pronoun changes
- Discuss media bias and how news is reported
- Write a short report using reported speech

1 Before You Read

- Where do you usually get your news — TV, social media, newspapers, or apps? Do you trust what you read?
- Have you ever seen the same story reported differently by two news sources?
- What do you think 'media bias' means?

2 Reading: Two Reports, One Event

"The same event. Two newspapers. Two completely different stories."

On 15 March, hundreds of protesters gathered outside City Hall to demonstrate against a new housing development planned for Riverside Park. Two local newspapers both covered the event.

Report A — The Daily Herald

"Angry mob causes chaos at City Hall," the headline **said**. The reporter **wrote** that approximately 300 people **had gathered** outside the building. A council spokesperson **told** reporters that the protesters "**were** putting public safety at risk." She **added** that the development **would** create 500 new jobs. The paper **reported** that three people **had been arrested** for disorderly behaviour.

Report B — The City Post

"Residents fight to save beloved park," the headline **announced**. The reporter **explained** that concerned citizens **had organised** a peaceful rally. A community leader **said** that they "**were** not against progress" but that the park **was** "irreplaceable." She **asked** the council **to reconsider**. Mr. Davies **told** the paper that he **had lived** near the park for 20 years. He **stated** that nobody **had asked** residents for their opinion.

Both articles described the same event, yet the language choices — "mob" versus "citizens" — reveal very different perspectives. Understanding how news is reported is just as important as understanding what is reported.

3 Vocabulary

Word	Definition	Example
protester	person who publicly disagrees	<i>Protesters gathered outside parliament.</i>
demonstrate	to take part in a public protest	<i>Thousands demonstrated against the law.</i>
mob	large, disorderly crowd (negative)	<i>The paper described them as a mob.</i>
spokesperson	speaks officially for a group	<i>A spokesperson denied the claims.</i>
disorderly	behaving in a chaotic way	<i>Charged with disorderly conduct.</i>
citizen	legal member of a country/city	<i>Citizens have the right to protest.</i>
rally	large public meeting for a cause	<i>A rally was held in support.</i>
neighbourhood	local area within a town	<i>It's a quiet neighbourhood.</i>
community	people living in one area	<i>The community came together.</i>
irreplaceable	too valuable to be replaced	<i>These trees are irreplaceable.</i>
opinion	a personal view or judgement	<i>Everyone has their own opinion.</i>
reveal	to make something known	<i>The report revealed statistics.</i>
perspective	a way of looking at something	<i>See it from a different perspective.</i>
version	a particular account of events	<i>They gave different versions.</i>
bias	unfair preference for/against	<i>The article showed clear bias.</i>
headline	the title of a news article	<i>The headline grabbed attention.</i>

Collocations: break the news • hit the headlines • make a statement • hold a rally • peaceful protest • media coverage • public opinion • report on

4 Grammar Focus: Reported Speech

□ In the Text, You Saw...

- Direct: "We are not against progress." → Reported: She **said** they **were** not against progress.
- Direct: "Nobody has asked us." → Reported: He **stated** nobody **had asked** residents.
- Direct: "Please reconsider." → Reported: She **asked** the council **to reconsider**.
- Direct: "The development will create jobs." → Reported: She **added** it **would** create jobs.

When we report what someone said, we usually shift the tense one step back.

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
Present Simple: "I work here."	Past Simple: She said she worked there.
Present Continuous: "I am working."	Past Continuous: She said she was working.
Past Simple: "I worked late."	Past Perfect: She said she had worked late.
Present Perfect: "I have finished."	Past Perfect: She said she had finished.
will: "I will call you."	would: She said she would call me.
can: "I can help."	could: She said she could help.

REPORTED QUESTIONS

- Yes/No: "Do you agree?" → He asked me if/whether I agreed.
- Wh-: "Where do you live?" → She asked me where I lived.

REPORTED COMMANDS & REQUESTS

- Command: "Stop filming!" → He told them to stop filming.
- Negative: "Don't touch." → She told us not to touch anything.

□ Reporting Verbs

Choose the verb that matches the speaker's intention: said, told, asked, explained, warned, admitted, denied, claimed, insisted, announced, added, stated, reported, noted.

△ Common Mistakes

- "He said me that..." → □ "He told me that..." (said = no object)
- "She asked where do I live." → □ "She asked where I lived."
- "He told to stop." → □ "He told them to stop." (told needs a person)

5 □ Exercise: Direct → Reported

Convert each direct speech sentence into reported speech.

1. "I am tired," she said.
→ _____
2. "We have finished," they told us.
→ _____
3. "I will call you tomorrow," he said.
→ _____
4. "I can speak French," she said.
→ _____
5. "Do you like coffee?" he asked me.
→ _____
6. "Where does she work?" I asked.
→ _____
7. "Don't open the door!" she told him.
→ _____
8. "Please sit down," the teacher said.
→ _____
9. "I was sleeping," he explained.
→ _____
10. "We are going to move," they announced.
→ _____

□ Answers

1. She said (that) she was tired.
2. They told us (that) they had finished.
3. He said he would call me the next day.
4. She said she could speak French.
5. He asked me if/whether I liked coffee.
6. I asked where she worked.
7. She told him not to open the door.
8. The teacher asked us to sit down.
9. He explained that he had been sleeping.
10. They announced that they were going to move.

6 □ Comprehension Quiz

1. What event did both newspapers report on?
Answer: A protest about a housing development in a park
2. How did The Daily Herald describe the protesters?
Answer: As an angry mob
3. What did the council spokesperson say?

Answer: The development would create 500 new jobs

4. What did Mr. Davies complain about?

Answer: Nobody had asked residents for their opinion

5. Convert: "I am happy." She said...

Answer: She said she was happy. (present → past)

6. He told ___ that he was tired.

Answer: me (told needs a person object)

7. Report: "Where did you go?" She asked me...

Answer: where I had gone (normal order + tense shift)

8. Report: "Don't run!" He told them...

Answer: not to run (told + person + not to + verb)

7 ➡ Fill in the Blanks

Word box: said • told • reported • asked • warned • claimed • explained • announced

1. She ___ that she was leaving early.
2. He ___ me that the meeting had been cancelled.
3. The reporter ___ that the protest had been peaceful.
4. She ___ me if I had seen the news.
5. The manager ___ us not to be late.
6. He ___ that he had never been there before.
7. The witness ___ that she had heard a loud noise.
8. The president ___ that changes would be made.

📄 **Answers:** 1. said • 2. told • 3. reported • 4. asked • 5. warned • 6. claimed • 7. explained • 8. announced

8 📄 Speaking & Writing

📄 Discussion Questions

1. Do you think the two reports were fair? Which seemed more biased?
2. How can readers identify bias in a news article?
3. Should journalists always be neutral, or is it acceptable to show opinions?
4. Have you ever believed a news story that turned out to be misleading?
5. How has social media changed the way news is reported?

□ Example Dialogue

A: Did you see the news about the factory closure?

B: Yes! The BBC reported that 200 workers had lost their jobs.

A: The spokesperson said they were restructuring, not closing.

B: She claimed that no jobs would be lost.

A: But the union leader denied that and insisted workers had been unfairly treated.

B: It depends who you ask — both sides have their version.

✍ Writing Task

Imagine you witnessed a small event. Write a short report (80–120 words) using reported speech:

- What did the people involved say?
- What did witnesses report?
- What did an official tell you?

Use at least 4 different reporting verbs.

9 □ Review Checklist

I can now...

- understand how the same event can be reported differently
- use vocabulary related to media and journalism
- change direct speech into reported speech with correct tense shifts
- report questions using if/whether and wh- words
- report commands and requests using told + to
- discuss media bias and write a report using reported speech



Congratulations!

You have completed Lesson 2: The News Behind the News.