CAPITOLO

7

In the News

Every story has a source. A good reader always asks what it is.

OBIETTIVI

1. I can talk about news and the media, name the parts of a front page and understand headline language.
2. I can report what people said, changing tenses, pronouns and time words, and choose between *say* and *tell*.
3. I can report questions, commands and requests, and use reporting verbs such as *promise, refuse, offer* and *suggest*.
4. I can ask for information politely with indirect questions.
5. I can write a news report for a school website.
6. I can talk about the BBC and the British press, and compare them with RAI.

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Where do you get your news? Every day we hear and read what other people have said, and every day we pass it on: *The teacher **said** the test **was** on Friday. Mum **asked** me **if** I **had** my keys. The website **claimed** that…*

In this unit the Bristol–Turin Link appears in the local paper, after an experiment that measured the size of the Earth with two sticks. You learn the language of news and headlines, **reported speech** (statements, questions, commands and requests), some useful reporting verbs and **indirect questions** for asking politely. You write a news report and find out about the BBC and the British press.

7.1 Vocabulary: News and the Media

7.1.1 News and media words

Remember (English 1, Unit 14): *newspaper, magazine, article, headline, journalist, reporter, channel, podcast*. Tabella 7.1 adds the words you need to talk about how news is made, shared and checked.

Tabella 7.1 News and media words

Word	Meaning	Example
the press	newspapers and magazines, and the journalists who work for them	*The story was on the front page of the national press.*
front page	the first page of a newspaper, with the most important stories	*Our school was on the front page!*
broadcast (v. / n.)	to send out a programme on radio or TV; a programme that is sent out (past: *broadcast*)	*The match was broadcast live.*
broadcaster	a company that makes and broadcasts programmes	*The BBC is a public broadcaster.*
breaking news	news about something that is happening right now	*Breaking news: the bridge has been closed.*
source	a person, document or website that gives information	*Always check the source of a story.*
fake news	false stories that are made to look like real news	*That photo is fake news — it's from 2015.*
fact-check (v.)	to make sure that the facts in a story are correct	*Journalists fact-check every number.*

DA RICORDARE

news /nju:z/ looks plural, but it is **uncountable** and takes a singular verb: *The news **is** good.* One item is *a piece of news* or *a news story*, never ✗ *a news*. And remember the stress: *BROADcast*, *HEADline*, *FRONT PAGE* (two equal stresses).

A newspaper page always has the same parts. Look at Figura 7.1: the **masthead** is the name of the paper at the top; the headline is followed by the **standfirst**, one or two sentences that sum up the story; the **byline** gives the journalist's name; under the photo, the **caption** says what or who is in it.

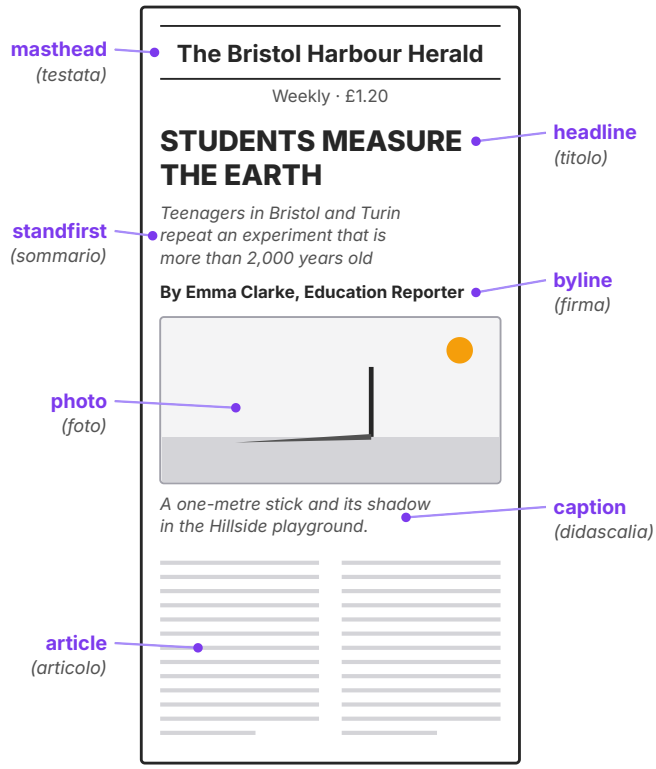


Figura 7.1 The anatomy of a front page (an invented local newspaper). The same parts are used by news websites, where the masthead becomes the name of the site at the top of the screen.

7.1.2 News verbs

Journalists choose verbs that show **what kind** of statement it was. Tabella 7.2 gives five common news verbs and the patterns that follow them.

Tabella 7.2 News verbs and their patterns

Verb	Meaning	Pattern and example
announce	to tell people something officially, for the first time	**announce (that)**: *The school announced that the trip was cancelled.*
report	to give information about something that has happened	**report (that)**: *The radio reported that the road was closed.*
claim	to say that something is true, without giving proof	**claim (that) / claim to**: *He claimed (that) he had seen a UFO. She claims to be a doctor.*
deny	to say that something is not true	**deny + -ing / deny (that)**: *The player denied cheating. He denied that he had cheated.*
warn	to tell somebody about a danger	**warn somebody (not) to / warn (that)**: *Police warned drivers not to travel.*

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claim è un falso amico: non vuol dire "reclamare" (= *complain*) ma **sostenere, affermare** qualcosa senza prove. Nei titoli segnala che il giornale **non garantisce** la notizia.

✗ *I want to claim about the food.* → ✓ *I want to* ***complain*** *about the food.* · ✗ *He denied to take the money.* → ✓ *He denied* ***taking*** *the money.* · ✗ *She announced us the news.* → ✓ *She announced the news* ***to us***.

7.1.3 Headline language

Headlines must be short, so they use a special grammar (English 1, Unit 14). Tabella 7.3 shows the full system: to understand a headline, "translate" it back into a normal sentence.

Tabella 7.3 Headline language

Headline	Rule	Normal sentence
STUDENTS MEASURE THE EARTH	present simple for a recent past event	*Students have measured the Earth.*
MAYOR TO OPEN NEW BRIDGE	**to** + base form for the future	*The mayor is going to open a new bridge.*
PAINTING STOLEN FROM MUSEUM	past participle alone = passive, no *be*	*A painting has been stolen from a museum.*
SCHOOL BANS PHONES	no articles (*a, the*)	*A school has banned phones.*
STAR VOWS TO QUIT	short, strong words: *vow* = promise, *quit* = leave, *bid* = attempt, *slam* = criticise strongly	*A star has promised to leave.*

7.2 Reading: Two Cities, One Shadow

Before you read. Can you measure the size of the Earth without leaving your school? What would you need? Look at the headline and the photo in Figura 7.1: what do you think the students did?

7.2.1 Two Cities, One Shadow: Students Measure the Earth

Teenagers in Bristol and Turin have used two sticks, a protractor and a video call to repeat an experiment that is more than 2,000 years old. — **By Emma Clarke, Education Reporter** (*testo della redazione*; *The Bristol Harbour Herald* is an invented newspaper)

Students from Hillside Academy in Bristol and from a liceo in Turin, Italy, measured the size of the Earth last Friday — without leaving their school playgrounds.

The experiment was part of the Bristol–Turin Link, an online partnership between the two schools. At the moment when the Sun was highest in the sky, each group measured the shadow of a one-metre stick. They then compared their results on a live video call.

The idea is not new. More than 2,000 years ago, the Greek scientist Eratosthenes, who worked at the great library of Alexandria in Egypt, used shadows in two Egyptian cities to calculate the size of our planet. “We wanted to see if we could do the same with the tools we have today,” explained Mrs Hill, who runs the Link at Hillside. “In the end, the most important tool was a protractor.”

The day did not start well. “It was cloudy all morning, and at twelve o’clock I thought we had failed,” said Sam Taylor, 16. “Then the clouds opened for about five minutes. Everybody ran outside, and we measured the shadow just in time.”

In Turin the sky was clear. “We were lucky. We could even see the Alps,” said Giulia Ferraro, 16, who led the Italian team.

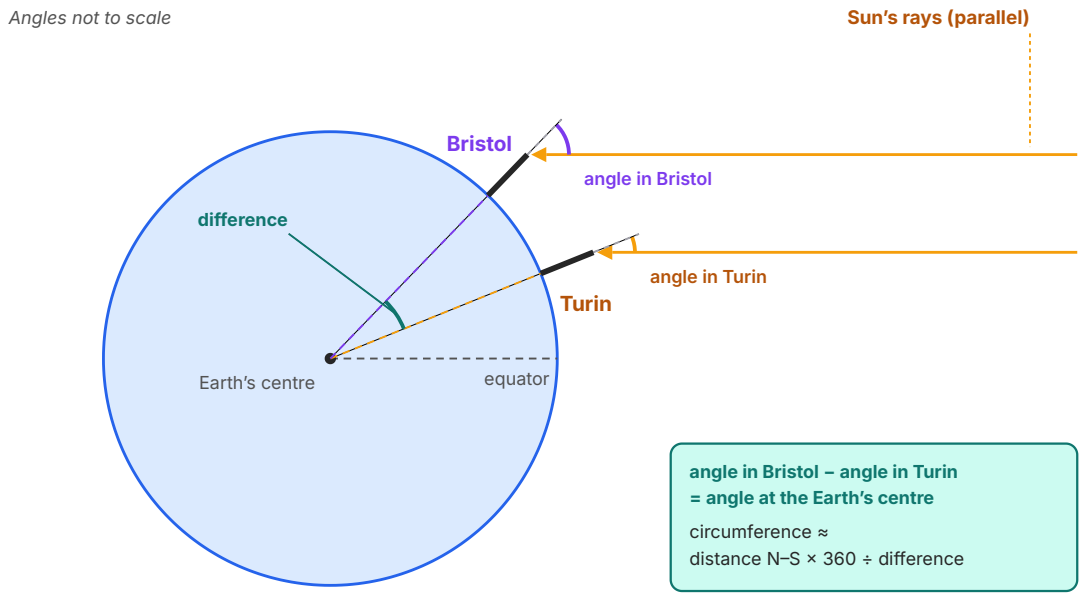


Figura 7.2 How the students’ method works. The Sun is so far away that its rays reach Bristol and Turin parallel. The difference between the two angles of the rays is equal to the angle at the centre of the Earth between the two cities (real values: 63.1° − 56.8° = 6.3°). This angle is the same fraction of 360° as the north–south distance is of the whole circumference.

The students drew each stick and its shadow to scale and measured the angle of the Sun’s rays with a protractor: 63.1 degrees in Bristol and 56.8 degrees in Turin. The difference, 6.3 degrees, shows what part of a full circle separates the two cities from north to south. Turin is about 710 kilometres south of Bristol, so the students multiplied 710 by 360 and divided the result by 6.3. Their answer was about 40,600 kilometres. The real distance round the Earth through the poles is about 40,000 kilometres.

“We were only 600 kilometres out,” said Marta, 16, Giulia’s classmate, who did the calculations. “That’s an error of about one and a half per cent. I think Eratosthenes would be proud of us.”

Not everything went perfectly. Callum Reid, 16, told the *Herald* that the Bristol team had nearly used the wrong stick. “The first one wasn’t straight. Luckily, Ms Adeyemi noticed,” he admitted. Ms Adeyemi, who teaches computing at Hillside, had set up a shared spreadsheet so that both teams could enter their data at the same time.

Prof.ssa Rossi, the students’ English teacher in Turin, was delighted. “Our students have learnt more about angles in one day than in a month of lessons,” she said, “and they have prac-

tised their English at the same time." She added that the two classes would repeat the experiment in June, near the longest day of the year, "when the shadows will be much shorter".

Next, the Link students are planning a Green Week in both schools in the spring. "We'll report on that too," promised Sam. "Maybe we'll even write the article ourselves."

7.2.2 Language in context

Notice how the article mixes **direct speech** — the exact words, in quotation marks — and **reported speech**: *Callum told the Herald that the Bristol team **had nearly used** the wrong stick. She added that the two classes **would repeat** the experiment.* The journalist also uses different reporting verbs: *explained, said, admitted, added, promised*. After a quotation the subject often follows the verb: *"…," **promised Sam***. And look at the north–south distance: 710 km is not the distance by road or by plane, because Turin is also further east than Bristol. Only the north–south part counts.

The method of Eratosthenes. Eratosthenes (c. 276 – c. 194 BC) was the head of the library of Alexandria. At midday on the longest day of the year the Sun shone straight down into a well in Syene (today Aswan), while in Alexandria a stick still had a shadow, at an angle of about 7.2° — 1/50 of a full circle. So the circumference had to be 50 times the distance between the two cities. The students used the same idea (Figura 7.2): $710 \times 360 \div 6.3 \approx 40{,}600$ km.

7.2.3 Media text: the same story, another website

A few days later, the same experiment appeared on a different website (Figura 7.3, an invented site). Compare the two versions. The numbers are the same, but the story is **framed** in a different way: the headline, the words chosen and the "related stories" tell the reader how to feel about the facts.

1. Which facts appear on both the *Herald* front page and the *BristolBuzz* page?
2. Is "Earth wrong by 600 km!" true? Is it fair? What would "Students 98.5% right" tell the reader?
3. The standfirst says "experts say". Which experts? What is missing?
4. Find words that express an opinion, not a fact (*amazing, spoiler, not quite…*). Why are some of them in quotation marks?

COLLEGAMENTI

Citizenship: checking sources. Before you share a story, ask: **Who** published it? Does it **name its sources**, or does it say only "experts say"? Do **other reliable sources** report the same facts? Open a new tab and check. **When** was it published? An old photo can come back as "breaking news".

Maths: reading a statistic. "Wrong by 600 km" and "98.5% right" describe the same result: 600 ÷ 40,000 = 0.015 = 1.5%. A big number can be a small percentage, and a small number can be a big one: if bike thefts at a school go from 2 to 4, a headline can say "BIKE THEFTS UP 100%". It is true — but it is only two bikes. Always ask: *out of how many?*

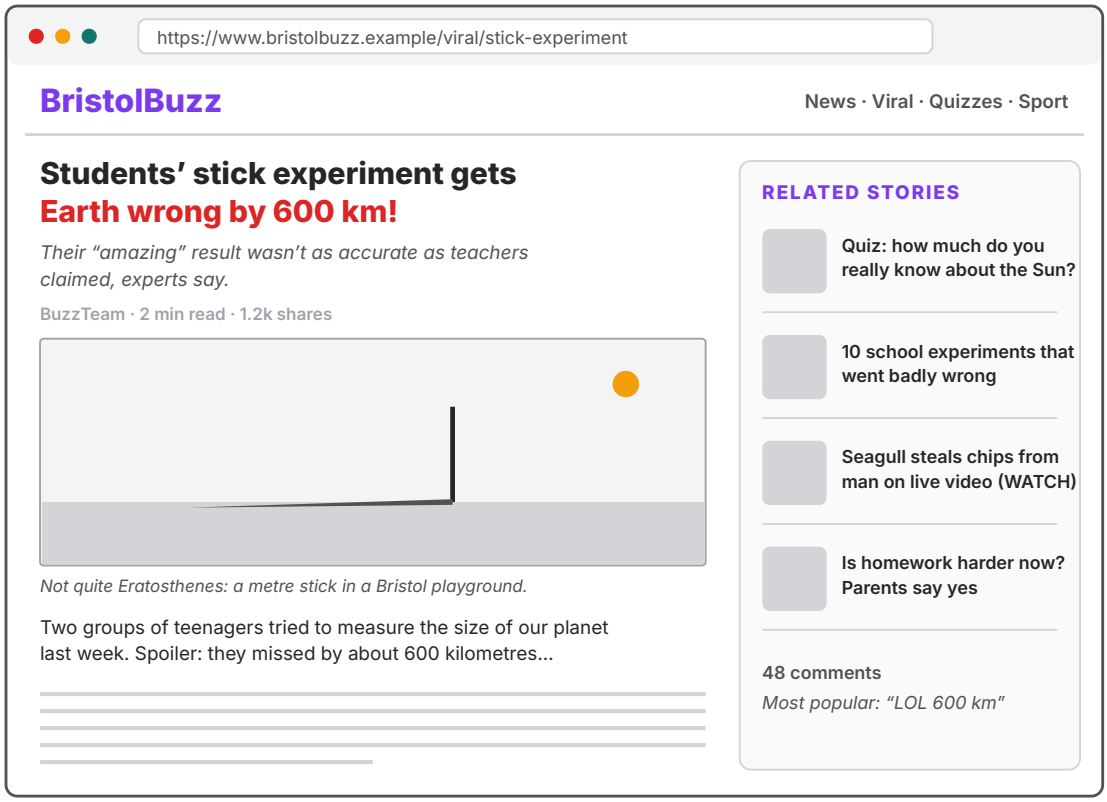


Figura 7.3 A news web page from an invented website (an original media text). Compare its headline, standfirst and caption with the front page in Figura 7.1.

7.3 Grammar: Reported Speech

When we tell somebody what another person said, we can quote the exact words (**direct speech**, English 1) or we can report them in our own sentence. This is called **reported speech** (or indirect speech): *"I'm tired," said Marta. → Marta said (that) she was tired.* The verb that introduces the report — *say, tell, ask, explain, promise*... — is a **reporting verb**.

7.3.1 Reported statements

When the reporting verb is in the past (*said, told*), the verb in the reported sentence usually moves **one step back into the past**. This change is called **backshift**. Figura 7.4 shows the main changes and Tabella 7.4 gives the complete list. *that* after *said* or *told* is optional, and in speech it is often left out.

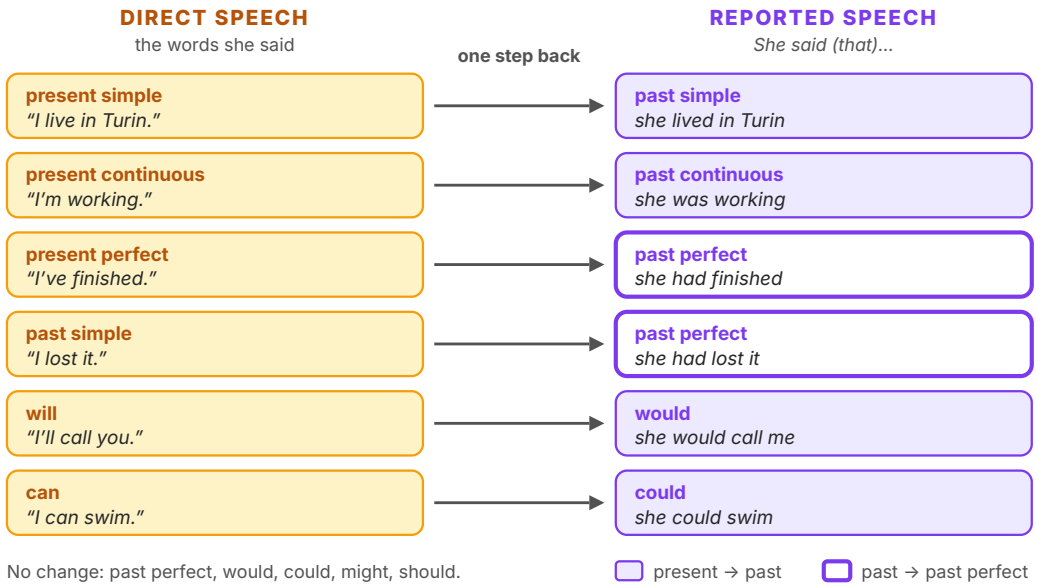


Figura 7.4 Backshift: in reported speech each tense moves one step back. Present tenses become past (filled boxes); the present perfect and the past simple become the past perfect (white boxes).

Tabella 7.4 Tense changes in reported speech

Direct speech	Reported speech
present simple: *"I **live** in Turin."*	past simple: *She said she **lived** in Turin.*
present continuous: *"I'**m working**."*	past continuous: *She said she **was working**.*
present perfect: *"I'**ve finished**."*	past perfect: *She said she **had finished**.*
past simple: *"I **lost** it."*	past perfect (or no change): *She said she **had lost** it.*
am / is / are going to: *"I'**m going to** call."*	*was / were going to*: *She said she **was going to** call.*
will: *"I'**ll** help."*	*would*: *She said she **would** help.*
can: *"I **can** swim."*	*could*: *She said she **could** swim.*
may: *"I **may** be late."*	*might*: *She said she **might** be late.*
must: *"I **must** go."*	*had to* (or *must*): *She said she **had to** go.*
past perfect, *would, could, might, should*	no change: *"I **should** study."* → *She said she **should** study.*

The point of view changes too. **Pronouns and possessives** follow the speaker: *"I've lost **my** keys," said Josh.* → *Josh said **he** had lost **his** keys.* And if you report the words at another time or in another place, **time and place words** change (Tabella 7.5).

Tabella 7.5 Time and place words in reported speech

Direct speech	Reported speech
now	*then / at that moment*
today / tonight	*that day / that night*
yesterday	*the day before / the previous day*
tomorrow	*the next day / the following day*
last week	*the week before / the previous week*
next week	*the following week / the week after*
two days ago	*two days before*
here / this / these	*there / that / those*

When there is no backshift. (1) When the reporting verb is in the present — for example when you pass on a message straight away: *"I'm on the bus."* → *Giulia **says** she**'s** on the bus.* (2) When the fact is still true now, backshift is optional: *Marta said that Turin **is** (or **was**) south of Bristol.*

***say* or *tell*?** Both introduce statements, but **tell** must have a person as its object, and **say** cannot: *She **said** (that) she was busy. She **told me** (that) she was busy.* If you want to mention the listener after *say*, use *to*: *She said **to me**…* (less common). Some fixed expressions always take *tell*: *tell the truth, tell a lie, tell a story, tell a joke, tell the time*.

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Reported statements (discorso indiretto: frasi affermative). Verbo introduttivo al passato (*said, told*) + *that* (facoltativo) + il verbo arretrato di un tempo: presente → passato, *present perfect* e *past simple* → *past perfect*, *will* → *would*, *can* → *could*. Cambiano anche pronomi e indicatori di tempo e luogo (*tomorrow* → *the next day*).

Confronto con l'italiano. Anche l'italiano arretra i tempi («*Sono stanca*» → *Ha detto che **era** stanca*), quindi il meccanismo vi è familiare. Due differenze: in inglese *that* si può omettere, mentre *che* in italiano è obbligatorio; e il "futuro nel passato" italiano usa il condizionale **composto** (*ha detto che **sarebbe venuto***), mentre l'inglese usa il semplice *would* + forma base: *He said he **would come*** (✗ *would have come*).

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✗ *She told that she was busy.* → ✓ *She **said** that she was busy.* / ✓ *She **told me** that she was busy.* (*tell* vuole sempre la persona)

✗ *He said me the answer.* → ✓ *He **told me** the answer.* · ✗ *She said that she will call me* (riferito a ieri sera, chiamata già avvenuta) → ✓ *She said that she **would** call me.*

7.3.2 Reported questions

In reported questions the verb is usually *ask*, *want to know* or *wonder*. Yes / no questions are introduced by ***if*** or ***whether***; *wh-* questions keep their question word. Then the question becomes a statement: **normal word order** (subject + verb), **no** *do / does / did*, **no question mark**. Tenses, pronouns and time words change as in statements (Tabella 7.6).

Tabella 7.6 Reported questions

Direct question	Reported question
"Is it sunny in Turin?" Sam asked.	*Sam asked **if / whether it was** sunny in Turin.*
"Have you finished the calculations?" Giulia asked Marta.	*Giulia asked Marta **if she had finished** the calculations.*
"What time does the call start?" Callum asked.	*Callum asked **what time the call started**.*
"Why did you choose a stick?" the reporter asked us.	*The reporter asked us **why we had chosen** a stick.*
"Who measured the shadow?" she asked. (subject question)	*She asked **who had measured** the shadow.*

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Reported questions (domande indirette riportate). *ask* + *if / whether* (= *se*) per le domande sì/no; *ask* + parola interrogativa per le altre. Poi l'ordine della frase affermativa (soggetto + verbo), senza *do / does / did* e senza punto interrogativo; tempi arretrati come nelle affermazioni.

Confronto con l'italiano. In italiano la domanda indiretta mantiene spesso lo stesso ordine della diretta («*Dove abiti?*» → *Mi ha chiesto **dove abitavo***); in inglese invece l'ordine cambia sempre: *Where **do you live**?* → *He asked me where **I lived**.* Attenzione anche a *if*: qui significa "se" nel senso di "se o no", non introduce una condizione.

7.3.3 Commands, requests and reporting verbs

To report an order or an instruction, use ***tell* + person + (*not*) *to* + base form**. To report a polite request, use ***ask* + person + (*not*) *to* + base form**. The imperative disappears, and there is no backshift to think about.

- *"Sit down, everybody."* → *Mrs Hill **told us to sit** down.*
- *"Don't touch the stick!"* → *Giulia **told Marta not to touch** the stick.*
- *"Could you send me the photos, please?"* → *The reporter **asked Sam to send** her the photos.*

Instead of *say* and *tell*, you can often choose a verb that sums up the speaker's intention. Each verb has its own pattern (Tabella 7.7); learn the verb together with its pattern.

Tabella 7.7 Some reporting verbs and their patterns

Verb	Pattern	Direct speech → reported speech
explain	*explain (that)* + clause; *explain something to somebody*	*"The stick must be straight." → She* ***explained that*** *the stick had to be straight.*
promise	*promise to* + base form / *promise (that)*	*"I'll write every week." → Aoife* ***promised to write*** *every week.*
refuse	*refuse to* + base form	*"I won't go to bed!" → Lily* ***refused to go*** *to bed.*
offer	*offer to* + base form	*"I'll carry your bag." → Josh* ***offered to carry*** *my bag.*
suggest	*suggest* + *-ing* / *suggest (that)* + person + base form or *should*	*"Let's meet at the station." → Callum* ***suggested meeting*** *at the station. / Callum suggested (that) we* ***(should) meet*** *at the station.*
warn	*warn* + person + (*not*) *to*	*"Don't go near the river." → Dad* ***warned us not to go*** *near the river.*

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Ordini, richieste e verbi introduttivi. *tell* (ordine) / *ask* (richiesta) + persona + (*not*) *to* + forma base; *promise, refuse, offer* + *to*; *suggest* + *-ing* o *that*.

Confronto con l'italiano. La struttura è molto simile a *dire / chiedere* ***di*** + *infinito*: *Mi ha detto di aspettare = She told me* ***to*** *wait*; *Ci ha chiesto di non fare rumore = She asked us* ***not to*** *make any noise*. Ma *suggerire di fare* non si traduce parola per parola: ✗ *suggest to do*, ✗ *suggest somebody to do*.

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✗ *He asked me where did I live.* → ✓ *He asked me where* ***I lived***. · ✗ *She asked me if was I hungry.* → ✓ *She asked me if* ***I was*** *hungry.* (ordine affermativo, niente *do / did*)

✗ *The teacher told us don't talk.* → ✓ *The teacher told us* ***not to talk***. · ✗ *She suggested me to go.* → ✓ *She suggested* ***going***. / ✓ *She suggested* ***that I*** *(should)* ***go***.

7.3.4 Indirect questions

An **indirect question** starts with a polite phrase — *Could you tell me…? Do you know…? I'd like to know… I was wondering if…* — followed by the question in **statement word order**. Indirect questions sound more polite than direct ones, so we use them with strangers, in shops, at information desks and in formal emails. Because we are asking now, there is **no backshift**.

Tabella 7.8 From direct to indirect questions

Direct question	Indirect (more polite) question
Where is the studio?	*Could you tell me* ***where the studio is****?*
What time does the museum open?	*Do you know* ***what time the museum opens****?*
Is there a bus to the airport?	*Could you tell me* ***if / whether there is*** *a bus to the airport?*
Did the parcel arrive?	*I'd like to know* ***if the parcel arrived****.*
Can we bring a friend?	*I was wondering* ***if we could*** *bring a friend.*

The question mark depends on the opening phrase: *Could you tell me…?* and *Do you know…?* are questions, so they end with **?**; *I'd like to know…* and *I was wondering…* are statements, so they end with a full stop. In *I was wondering if we could…* the past tenses make the request softer, not past in time.

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Indirect questions (domande indirette di cortesia). Formula di cortesia (*Could you tell me / Do you know / I'd like to know*) + parola interrogativa o *if / whether* + soggetto + verbo, senza *do / does / did* e senza arretramento dei tempi.

Confronto con l'italiano. L'italiano dice *Sa dirmi* ***dov'è*** *la stazione?* senza cambiare nulla; l'inglese sposta il verbo dopo il soggetto: ✗ *Could you tell me where is the station?* → ✓ *Could you tell me where* ***the station is****?*

7.4 Listening and Speaking: Reporting What People Said

Listening 1. Listen (books closed) to your classmates reading the script. On a Link video call, Sam tells Giulia and Marta about the morning assembly at Hillside (Tabella 7.9). Note down the reported speech you hear.

Tabella 7.9 Listening script — What did she say?

Sam	Guess what? Mrs Hill talked about Green Week in assembly this morning.
Giulia	Really? What did she say?
Sam	She said they'd chosen the date. But she didn't tell us what it was! She said she would announce it next week.
Marta	Typical teacher. Did she say anything else?

Sam	Loads. She asked every class to choose two “green reps”. And she warned us not to leave the lights on in the classrooms — she said she’d be checking every afternoon.
Giulia	Ha! Did anyone volunteer to be a green rep?
Sam	Callum did. Mrs Hill asked if anybody could design the posters, and he offered to do them all. Then he told me he’d never designed a poster before.
Marta	Brave. Prof.ssa Rossi said something similar to us yesterday. She told us she wanted a report for the Link blog every week during Green Week.
Giulia	And she asked whether we could write it in English and in Italian.
Sam	Good idea. Oh, and one more thing: Mrs Hill said the *Herald* had phoned the school again. Apparently they want to write about Green Week too.
Marta	We’re famous! Did they say when?
Sam	No idea. I’ll ask Mrs Hill tomorrow and tell you.

Listening 2. After the newspaper article, a local radio station, Harbour FM (invented), invites Sam to talk about the experiment. Sam phones the station (Tabella 7.10). Which polite questions does he ask?

Tabella 7.10 Listening script — A call to the radio station

Receptionist	Good morning, Harbour FM. How can I help you?
Sam	Hello. My name’s Sam Taylor. I’m calling about the interview on Thursday, about the shadow experiment.
Receptionist	Ah yes, the young scientists! What would you like to know?
Sam	Could you tell me what time we should arrive?
Receptionist	The programme starts at 4.30, so please be here by 4.15.
Sam	Great. And do you know if my friend Callum can come too? He was in the team.
Receptionist	Of course. Can I ask how old you both are?
Sam	We’re both sixteen.
Receptionist	Then we need a permission form from your parents. I’ll email it to your school today.
Sam	Thank you. I was wondering whether we should bring anything — the stick, maybe?
Receptionist	It’s radio, so nobody will see it! But bring your notes and your numbers.
Sam	OK. One last thing: could you tell me where the studio is exactly?
Receptionist	We’re on the second floor of the old warehouse opposite the ferry stop. Ask for Dan at the front desk.

Sam	Perfect. Thanks very much for your help.

Useful language. Tabella 7.11 collects the phrases you need to pass on what somebody said and to ask for information politely.

Tabella 7.11 Useful language — reporting and asking politely

Function	Phrases
Reporting what somebody said	*She said (that)… · He told me (that)… · They asked us to… · She wanted to know if… · He promised / offered / refused to…*
Reporting news you are not sure about	*Apparently,… · According to the website,… · I've heard that… · People are saying that…*
Asking politely for information	*Could you tell me…? · Do you know…? · I'd like to know… · I was wondering if…*
Reacting to news	*Really? · No way! · That's great news! · Oh no, that's a shame. · I don't believe it!*

LEARNING TO LEARN

Take notes while you listen. You cannot write every word, and you don't need to. Before you listen, read the task and decide what you are listening for: names, numbers, times, decisions. While you listen, write only **key words** (nouns, verbs, numbers) and use **abbreviations** and symbols:

- *Thu* = Thursday, *4.15* = times as numbers, *C* = Callum (initials for people);
- *w/* = with, *b/c* = because, *approx.* = about, *info* = information;
- → = so / leads to, + = and, ≠ = is different from, *?* = not sure, check it later.

After you listen, turn your notes into full sentences at once: *Thu, 4.15, C ✓, form → school* becomes *Sam must arrive by 4.15 on Thursday; Callum can come; the station will email a form to the school.*

7.4.1 Speaking tasks

1. **Pass it on.** In groups of four, A tells B a piece of news; B reports it to C, C to D (*Anna said that her cousin had won…*). D tells the class. Did the news change on the way?
2. **Role play: at the information desk.** Student A works at a museum, a station or a radio station; student B asks for information with indirect questions (*Could you tell me…? Do you know if…?*). Then swap roles.
3. **Discussion.** Where do you get your news? Which sources do you trust most, and why? How do you check a story before you share it?

7.5 Writing: A News Report

A news report tells readers what has happened, clearly and quickly. Its first sentence, the **lead**, answers as many of the **5 Ws** as possible: *who? what? when? where? why?* (and often *how?*). Then the report follows an **inverted pyramid**: the most important facts come first, and the details come later, so a reader who stops after one paragraph still knows the main story.

Tabella 7.12 Model text — a news report for the school website

SNOW CLOSES HILLSIDE FOR THE DAY
Hillside Academy closed for the day on Tuesday after heavy snow fell on Bristol during the night.
The head teacher made the decision at 6.30 in the morning, when many buses had stopped running. "The roads were too dangerous," she explained. "Our students' safety comes first."
Mr Evans, the school secretary, said that he had answered more than a hundred phone calls before nine o'clock. "Most parents just wanted to know if the school was open," he told us with a smile.
Not everybody enjoyed a day off. Year 11 student Callum Reid said he had spent the day revising for his mock exams. "Well, for most of the day," he admitted. Meanwhile, a group of Year 7 students built a snowman nearly two metres tall in the park opposite the school.
The school reopened on Wednesday morning. Mr Doyle has promised that the Year 9 football match, which was cancelled because of the snow, will take place next week.
By the Hillside Voice news team

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

Analyse the model.

- **Headline:** headline language — present simple for a past event, no articles: *SNOW CLOSES HILLSIDE*.
- **Lead:** one sentence with the 5 Ws: *who / what* (Hillside closed), *when* (on Tuesday), *where* (Bristol), *why* (heavy snow).
- **Inverted pyramid:** the decision, then reactions, then what happens next.
- **Quotes and reported speech:** the report alternates direct quotes (*"The roads were too dangerous," she explained*) with reported speech (*Mr Evans said that he had answered…*).
- **Reporting verbs:** *explained, said, told, admitted, promised* — not only *said*.
- **Tenses:** past simple for the events, past perfect for earlier events (*many buses had stopped running*), present perfect for the latest news (*Mr Doyle has promised*).
- **Register:** neutral; the opinions come from the people quoted.

Checklist. Before you hand in a news report, check that: (1) the headline is short and uses headline language; (2) the lead answers the 5 Ws; (3) the most important facts come first; (4) you have used at least two direct quotes, with correct punctuation, and some reported speech; (5) you have used different reporting verbs; (6) the tenses are correct, with backshift after *said / told*; (7) the facts are separate from the opinions.

Your task. Write a news report (140–180 words) for your school website about a real or invented event: a sports result, a school trip, a visit from a famous person, a small disaster in the science lab. Invent a headline, a lead with the 5 Ws and at least two quotes.

7.6 Culture: The BBC and the British Press

For many people around the world, British news means three letters: BBC. The British Broadcasting Corporation is one of the oldest broadcasters in the world, with radio, TV and online services in English and many other languages.

7.6.1 From a company to a corporation

The BBC began as a company. The British Broadcasting **Company** was formed on 18 October 1922 by a group of radio manufacturers, and its first daily broadcasts started in November 1922 from a station in London called 2LO. On 1 January 1927 it became the British Broadcasting **Corporation**, a public body created by a **Royal Charter**, and its manager, John Reith, became its first Director-General. Reith believed that the BBC should be a public service, not a business; its mission is still summed up in three words: to *inform, educate and entertain*. Figura 7.5 shows the main steps of its history.

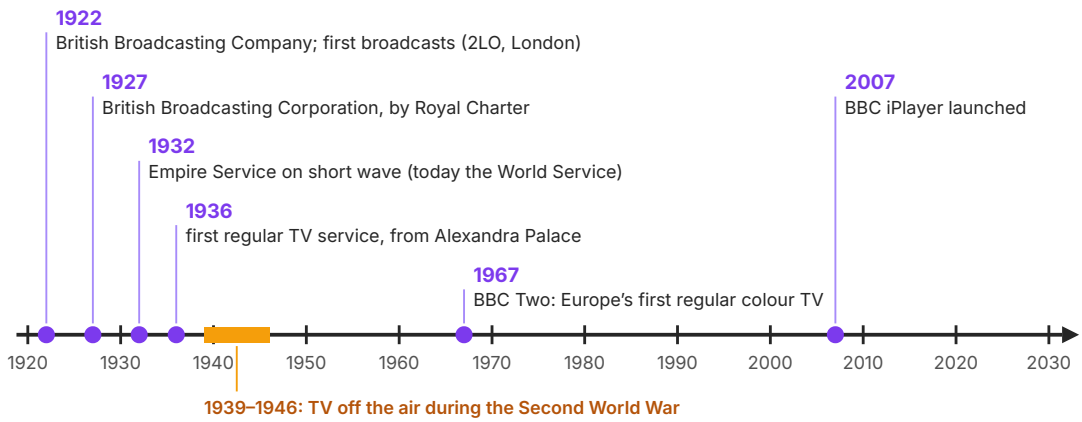


Figura 7.5 The BBC from 1922 to today, on a proportional time axis. The amber bar shows the years when the television service was suspended.

On 2 November 1936 the BBC started the world's first regular high-definition television service, from Alexandra Palace in north London. Very few people owned a television set, and the service stopped during the Second World War, from 1939 to 1946. Today the BBC has national and local radio stations, several TV channels, a news website and an online streaming service, iPlayer, launched in 2007.

The BBC is paid for in an unusual way. In the UK it shows no advertisements: instead, every household that watches live TV or uses iPlayer must buy a TV licence. This **licence fee** (£174.50 a year in 2025) goes to fund the BBC. As a **public service broadcaster**, the BBC must be impartial: its news must not take sides in politics. Whether it always succeeds, and whether the licence fee is fair, are often debated.

7.6.2 Broadsheets and tabloids

British newspapers have traditionally been divided into two groups. The **broadsheets** were large newspapers with long articles on politics, the economy and international news, such as *The Times* and *The Guardian*. The **tabloids** were smaller, with big photos, short articles, celebrity stories and very dramatic headlines; the most popular ones, like *The Sun* and the *Daily Mirror*, are called "red-tops" because of their red mastheads.

Today the size no longer tells the whole story: *The Times* has been printed in a small format since 2004 and *The Guardian* since January 2018, but people still call them quality papers. Many readers now read the news only on websites and apps, where every story competes for clicks — which is why headlines like the one in Figura 7.3 exist.

APPROFONDIMENTO

Auntie and the Beeb. The British have two affectionate nicknames for the BBC. *The Beeb* simply comes from the way people say the letters *B-B-C*. *Auntie* is a joke: in the early years the BBC seemed to know what was "good for" its listeners, like an old-fashioned aunt who gives advice to everybody. You can still read headlines like *AUNTIE TO AXE SHOW* — which, in headline language, means that the BBC is going to cancel a programme.

7.6.3 Compare with Italy

Italy's public broadcaster is RAI. Italian radio started in 1924 with the URI (Unione Radiofonica Italiana), which became the EIAR in 1927 and finally the RAI in 1944. Regular television broadcasts began on 3 January 1954. Like the BBC, RAI is paid for by a licence fee, the *canone*, which since 2016 has been included in the electricity bill (€90 a year in 2025). Unlike the BBC, however, RAI also shows advertisements, although it must show fewer of them than private channels.

Discuss. Does your family watch RAI, private channels or streaming services? Where do people in Italy get their news today? Do you think public broadcasters like the BBC and RAI

should be paid for by a licence fee, by advertising or by both? Give reasons.

SINTESI

- News words: *the press, front page, broadcast* (past *broadcast*), *breaking news, source, fake news, fact-check*; *news* is uncountable: *The news* ***is***...
- The parts of a front page: *masthead, headline, standfirst, byline, photo, caption, article*.
- News verbs: *announce (that), report (that), claim (that / to), deny + -ing / (that), warn somebody (not) to*. *claim ≠ reclamare*.
- Headline language: present simple for recent past events, *to* + base form for the future, past participle alone for the passive, no articles.
- Reported statements: after a past reporting verb the tense moves one step back (backshift); pronouns, possessives and time and place words change.
- No backshift with a present reporting verb (*She says...*); optional when the fact is still true.
- *say (that) / say something to somebody*; *tell somebody (that)*: ✗ *She told that...*
- Reported questions: *ask if / whether* or *ask* + question word + subject + verb; no *do / did*, no question mark.
- Commands and requests: *tell / ask* + person + (*not*) *to* + base form. Reporting verbs: *explain that, promise to, refuse to, offer to, suggest + -ing*.
- Indirect questions for politeness: *Could you tell me where the studio is? Do you know if...?* — statement word order, no backshift.
- A news report: headline, a lead with the 5 Ws, the inverted pyramid, quotes and reported speech, neutral register.
- The BBC: Company 1922, Corporation by Royal Charter 1927, first regular TV service 1936; paid for by the licence fee, no adverts in the UK. RAI: 1944, TV from 1954, the *canone* and advertising.

ESERCIZI

Vocabulary

1. ● Match the words (1–6) with the definitions (a–f). 1 front page · 2 source · 3 broadcast · 4 fake news · 5 fact-check · 6 breaking news — a false stories that look like real news · b the first page of a newspaper · c to make sure that the facts in a story are correct · d news about something that is happening right now · e a person, document or website that gives information · f to send out a programme on radio or TV

2. ● “It’s not true. I didn’t take the money,” the minister said. → The minister _____ taking the money.

   A. claimed
   B. denied
   C. warned
   D. announced

3. ● The police _____ drivers not to use the road during the storm.

   A. warned
   B. claimed
   C. denied
   D. reported

4. ● Complete with *announce, claim, deny, report* or *warn* in the correct form. a Yesterday the school _____ that the trip was cancelled. b The man _____ to be a doctor, but he wasn’t. c Weather forecasters are _____ people that the roads will be icy tonight. d “That’s not true! I’m not leaving the band,” said the singer. She _____ that she was leaving the band. e Several newspapers _____ that the match had been cancelled.

5. ●● Rewrite the headlines as normal sentences. a STUDENTS MEASURE THE EARTH b MAYOR TO OPEN NEW BRIDGE c PAINTING STOLEN FROM MUSEUM d SCHOOL BANS PHONES e TEEN SAVES DOG FROM RIVER

6. ●● Write a headline (3–5 words) for each piece of news. a The government is going to build three new hospitals. b A rare bird has been seen in a garden in Bristol. c A sixteen-year-old student has won a national science prize. d Heavy rain has closed the main road to the airport.

7. ● Odd one out. Explain your choice. a reader · viewer · listener · byline b headline · standfirst · caption · journalist c announce · report · claim · broadcaster d radio · television · podcast · front page

Grammar

8. ● Complete with *said* or *told*. a Giulia _____ me she was tired. b Sam _____ that the bus was late. c Mrs Hill _____ us to sit down. d She _____ goodbye and left. e Callum _____ us a funny story. f Marta _____ to me that she had finished.

9. ● Report the statements. Start with the words given. a “I’m tired,” said Marta. → Marta said… b “We’re watching the news,” said Josh. → Josh said… c “I’ve finished my article,” said Callum. → Callum said… d “I’ll call you later,” Aoife told Sam. → Aoife told Sam… e “I can’t find my phone,” said Lily. → Lily said… f “We lost the match,” said the players. → The players said…

10. • “I’m going to the library tomorrow,” said Giulia. → Giulia said she _____ to the library the next day.

    A. is going
    B. goes
    C. was going
    D. has gone

11. •• The words were said last month. Complete the reported sentences with the correct time or place words. a “I saw her yesterday.” → He said he had seen her _____. b “The match is today.” → She said the match was _____. c “We’ll meet here tomorrow.” → They said they would meet _____ _____. d “I started this course two weeks ago.” → He said he had started _____ course two weeks _____. e “Our exams are next week.” → They said their exams were _____.

12. • Report the questions. a “Are you ready?” Mrs Hill asked us. b “Where do you live?” the reporter asked Callum. c “Have you seen my keys?” Mum asked me. d “What time does the film start?” Sam asked. e “Can you speak Italian?” the interviewer asked Aoife. f “Why did you choose this school?” the journalist asked Giulia.

13. •• Find and correct the mistake in each sentence. a ✗ He asked me where did I live. b ✗ She told that she was busy. c ✗ The teacher said us to be quiet. d ✗ They asked me if was I hungry. e ✗ She suggested me to take the bus. f ✗ He told me don’t worry.

14. • Report the commands and requests with *tell* or *ask*. a “Close the door, please,” Mrs Hill said to Callum. b “Don’t touch the stick!” Giulia said to Marta. c “Please send me the photos,” the reporter said to Sam. d “Don’t be late,” Mum said to Josh. e “Wait outside,” the receptionist said to us.

15. •• “Why don’t we watch the news together?” said Aoife. → Aoife _____ the news together.

    A. suggested us to watch
    B. suggested to watch
    C. said us to watch
    D. suggested watching

16. •• Report each sentence with one of these verbs: *explain, offer, promise, refuse, warn*. a “I’ll help you with your homework,” Josh said to me. b “I won’t tidy my room!” said Lily. c “I’ll write every week, I promise,” said Aoife. d “Don’t touch the oven — it’s hot,” Helen said to Lily. e “The stick has to be straight, or the shadow will be wrong,” said Ms Adeyemi.

17. •• Make the questions more polite. Use the words in brackets. a Where is the radio studio? (Could you tell me…) b Does this bus stop at the station? (Do you know…) c What time does the museum close? (Could you tell me…) d Is there a lift? (Do you know…) e How much is a ticket? (I’d like to know…)

18. ●●● Translate into English. a Mi ha detto che sarebbe arrivato il giorno dopo. b Le ho chiesto dove abitava. c Il professore ci ha detto di non usare il telefono.

Reading and Listening

19. ● Read "Two Cities, One Shadow" again. True (T), false (F) or doesn't say (DS)? a The students measured the Earth in their school playgrounds. b It was sunny in Bristol all day. c Eratosthenes worked in Alexandria. d Marta did the calculations. e The students will repeat the experiment in September. f The reporter took part in the video call.

20. ●● Answer the questions about the article. a Why did the Bristol team nearly fail? b How did the students measure the angles? c Why is 710 km not the distance by road between the two cities? d What will the next Link project be?

21. ●● Look at the web page in Figura 7.3 and compare it with the *Herald*. a Which two facts appear in both? b Find two words or phrases that express opinion. c Which headline makes the result sound better? Why? d Who are the "experts" in the standfirst?

22. ● Listening 1 (Tabella 7.9). What did Mrs Hill say about the date of Green Week?

    A. She said she would announce it the next week.

    B. She said it would be in March.

    C. She said she didn't know it yet.

    D. She asked Sam to choose it.

23. ●● Listening 2 (Tabella 7.10). Complete the report of the phone call. a Sam asked what time… b He wanted to know if… c The receptionist asked… d Sam wondered whether… e The receptionist told Sam to ask for…

Writing and Speaking

24. ●● Think of a conversation you had today or yesterday (with a friend, a teacher, a parent). Write 80–100 words reporting it. Use *say, tell* and *ask*, and at least two other reporting verbs.

25. ●● Role play. Student A works at the information desk of a science museum. Student B wants to know: the opening times, the price of a student ticket, whether there is a café, where the planetarium is. Student B uses indirect questions.

26. ●●● Write a news report (120–150 words) for your school website with this headline: LOST TORTOISE FOUND IN SCIENCE LAB. Include a lead with the 5 Ws, at least two quotes and some reported speech.

Towards B1

27. ●● Multiple-choice cloze. Choose the correct word (A, B, C or D) for each gap. *Last week a reporter from our local radio station (1) ___ our school. She (2) ___ us that she wanted to make a programme about young people and the news. First she asked us (3) ___ we read a newspaper every day. Most of us said that we (4) ___ the news on our phones. One student (5) ___ that he never watched the news at all. At the end the reporter (6) ___ to send us a copy of the programme.* 1 A visited B went C arrived D came · 2 A said B told C spoke D explained · 3 A that B what C if D do · 4 A had read B read C are reading D reading · 5 A admitted B told C spoke D asked · 6 A promised B suggested C told D said

28. ●● Open cloze. Write ONE word in each gap. *Last Sunday I asked Grandad Arthur (1) ___ he remembered his family's first television. He told (2) ___ that they had bought one when he was about ten. "Everybody in the street came to watch it," he said. He explained that there (3) ___ only three channels then. Then he asked me how many hours I spent online every day, and I (4) ___ him the truth: about four. He laughed and told me (5) ___ to believe everything I read on the internet. I promised (6) ___ check my sources.*

29. ●● Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first. Use two to five words. a "Don't forget your passport," Mum said to me. → Mum told ___ forget my passport. b "Where is the station?" she asked me. → She asked me ___. c "Let's go to the cinema," said Marta. → Marta suggested ___ to the cinema. d "I'll help you," Josh said to me. → Josh offered ___. e "Is the museum open?" → Do you know ___ open?

30. ●● You missed yesterday's Link video call. Write a message (35–45 words) to a friend who was there. Ask what the teachers said, what you have to do for next week and when the next call is.

31. ●●● Write a story (about 100 words) that begins with this sentence: *When I read the headline, I couldn't believe my eyes.*

PER APPROFONDIRE

- SWA
- EGU
- RED
- OAL

Glossario del capitolo

Backshift
*arretramento dei tempi verbali — "I'm tired." → She said she **was** tired.*

Breaking news
ultime notizie, notizia dell'ultima ora — news about something that is happening now

Broadcast
trasmettere; trasmissione — past and past participle *broadcast*: *The match was broadcast live.*

Broadsheet / tabloid
quotidiano "di qualità" / quotidiano popolare — originally a large-format and a small-format newspaper

Byline
firma (di un articolo) — the line that gives the journalist's name

Claim
sostenere, affermare (falso amico: non "reclamare") — *He claimed (that) he had seen a UFO.*

Deny
negare, smentire — deny + -ing / deny (that): *He denied cheating.*

Fact-check
verificare i fatti — Journalists fact-check every number.

Fake news
notizie false, bufale — false stories made to look like real news (uncountable)

Front page
prima pagina — The story was on the front page.

Indirect question
domanda indiretta — Could you tell me where the studio is?

Lead
attacco (di un articolo) — the first sentence of a news report, answering the 5 Ws

Licence fee
canone (radiotelevisivo) — the yearly payment that funds the BBC

Reported speech
discorso indiretto — Marta said (that) she was tired.

Reporting verb
verbo introduttivo (del discorso indiretto) — say, tell, ask, explain, promise, suggest…

Say / tell
dire — say (that)…; *tell somebody (that)…*: ✗ *She told that…*

Source
fonte — a person, document or website that gives information

Standfirst
sommario (sotto il titolo) — one or two sentences that sum up a news story

The press
la stampa — newspapers and magazines, and the journalists who work for them

Warn
avvertire, mettere in guardia — warn somebody (not) to do

Soluzioni

1. 1 b · 2 e · 3 f · 4 a · 5 c · 6 d

2. B — *deny* + *-ing* = say that something is not true

3. A — *warn somebody not to* + base form

4. a announced · b claimed · c warning · d denied · e reported (also *announced* / *claimed*)

5. a Students have measured the Earth. · b The mayor is going to (will) open a new bridge. · c A painting has been stolen from a museum. · d A school has banned phones. · e A teenager has saved a dog from a river.

6. Model answers: a GOVERNMENT TO BUILD THREE HOSPITALS · b RARE BIRD SEEN IN BRISTOL GARDEN · c TEEN WINS SCIENCE PRIZE · d RAIN CLOSES AIRPORT ROAD

7. a byline (a part of a page; the others are people who follow the news) · b journalist (a person; the others are parts of a page) · c broadcaster (a noun; the others are news verbs) · d front page (part of a newspaper; the others are things you listen to or watch)

8. a told · b said · c told · d said · e told · f said

9. a (that) she was tired · b (that) they were watching the news · c (that) he had finished his article · d (that) she would call him later · e (that) she couldn't find her phone · f (that) they had lost (or *lost*) the match

10. C — *am going → was going*; *tomorrow → the next day*

11. a the day before / the previous day · b that day · c there · the next day / the following day · d that · before · e the following week / the week after

12. a Mrs Hill asked us if / whether we were ready. · b The reporter asked Callum where he lived. · c Mum asked me if / whether I had seen her keys. · d Sam asked what time the film started. · e The interviewer asked Aoife if / whether she could speak Italian. · f The journalist asked Giulia why she had chosen that school (or *chose*).

13. a He asked me where I lived. · b She said that she was busy / She told me that she was busy. · c The teacher told us to be quiet. · d They asked me if I was hungry. · e She suggested taking the bus / She suggested (that) I (should) take the bus. · f He told me not to worry.

14. a Mrs Hill asked Callum to close the door. · b Giulia told Marta not to touch the stick. · c The reporter asked Sam to send her (or him) the photos. · d Mum told Josh not to be late. · e The receptionist told us to wait outside.

15. D — *suggest* + *-ing*; also possible: *suggested (that) we (should) watch*

16. a Josh offered to help me with my homework. · b Lily refused to tidy her room. · c Aoife promised to write every week. · d Helen warned Lily not to touch the oven (because it was hot). · e Ms Adeyemi explained that the stick had to be straight, or the shadow would be wrong.

17. a Could you tell me where the radio studio is? · b Do you know if / whether this bus stops at the station? · c Could you tell me what time the museum closes? · d Do you know if / whether there is a lift? · e I'd like to know how much a ticket is.

18. a He told me (that) he would arrive the next day / the following day. (✗ *would have arrived*) · b I asked her where she lived. · c The teacher told us not to use our phones (the phone).

19. a T · b F (it was cloudy all morning) · c T · d T · e F (in June) · f DS

20. a Because it was cloudy all morning; the Sun came out for only about five minutes. · b They drew each stick and its shadow to scale and measured the angle with a protractor. · c Because it is only the north–south distance; Turin is also further east

than Bristol. · d A Green Week in both schools in the spring.

21. a The students used a metre stick in a Bristol playground; the result was about 600 km away from the real value (also: two groups of teenagers, last week). · b *amazing*, *not quite Eratosthenes*, *Spoiler*, *wasn't as accurate as teachers claimed*. · c The *Herald*'s: it says the students *measured* the Earth and doesn't mention the error in the headline; *BristolBuzz* says *wrong by 600 km!*, in red, with an exclamation mark. · d We don't know: the page doesn't name them, so we cannot check the claim.

22. A — *She said she would announce it next week.*

23. a …they should arrive. · b …his friend Callum could come too. · c …how old they both were. · d … they should bring anything. · e …Dan at the front desk.

24. Model answer: *This morning my friend Luca told me that he had lost his maths book. He asked me if I could lend him mine, and I said that I needed it for the test. Then he suggested studying together after school, so I agreed. At lunch our teacher announced that the test would be on Friday, not Thursday. Luca promised to bring some snacks to my house, but at four o'clock he phoned me and explained that he couldn't come because he had to look after his little brother.* (≈ 90 words)

25. Model: *B: Excuse me, could you tell me what time the museum closes? A: At six o'clock. B: And do you know how much a student ticket is? A: It's £8 with a student card. B: I was wondering if there's a café. A: Yes, on the ground floor. B: Could you tell me where the planetarium is? A: On the first floor, next to the lift.* Check: statement word order after the question word; no *do / does*.

26. Model answer: *LOST TORTOISE FOUND IN SCIENCE LAB. Speedy, the tortoise from Class 2B, was found in the science lab on Monday morning, three days after he had disappeared from his box. The caretaker discovered him under a cupboard at 7.30. "I heard a strange noise and looked down," he explained. "He was eating a leaf from one of our plants." Speedy's owner, the class teacher, said she had searched the whole school on Friday. "I was really worried. I thought someone had taken him home," she admitted. Students told us that they had made posters and put them in every corridor. Nobody knows how Speedy got into the lab, but the teacher has promised to buy a new box with a lid. Speedy is now back in Class 2B and seems very happy.* (≈ 135 words) Check: 5 Ws, quotes, reported speech, reporting verbs.

27. 1 A · 2 B (*tell* + person) · 3 C · 4 B (present simple → past simple: same form, *read*) · 5 A · 6 A (*promise to*)

28. 1 if / whether · 2 me · 3 were · 4 told · 5 not · 6 to

29. a me not to · b where the station was · c going · d to help me · e if / whether the museum is

30. Model answer: *Hi Marta! I'm sorry I missed the call yesterday — I was at the dentist. Could you tell me what Prof.ssa Rossi said? Do we have to write anything for next week? And do you know when the next call is? Thanks a lot! Giulia* (≈ 45 words)

31. Model answer: *When I read the headline, I couldn't believe my eyes: LOCAL TEEN WINS £10,000. Under it there was a photo of my cousin Ella! I phoned her at once and asked her if it was true. She laughed and said that she hadn't won anything. She explained that a reporter had taken her photo at a school event and that the website had used the wrong picture. Later that day the website deleted the story and apologised. Since then, Ella says she is "almost famous", and I always check a story twice before I believe it.* (≈ 100 words) Check: narrative tenses, reported speech, a clear ending.