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ENGLISH GRAMMAR IN PLAIN ENGLISH

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We can use [reported speech](#) to express orders, requests and advice.

Orders

An *order* is when somebody tells you to do something.

We can use '**tell**' with infinitives to report orders:

- *Jim's mum: Wash your hands! Dinner's ready!*
- *She **told him to wash** his hands.*

- *Jim's mum: Don't touch that pan – it's hot!*
- *She **told him not to touch** the pan.*

The structure here is:

tell + someone + (not) to do something

The most common verb for reporting an order is '*tell*', but we can also use other verbs such as: *order, command, instruct*:

- *The sergeant **commanded** his men to stand straight.*
- *The manager **instructed** his team to follow the guidelines.*

Note that the structure here is the same as with the verb 'tell'.

Requests

A *request* is when somebody asks you to do something – usually politely. We can use '*ask*' with infinitives to report requests:

- *Jim's mum: Can you wash your hands? Dinner's ready!*

- She ***asked him to wash*** his hands.

- *Jim's mum: Don't touch that pan – it's hot!*
- She ***asked him not to touch*** the pan.

The structure here is:

ask + someone + (not) to do something

Requests for objects

When we want that somebody gives us something, we can '*ask for*' it:

- *Jim: Mum, can I have some bread?*
- *Jim **asked** her **for** some bread.*

- *Jim's sister: Could I have a glass of water?*
- *Jim's sister **asked for** a glass of water.*

The structure here is:

ask (someone) for + object

Let's summarize these structures:

![×]

via https://keepsmilingenglish.com/2015/12/reported-speech-the-basics/

Other reporting verbs

We can also use a lot of other verbs in reported speech.
We can use the verbs '*suggest*', '*insist*', '*recommend*', '*demand*', '*request*', and '*propose*' to report **advice and suggestions**. Some of them follow the same pattern:

- *She **ordered** him **to wash** his hands.*
- *She **advised** him **to wash** his hands.*
- *She **ordered** him **not to touch** the pan.*
- *She **advised** him **not to touch** the pan.*

For example, we can transform the following direct speech sentences into reported speech:

- *Come on. Eat your vegetables. They're good for you!*
- She **persuaded** *him to eat* his vegetables.

- *Remember to wash the dishes.*
- She **reminded** *him to wash* the dishes.

- *Don't forget!*
- She **warned** *him not to forget.*

Sometimes the pattern is different:

- *OK, Mum. I'll wash the dishes.*
- He **promised** *to wash* the dishes.
- NOT: ~~He promised her to wash the dishes.~~

- *Why don't you watch TV?*
- He **suggested (that) she should** *watch* TV.
- He **suggested (that) she watch** TV.

'That' and 'should' are optional in these clauses.

Note that '*suggest*', '*recommend*', and '*propose*' may also be followed by a **gerund.**

You can also say:

- He **suggested watching** TV.
- NOT: ~~He suggested her to watch TV.~~
- NOT: ~~He suggested to watch TV.~~

Because we use the infinitive, there is no need to worry about tense. But as with reported statements and reported questions, we may need to change **pronouns** as well as **time** and **place** in reported requests.

Consider the example:

- *They said to the architect: "We'd like you to meet **us** here **tomorrow**."*
- *They asked the architect to meet **them** there **the next day**.*

Watch this small video explaining how reported speech is used for orders and requests:

See also:

[Reported Speech: Overview](#)

[Reported Speech: Tenses](#)