

When we use Reported Speech, we are usually talking about the past (because obviously the person who spoke originally spoke in the past).

For example:

Direct speech: "I've lost my umbrella."

Reported speech: He said (that) he had lost his umbrella.

The verbs therefore usually have to be in the past too.

Verb Form Changes in Reported Speech

Can into Could

- Could (The verb remains unchanged)

Have to into Had to

-Must into Must/Had to

May into Might Might (The verb remains unchanged)

-Should (The verb remains unchanged)

TENSE CHANGES IN REPORTED SPEECH	
Direct Speech	Reported Speech
Present Simple She always wears a coat.	Past Simple He said (that) she always wore a coat.
Present Continuous I'm looking for my keys.	Past Continuous She said (that) she was looking for her keys.
Present Perfect She has written three letters for her friend.	Past Perfect He said (that) she had written three letters for her friend.
Past Simple My friend gave me a bar of chocolate.	Past Perfect He said (that) his friend had given him a bar of chocolate.
WILL I will finish my report in two days.	WOULD He said (that) he would finish his report in two days.
CAN I can speak English.	COULD She said (that) she could speak English.
MAY I may invite them to dinner.	MIGHT She said (that) she might invite them to the dinner.
MUST I must go to the bank and get some money.	HAD TO She said (that) she had to go to the bank and get some money.
HAVE TO I have to submit this assignment by 3 pm tomorrow.	HAD TO She said (that) she had to submit this assignment by 3 pm tomorrow.