



APEX ENGLISH

Your voice. Global.

B1 · GENERAL ENGLISH

UNIT 8 · B1·8B

She said, they said

Theme · Media & tech



Unit 8 · B1·8B

She said, they said

Theme: Media & tech

B1 · General English



Learning objectives

- Report what other people said, without quoting them directly.
- Use reported speech with 'say' and 'tell' (and the tense shift).
- Talk about news, gossip and the strange life of information online.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Class Book

Warm-up · A rumour you once believed

Think of ONE rumour or 'fact' you once believed — and then discovered was false. Describe in 3 sentences: what it was, where you heard it, and when you found out the truth.

What was the rumour?

Who told you?

How did you find out it wasn't true?

Lead-in · Predict the headline

Read each 'clue' (the first sentence of a real news story). Guess what the headline was. Then reveal.

1. A 34-year-old man in Osaka has admitted spending €12,000 on a robot cat because he 'felt guilty leaving his real cat home alone'.

2. For the first time in history, more people over 65 own a smartphone than under-25s own a fixed line.

3. A woman in Lisbon tried to return a coffee machine after 3 years, arguing the manual was 'in the wrong language for her mood'.

4. An American teenager has made \$200,000 in one year by teaching adults how to text 'normally'.

5. A study of 5,000 couples found that couples who watch the SAME series together are 30% happier than those who watch separately.

followUp: Which headline sounds most made-up but is real? Which one would you click on?

Reading · A message forwarded 40 times

My aunt sent me a WhatsApp message yesterday. It came with the little 'forwarded many times' arrow. The message said the government had announced a new tax on family gifts over €100. My aunt was worried — she was planning to give my cousin €200 for her birthday. She asked if I could confirm the story.

I checked. The message was two years old. It came from a country that isn't mine. The 'new tax' had never existed anywhere. But by the time I explained all this, she had already forwarded the message to eleven other people. They had also forwarded it. Somewhere, this rumour is still travelling.

The tricky thing about false information is that it doesn't feel false. It feels like someone caring. My aunt didn't send it because she wanted to lie — she sent it because she was scared and wanted to protect the family. And that's why these messages travel so fast. They ride on love.

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1. What was the false story?
 - (A) A new tax on family gifts
 - (B) A new law about phones
 - (C) A new type of coffee
2. How old was the message?
 - (A) One week
 - (B) Two years
 - (C) Ten years
3. Why does the writer think these messages travel so fast?
 - (A) Because they're funny
 - (B) Because they ride on love and fear
 - (C) Because they're free

Vocabulary in context

Match the phrase to its meaning.

forwarded — sent again to someone else

confirm — check that something is true

false information — content that isn't true

ride on (something) — travel by using it as a vehicle

True / False / Not Given

Based only on the text.

1. The aunt sent the message out of malice.
 - (A) True
 - (B) False
 - (C) Not Given
2. The rumour is still travelling somewhere.
 - (A) True
 - (B) False
 - (C) Not Given
3. The writer's cousin is 21.
 - (A) True
 - (B) False
 - (C) Not Given

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4. False information often travels because people care.

- (A) True
- (B) False
- (C) Not Given

React to the text

Answer in 2–3 sentences.

1. Do you ever get forwarded messages from relatives? What do you do with them?

2. Do you agree that fake news 'rides on love'?

Scan for meaning

Find the word or phrase from the text.

1. sent again to someone else

2. check that something is true

3. travel by using it as a vehicle

Vocabulary · News & media

headline — the big title of a news story

article — a written piece of news

journalist — a person who writes news

source — where the information comes from

sensationalist headline — a title designed only to make you click

disinformation — false information made to look real

spread (a rumour) — make it travel from person to person

share (a post) — publish it to your own followers

trending — very popular right now

fact-check — verify if something is true

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go viral — become suddenly very popular

cover a story — report on a story (as a journalist)

practice

Complete each sentence with ONE word or phrase from the lists.

1. That ____ is pure ____ — 'You won't believe what happened next!'

2. Please ____ ____ it before you send it to your family group.

3. That video is ____ this week — 5 million views.

4. The ____ interviewed three people for the ____.

5. Always ask: what's the ____ of this information?

6. Rumours ____ fastest when people are scared.

Collocations · news & speech

Match each verb with its noun.

break — the news / a story / a rumour

spread — a rumour / news / a lie

publish — an article / a book / a photo

quote — a source / a witness / a politician

deny — a rumour / an accusation / responsibility

Odd one out

Choose the word that does NOT belong.

1. journalist · reporter · editor · astronaut

(A) journalist

(B) reporter

(C) editor

(D) astronaut

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2. headline · article · caption · onion

(A) headline

(B) article

(C) caption

(D) onion

3. trending · viral · popular · frozen

(A) trending

(B) viral

(C) popular

(D) frozen

Word building · verb ↔ noun

Complete each pair.

utility:

1. inform → the ____

2. report → a ____

3. publish → a ____

4. quote → a ____



Grammar · Reported speech (say / tell) with tense shift

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1. What reported speech does — Reports what someone said, WITHOUT quotation marks and usually with a tense shift. • Direct: 'I'm tired,' she said. • Reported: She said (that) she was tired.

2. Tense shift (main verb goes 'one step back') — • present simple → past simple ('I work' → he said he worked) • present continuous → past continuous ('I'm working' → he said he was working) • present perfect → past perfect ('I've seen it' → he said he had seen it) • past simple → past perfect ('I went' → he said he had gone) • will → would ('I will call' → he said he would call) • can → could ('I can help' → he said he could help).

3. SAY vs TELL — • TELL needs a person immediately after it → She told ME (that) she was tired. ■ • SAY does NOT take a person directly → She said (that) she was tired. ■ / She said me... ■

4. Pronouns and time expressions also change — • 'I' → she/he ; 'my' → her/his • today → that day ; yesterday → the day before ; tomorrow → the next day / the following day • here → there ; now → then

Exercise A — Change to reported speech

Rewrite each sentence in reported speech (use SAID unless a person is given).

1. 'I'm tired,' she said.

2. 'We work in Braga,' they told me.

3. 'I've finished the report,' he said.

4. 'I'll call you tomorrow,' she said.

5. 'I can help you,' he told her.

Exercise B — say or tell?

Complete each sentence with the correct verb form.

1. She ____ me she was tired.

2. He ____ that he had finished.

3. They ____ us the truth.

4. The teacher ____ we could leave early.

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5. Please don't ____ anything to your brother.

Exercise C — Find and fix the mistake

Each sentence has ONE mistake.

1. She said me she was tired.

2. He said that he will call tomorrow.

3. They told that they were happy.

4. She said me she likes it.

Exercise D — Rewrite in reported speech

Rewrite each short quote.

1. 'I don't have time today,' Rui said.

2. 'We're going on holiday next month,' they told us.

3. 'I saw her yesterday,' he said.

Exercise E — About you

Report ONE thing each of these people has recently said to you.

1. Your mother (in the last week).

2. Your boss OR teacher.

3. A close friend.

Exercise F — Complete the mini-gossip

Complete each gap with the correct reported form.

1. Ana ____ (say) that she ____ (be) tired and she ____ (need) a break.

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2. He ____ (tell) me that he ____ (already / finish) the project and ____ (will/send) it that afternoon.

Listening · A brief phone gossip

Two friends catch up on some workplace gossip. Notice how they report what other people said, with tense shifts.

pre

Do you like office gossip? Where's the line between chat and gossip?

What's the wildest thing a colleague has ever told you?

gist

1. Who is the main person being talked about?

2. Why is she leaving?

3. How did the news break?

detail

1. What did Marta reportedly say about her salary?

2. What did the boss promise the team?

3. What did another colleague, Rui, say?

Third listen — read between the lines

Answer from what is IMPLIED.

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1. How does Voice A feel about Marta leaving?

2. Is Rui really a 'prophet'?

Useful language from the audio

Match each phrase to what it does.

"She said (that) she wanted a career change." — reported statement with 'said'

"He told the team he would hire two people." — reported speech with 'told + person'

"Rui said he'd seen it coming." — reported speech + past perfect shift

"Apparently..." — signals a piece of second-hand information

"I'll miss her, actually." — expresses genuine feeling

Voice A: Wait — you haven't heard? Marta's leaving.

Voice B: What? Marketing Marta? Since when?

Voice A: Announced yesterday. The boss told the whole team in a quick 10am meeting. Then the WhatsApp group exploded, obviously.

Voice B: Where's she going?

Voice A: A small food-tech start-up in Porto. She said she wanted a career change. She told the boss the money wasn't the reason — she wanted, quote, 'to build something small'.

Voice B: That sounds like her.

Voice A: And the boss said he'd hire two people to replace her by summer. Which, honestly — good luck.

Voice B: Rui must be enjoying this. He always thinks he sees things coming.

Voice A: Oh, he's insufferable. He told everyone he'd seen it coming for six months. Apparently he's 'basically a prophet' now.

Voice B: Of course he is.

Voice A: I'll miss her, actually. She's the one who kept the meetings under 30 minutes.

Voice B: The team's about to become 40% longer. Grim.

Fourth listen — fill the gaps

Listen again and complete the exact phrases.

1. She ____ she ____ a career change.

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2. He ____ the team he ____ hire two people.

3. Rui ____ he ____ seen it coming.

4. ____, he's 'basically a prophet' now.

Speaking · Play the messenger

In pairs. Student A whispers a short piece of 'news' to Student B (a real headline, a fake headline, or something about themselves). Student B then reports it to the whole class in reported speech.

Scene: Report from a friend

A: You: whisper a piece of news to your partner.

B: You: report it out loud, correctly.

Scene: Report from a boss / teacher

A: You: whisper something authoritative.

B: You: report it politely and clearly.

Scene: Report from a family member

A: You: whisper family gossip.

B: You: report it (kindly).

Discussion · media & gossip

Choose 2 questions and speak for 30–45 seconds each.

Where do you get most of your news? Do you trust it?

Is gossip always bad, or can it be useful?

What's the last thing you read that turned out to be fake?

Would you rather be famous or invisible?

Role-play · Correcting your aunt's WhatsApp

Read your role, prepare, then run the conversation for 2 minutes.

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Scene: Your aunt has just forwarded a fake news message to the family group

A: You: politely explain it's fake, without embarrassing her.

B: You: the aunt. Defensive at first. Prepare 2 reasons why you thought it was true.

Mini-presentation · 60-second news round-up

Deliver a 60-second round-up of THREE things people (family, friends, colleagues) said to you this week. Use reported speech throughout.

Beat 1 (10s) — Something a family member said.

Beat 2 (15s) — Something a colleague / classmate said.

Beat 3 (20s) — Something you saw or read online — and whether you believe it.

Beat 4 (15s) — One thing YOU said this week that you're proud of.

sample: My mother said I was working too much and needed a haircut — both true. My colleague Sofia told me she'd found a flat with a proper garden and paid less than her old studio — hard to believe. I read online that a study said couples who watch series together are 30% happier, and honestly, that one I trust. And I said something I'm proud of this week: I told my boss I couldn't do the extra weekend project, without apologising three times. Small win.

Writing · A short 'this week people said' post

Write 80–100 words summarising THREE things people said to you this week. Use reported speech throughout. Include at least one 'told + person'.

bonus: Bonus — Rewrite the same paragraph as three direct quotes with quotation marks.

Wrap-up · What did we cover?

Reported speech: shift tense back one step (present → past, will → would).

TELL needs a person right after it; SAY does not.

Also shift pronouns and time words (today → that day, tomorrow → the next day).

Fake news travels because it 'rides on love and fear' — check before you forward.

Quiz

1. "I'm tired," she said." → Reported:

- (A) She said she is tired.
- (B) She said she was tired.
- (C) She said her tired.

2. Which is CORRECT?

- (A) She told that she was late.
- (B) She said me she was late.
- (C) She told me she was late.

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3. "'I'll call you tomorrow,' he said." → Reported:

- (A) He said he will call me tomorrow.
- (B) He said he would call me the next day.
- (C) He told he'll call me.

4. 'Fact-check' means...

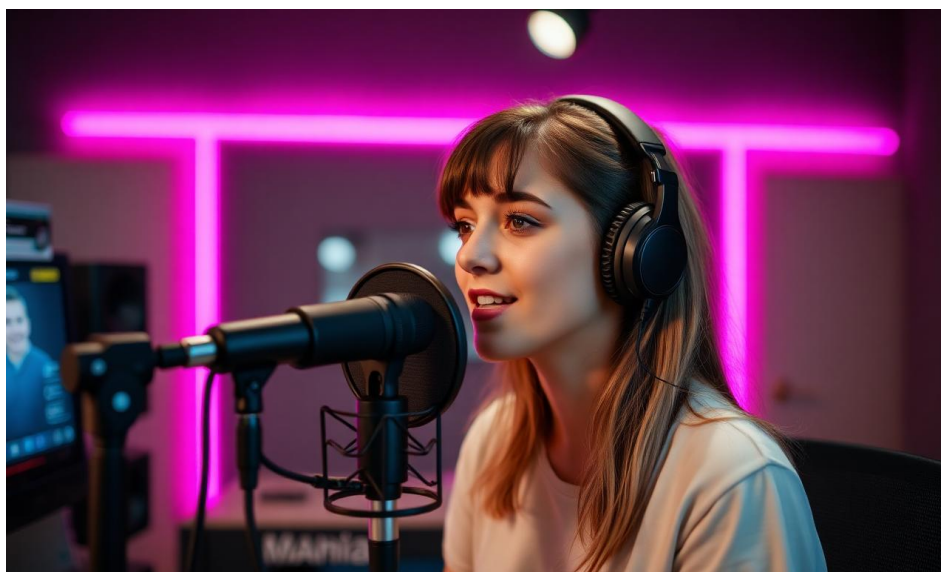
- (A) publish a story
- (B) verify if something is true
- (C) share a post

5. 'Clickbait' means...

- (A) a fishing tool
- (B) a title designed only to get clicks
- (C) a fast internet connection



Workbook — home practice



1. Vocabulary recall

Complete each sentence with the best word from the class-book lesson.

1. Write ONE new word from the lesson and its meaning in your own words.

2. Write ONE collocation from the lesson and use it in a sentence about your life.

3. Write ONE phrase you'd use in real conversation this week.

2. Grammar practice · Reported speech (say / tell)

Rewrite each sentence using the target grammar of this lesson.

1. Sentence 1 → rewrite it correctly with the target grammar.

2. Sentence 2 → rewrite it correctly with the target grammar.

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3. Sentence 3 → find and fix ONE mistake.

4. Sentence 4 → complete the gap with the correct form.

5. Sentence 5 → write your own example, true about you.

3. Reading recall

Look back at the class-book reading. Answer briefly in your own words.

1. What was the main idea in ONE sentence?

2. What is ONE opinion of the writer you agree with?

3. What is ONE opinion you disagree with, and why?

4. Listening · a follow-up dialogue

Two voices talk about media & tech for about a minute. Notice the target grammar in use.

1. What is the main topic of the conversation?

2. Who sounds more confident and why?

3. Which target-grammar phrase appears TWICE in the audio?

Voice A: So — tell me about your media & tech this week. Anything different?

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Voice B: Honestly, yes. I've been trying something new — and it's changed how I feel completely.

Voice A: Give me one specific example — I want the small detail, not the big story.

Voice B: OK: I stopped checking my phone before bed. Just that. And I already sleep better.

5. Writing · a short reflection

Write 70–100 words about the theme of this lesson. Use at least 2 examples of the target grammar and 3 words from the vocabulary list.

6. Reflection

Look back at your notes from class. Answer briefly.

1. What is ONE thing from this lesson you already use naturally?

2. What is ONE thing you'd like to practise more this week? How exactly?

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Answer key — Class Book

Lead-in · Predict the headline

1. Headline: 'Man buys robot cat to keep real cat company.' (BBC, 2022 — a real story.)
2. Headline: 'The end of the landline — grandparents overtake grandchildren.' (Ofcom, 2023.)
3. Headline: 'Coffee machine refused refund — court sides with shop.' (Público, 2024, satirical section.)
4. Headline: 'Teen charges \$80 an hour to fix your texting.' (NYT, 2023.)
5. Headline: 'The couple that streams together, stays together.' (Netflix / OII study, 2022.)

Reading · A message forwarded 40 times

1. (A) A new tax on family gifts
2. (B) Two years
3. (B) Because they ride on love and fear
1. (B) False
2. (A) True
3. (C) Not Given
4. (A) True
1. Model: yes — from an aunt, weekly. I check the ones that scare me and quietly ignore the rest.
2. Model: yes — most people share bad information because they think they're protecting someone, not because they enjoy lying.
1. forwarded
2. confirm
3. ride on

Vocabulary · News & media

1. headline / sensationalist headline
2. fact-check
3. trending / going viral
4. journalist / article
5. source
6. spread
1. (D) astronaut
2. (D) onion
3. (D) frozen
1. information
2. report / reporter
3. publication
4. quote / quotation

Grammar · Reported speech (say / tell) with tense shift

1. She said (that) she was tired.
2. They told me (that) they worked in Braga.
3. He said (that) he had finished the report.
4. She said (that) she would call me the next day.
5. He told her (that) he could help her.
1. told
2. said
3. told
4. said
5. say
1. She told me she was tired. / She said (that) she was tired.
2. He said (that) he would call the next day.
3. They said that they were happy. / They told us that they were happy.
4. She told me she liked it.
1. Rui said (that) he didn't have time that day.
2. They told us (that) they were going on holiday the following month.

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3. He said (that) he had seen her the day before.

1. Model: My mother told me that I was working too much and needed a haircut.

2. Model: My boss said (that) she was very happy with my last report.

3. Model: My friend Ines told me (that) she was thinking of moving to Amsterdam next year.

1. said / was / needed

2. told / had already finished / would send

Listening · A brief phone gossip

1. Marta from the marketing team — she's just announced she's leaving.

2. She said she wanted a career change — she's moving to a small food-tech start-up in Porto.

3. The boss told the team in a quick 10am meeting; then a WhatsApp group exploded.

1. She told the boss the money wasn't the reason — she wanted 'to build something small'.

2. He said he would hire two people to replace her by the summer.

3. He told everyone he'd seen it coming for six months — he was 'basically a prophet'.

1. A mix of happy for her, sad for the team — several small sighs and 'we'll miss her' phrases.

2. Almost certainly not — the tone when they mention him is amused; he probably guessed after everyone else.

1. said / wanted

2. told / would

3. said / had

4. Apparently

Quiz

1. (B) She said she was tired.

2. (C) She told me she was late.

3. (B) He said he would call me the next day.

4. (B) verify if something is true

5. (B) a title designed only to get clicks

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Answer key — Workbook

1. Vocabulary recall

1. Open answer — check with your teacher.
2. Open answer.
3. Open answer.

2. Grammar practice · Reported speech (say / tell)

1. Model answer — see class notes.
2. Model answer — see class notes.
3. Model answer — see class notes.
4. Model answer — see class notes.
5. Open answer.

3. Reading recall

1. Open answer — around 15 words.
2. Open answer.
3. Open answer — 2 sentences.

4. Listening · a follow-up dialogue

1. Model: both speakers compare their own experience of media & tech.
2. Open answer — look for specific detail and full sentences.
3. Open answer — see transcript.

6. Reflection

1. Open answer.
2. Open answer — be specific: what, when, how often.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class