

Reporting verbs

When we report what someone has said, we are unlikely to use exactly the same words as in the original speech. We can choose from many different reporting verbs to help us convey the general idea using fewer words than in the original speech. Here are some common reporting verbs:

reporting verb (+ that)
agree, admit, announce, argue, believe, claim, complain, deny, explain, insist, promise, propose, reply, request, say, state, suggest, think, warn: <i>The director claimed (that) they decided to make the changes two years ago.</i>
reporting verb + someone + that
assure, inform, persuade, remind, tell: <i>He assured the interviewer that the company would continue to operate in the future.</i>
reporting verb + to-infinitive
agree, ask, claim, offer, promise, propose, refuse: <i>He promised to do his best for the employees.</i>
reporting verb + someone + to-infinitive
advise, ask, encourage, invite, persuade, remind, tell, urge, warn: <i>They urged the employees to stay calm.</i>
reporting verb + preposition + -ing / noun
argue about, complain about: <i>He complained about the terrible food.</i> apologise for: <i>The company apologised for causing redundancies.</i> insist on: <i>The manager insisted on seeing the staff.</i> complain to: <i>He complained to the manager.</i>
reporting verb + someone + preposition + -ing / noun
accuse of: <i>They accused the company of planning badly.</i> advise about, remind about: <i>They reminded her about the meeting.</i> advise on, congratulate on: <i>He advised me on the deal.</i> blame for, thank for: <i>They thanked her for coming.</i>
reporting verb + -ing / noun
accept, admit, deny, suggest: <i>The director denied having financial problems.</i> <i>The employees accepted the offer of early redundancy.</i>
reporting verb + someone (+ noun)
offer, promise, refuse: <i>He offered her a job.</i>

▲ Some of the same verbs can be used in different ways (e.g. admit, claim, offer, persuade):
West claimed that they decided to make the changes two years ago.
West claimed to have decided to make the changes two years ago.