

## Reported Speech (Telling stories)

### Read

#### THE MOST UNSUCCESSFUL PET RESCUE

Mrs Sarah Greenfield was worried because she hadn't seen her pet cat, Percy, for nearly two days. She told her neighbour, Frank Armstrong about it. Frank said he knew where Percy was and took her to a tall tree in the street. He pointed up at a branch near the top of the tree where Percy was sitting. Mrs Greenfield called out to her cat but it did not move. Then she asked Frank Armstrong what she should do. He suggested that she should telephone the fire brigade and ask them to help.

Mrs Greenfield went back to her house and phoned the local fire station. She told them about the cat and asked them to come and save the cat. Twenty minutes later, a big red fire engine parked outside Mrs Greenfield's house. Mrs Greenfield showed the fire officer where Percy was sitting in the tree. The fire officer asked Mrs Greenfield what the cat liked eating. She told him that Percy's favourite food was sardines. The fire officer said it would be difficult to catch the cat because it would be very frightened and asked her if she had got any sardines.

Mrs Greenfield opened a tin of sardines and gave it to the fire officer. The fire officer extended the tall ladders on the fire engine and climbed up to the cat. He held out the open tin of sardines and called to the cat. Percy was very hungry and he could smell the sardines. He scrambled towards the fire officer who caught him easily. From the top of the ladder, the fire officer called to Mrs Greenfield and told her he had caught the cat.

Mrs Greenfield was very happy and thanked the fire officer as he was climbing down the ladder. After the fire officer had handed the cat to Mrs Greenfield, she put it on the ground with the tin of sardines. Mrs Greenfield thanked the fire officer again and invited him to have a cup of tea and a slice of cake at her house. The fire officer accepted the invitation and they walked to her house.

Twenty minutes later, after two cups of tea and three slices of cake, the fire officer got into the big red fire engine and started the engine to drive away. Unfortunately, as he was reversing the fire engine, he ran over the cat and killed it.

### Exercises

#### 1 Read the story and work out who said...

- a) "It's all right. I've got him!" \_\_\_\_\_
- b) "Would you like to have a cup of tea and a slice of cake?" \_\_\_\_\_
- c) "I haven't seen Percy for two days." \_\_\_\_\_
- d) "He loves sardines." \_\_\_\_\_
- e) "I know where he is. I saw him this morning." \_\_\_\_\_
- f) "What do you think I should do?" \_\_\_\_\_
- g) "Why don't you phone the fire brigade?" \_\_\_\_\_
- h) "The cat'll be very frightened so it'll be difficult to catch." \_\_\_\_\_
- i) "Have you got any sardines?" \_\_\_\_\_
- j) "Would you like another slice of cake?" \_\_\_\_\_



## Reflection

**2** Look at your answers to Exercise 1. Look at the way that the spoken words are reported in the story. Notice the changes in verbs tenses between the spoken words and the report. Notice that not all the spoken lines are actually reported.

## Read

### HOW NOT TO IMPRESS YOUR NEW BOSS

After Peter and Fiona Tompkins got married, they moved into a very nice suburban house just outside Cardiff in Wales. Peter had just got a new job in the Welsh Tourism Board.

One Tuesday afternoon, just after Peter had started in his new job, Fiona was surprised when her husband phoned and said he had invited his new boss, Gwyn Williams, and his wife to come to dinner. Fiona was furious and told Peter she had no suitable food for them. He replied he was sure she would think of something adding that they would arrive at 7.30.

Fiona searched in her freezer and found some salmon. It was about two weeks beyond its 'sell by' date but she decided to risk it. She cut the head and tail off the fish and gave them to the cat. Then she used the meat to make a fish pie. She prepared some vegetables and found a bottle of German white wine.

At 7.30 the house was looking beautiful when Peter arrived with Mr and Mrs Williams. Fiona welcomed them to the house and offered them a glass of sherry before dinner. Mrs Williams asked how long they had been married and Fiona proudly showed them the photographs of their wedding.

Everyone enjoyed the dinner and Mr and Mrs Williams left at around ten o'clock. Peter and Fiona discussed the evening and decided it had been a great success. Peter was taking the rubbish out to the dustbin when he found the body of their pet cat lying on the front door step.

He went back to the kitchen where Fiona was washing the plates and told her about the cat. Fiona was horrified and told Peter that the salmon had been beyond its 'sell by' date.

Fiona slept very badly. She was convinced she had not only poisoned her husband but also her husband's new boss and his wife. At three o'clock in the morning Fiona woke up her husband and asked him if he was feeling ill. He said he was fine. Fiona told him about her worries. Peter said there was nothing they could do about it and persuaded her to go back to sleep.

In the morning, Peter decided to bury the cat. He dug a hole in the garden and then went to the front door to pick up the body of the cat. As he was picking up the body, he saw a small piece of white paper on the door step. He picked up the paper and read it. It said, "I'm terribly sorry but when we were reversing the car we ran over your cat." The note was signed by Gwyn Williams.

**3** Read the story and write an exercise like exercise 1. Write the actual words which were spoken by people in the story.

*[If you enjoyed these stories you might also enjoy "The Book of Heroic Failures" by Stephen Pile.]*



## Teacher's notes

There are plenty of grammar exercise books with formal exercises practising tense-shift and other traditional features of reported speech. This worksheet concentrates on reported speech in story-telling which goes beyond these formal tense-shift exercises.

- 1 The first exercise gives some lines of speech from the story and asks students to name the characters who said these lines. The lines are intentionally not listed in sequence with the story in order to make students think more carefully.
- 2 The second exercise prompts students to compare the spoken lines with the way they are reported in the story. Encourage students to talk about differences which they find. This will raise their sensitivity to reported speech.
- 3 In the third exercise, students attempt to write the actual words used by characters in a story. They may need help with this task but the process will

