



Module 5 – Reported Speech & Gerunds/Infinitives

Title: "Telling, Saying, and -ing vs To..."

[Section 1 – Reported Speech]

When switching from direct to reported speech, we often need to shift verb tenses, especially when the reporting verb (e.g., said, told me, asked) is in the past.

Direct Speech Tense	Reported Speech Tense	Example
Present Simple	Past Simple	"I eat pizza." → He said he ate pizza.
Present Continuous	Past Continuous	"I am eating." → She said she was eating .
Present Perfect	Past Perfect	"I have eaten." → He said he had eaten .
Present Perfect Continuous	Past Perfect Continuous	"I have been eating." → She said she had been eating .
Past Simple	Past Perfect	"I ate pizza." → He said he had eaten pizza.
Past Continuous	Past Perfect Continuous	"I was eating." → She said she had been eating .



Past Perfect	Past Perfect (no change)	"I had eaten." → He said he had eaten .
Past Perfect Continuous	Past Perfect Continuous (no change)	"I had been eating." → She said she had been eating .
Will	Would	"I will go." → He said he would go .
Can	Could	"I can swim." → She said she could swim.
May	Might	"I may come." → He said he might come.
Must	Had to (often)	"I must leave." → She said she had to leave.

Time and place expressions also shift:

- "today" → that day
- "tomorrow" → the next day
- "yesterday" → the day before
- "here" → there
- "now" → then

Tip: If the reporting verb is in the present tense, you don't need to change the tense of the original statement:

- Elena says, "I'm tired." → Elena says she is tired.

Suggestion vs. Statement

- Statement: "I'm going out now." → She said she was going out then.
- Suggestion: "Let's order pizza." → She suggested **ordering** pizza.

Reporting Questions and Commands

Yes/No Questions: Use **if** or **whether**.

- "Do you like coffee?" → He asked **if** I liked coffee.

Wh- Questions: Keep the question word, but use statement word order.

- "Where do you live?" → She asked **where** I lived.



- “What time did they leave?” → He asked **what time** they had left.

Commands and requests:

We use verbs like **tell, ask, advise, invite**, followed by an infinitive.

- “Please sit down.” → She asked me **to sit down**.
- “Don’t touch that!” → He told me **not to touch** that.

[Section 2 – Gerunds vs Infinitives]

Some verbs are **followed only by gerunds**:

- enjoy, avoid, admit, deny, suggest, consider, miss, finish, risk, mind

“She enjoys **cooking**.”

“He denied **stealing** the money.”

Some verbs are **followed only by infinitives**:

- agree, decide, hope, plan, learn, want, need, offer, refuse, promise

“They decided **to travel** abroad.”

“He promised **to call** later.”

Some verbs can be followed by **both**, but the meaning changes:

- **remember / forget / stop / try**

Remember / forget

- “I remember **locking** the door.” (I locked it, then remembered)
- “Remember **to lock** the door.” (Don’t forget to do it!)

Try

- “Try **adding** some lemon.” (an experiment or suggestion)
- “Try **to finish** by 5.” (make an effort)

More Real-Life Examples – Choosing Gerunds or Infinitives

- She suggested **going** to the new Italian restaurant.
- I can’t afford **to buy** a new car right now.
- They avoided **talking** about politics.
- He hopes **to get** a promotion soon.
- We discussed **moving** to a bigger house.



- I forgot **to bring** my wallet.

Adjective + Infinitive

- It's hard **to concentrate** when it's noisy.
- I'm happy **to help** you.

Too / Enough + Infinitive

- She's too young **to drive**.
- He isn't strong enough **to lift** it.

Mini Dialogue Examples – Combining Reported Speech and Verb Patterns

Direct speech: "I plan to take a break."

Reported: Elena said she **planned to take** a break.

Direct: "You should try meditating."

Reported: Maria advised **trying** meditation.

Direct: "We want to help with the cleanup."

Reported: They said they **wanted to help** with the cleanup.

Direct: "Don't forget to call the decorator."

Reported: Antonio reminded me **to call** the decorator.

Direct: "Why did she cancel the order?"

Reported: He asked **why she had cancelled** the order.

Tip Box – Common Confusions

Here is a further explanation:

Verb	Gerund or Infinitive?	Example
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suggest	gerund only	She suggested going out.
decide	infinitive only	He decided to leave early.
like	both, slight nuance	I like swimming / I like to swim .
begin, start	both, same meaning	She began crying / She began to cry .

In everyday conversation, we often report what others have said and talk about plans, preferences, and actions using gerunds or infinitives.

Mastering these structures helps you express yourself more precisely and naturally, whether you're planning a party or just telling a story.

Reading - lesson 5: Planning a family party

(Mastering reported speech & gerunds/infinitives in everyday conversation)

Story summary

This heartwarming family story centers around Elena's efforts to organize a 50th wedding anniversary celebration for her parents. The narrative unfolds through a series of phone conversations and family communications as Elena coordinates with relatives, vendors, and service providers across Italy. The story illustrates how we naturally convey information, engage in conversations, and discuss plans and preferences within family contexts. Through Elena's interactions with her sister Maria, brother Antonio, various cousins, and her parents, we see how reported speech is used to share information and coordinate activities.

The story also explores Elena's personal reflections on event planning, her relationships with family members, and the balance between giving and receiving help. The narrative shows how gerunds and infinitives are naturally used when discussing preferences, plans, activities, and personal feelings. Elena's experience planning this special celebration highlights the complexity of family dynamics and the importance of effective communication in maintaining strong relationships. The story provides authentic contexts for understanding how we report what others have said and how we express our own thoughts, preferences, and intentions using different verb forms.

"The family reunion"



Elena puts down her phone after a long conversation with her sister about organizing their parents' 50th wedding anniversary celebration. The family has been planning this event for months, and coordination is becoming quite complex.

"Maria told me that **she had already booked** the restaurant for next Saturday," Elena explains to her husband. "She said **she would call** the caterer today to confirm the menu details."

Her husband, David, looks up from his newspaper. "What did your brother say about the guest list?"

"Antonio claimed **he had invited** all the relatives from his side of the family. He mentioned **he was planning** to drive down from Milan with his wife and kids. He promised **he would arrive** early to help with the decorations."

Elena enjoys **organizing** family events, but she admits **planning** such a large celebration is stressful. She loves **bringing** everyone together, but she worries about **forgetting** important details.

"I need **to call** the florist today," she says, making a note in her agenda. "Maria suggested **ordering** white roses and baby's breath for the centerpieces. She recommended **choosing** simple arrangements because the venue is already quite elegant."

David offers **to help** with the preparations. "I don't mind **picking up** the flowers on Friday. I'm good at **carrying** heavy things, and I promised **to assist** with the setup."

Elena smiles. "That would be wonderful. I was worried about **managing** everything on my own. I hate **asking** for help, but I'm learning **to accept** assistance from others."

The phone rings again. It's Elena's cousin calling from Rome. "Francesca said **she couldn't come** because her daughter was sick. She explained **she had tried** to find a babysitter, but nobody was available. She apologized and said **she would send** a gift instead."

Elena understands the situation. "I told her **not to worry** about it. Family comes first, and we'll miss her, but we understand."

Later that evening, Elena's mother calls. "Mamma told me **she had been thinking** about the party all day. She said **she felt** overwhelmed by everyone's kindness. She mentioned **she had never expected** such a big celebration."

"What did Papa say?" Elena asks.

"He claimed **he didn't want** a big fuss, but Mamma said **he was secretly excited**. She told me **he had been** talking about it with his friends at the coffee bar."

Elena stops **reading** her planning notes to answer another call. It's the restaurant manager confirming the final details. He says **they will prepare** a special menu and **they have reserved** the private dining room.

"I'm tired of **making** phone calls," Elena sighs. "But I love **seeing** how excited everyone is about the celebration. It's worth **spending** all this time and energy to make our parents happy."



David suggests **taking** a break from planning. "Why don't we stop **working** on this tonight and go for a walk? We can continue **organizing** tomorrow."

Elena agrees. "You're right. I need **to take a break** for a while. All this planning is exhausting, but I know I'll regret **not doing** everything perfectly for such a special occasion."