

**It is said that ... He is said to ...**  
**He is supposed to ...**

A

Study this example situation:



George is very old. Nobody knows exactly how old he is, but:

**It is said that** he is 108 years old.

or **He is said to be** 108 years old.

Both these sentences mean: 'People say that he is 108 years old.'

You can use these structures with a number of other verbs, especially:

**alleged believed considered expected known reported thought understood**

Compare the two structures:

- Cathy loves running.  
**It is said that** she runs ten miles a day.      or    She **is said to run** ten miles a day.
- The police are looking for a missing boy.  
**It is believed that** the boy is wearing a white sweater and blue jeans.      or    The boy **is believed to be wearing** a white sweater and blue jeans.
- The strike started three weeks ago.  
**It is expected that** the strike will end soon.      or    The strike **is expected to end** soon.
- A friend of mine has been arrested.  
**It is alleged that** he hit a policeman.      or    He **is alleged to have hit** a policeman.
- The two houses belong to the same family.  
**It is said that** there is a secret tunnel between them.      or    There **is said to be** a secret tunnel between them.

These structures are often used in news reports. For example, in a report about an accident:

- It is reported that** two people were injured in the explosion.      or    Two people **are reported to have been injured** in the explosion.

B

**(Be) supposed to**

Sometimes **(it is) supposed to ...** = (it is) said to ... :

- I want to see that film. **It's supposed to be** good. (= it is said to be good)
- Fireworks **are supposed to have been invented** in China. Is it true?

But sometimes **supposed to** has a different meaning. We use **supposed to** to say what is intended, arranged or expected. Often this is different from the real situation:

- The plan **is supposed to be** a secret, but everybody seems to know about it.  
(= the plan is intended to be a secret)
- What are you doing at work? You're **supposed to be** on holiday.  
(= you arranged to be on holiday)
- Our guests **were supposed to come** at 7.30, but they were late.
- Jane **was supposed to phone** me last night, but she didn't.
- I'd better hurry. I'm **supposed to be meeting** Chris in ten minutes.

You're **not supposed to** do something = it is not allowed or advisable:

- You're **not supposed to park** your car here. It's private parking only.
- Jeff is much better after his illness, but he's still **not supposed to do** any heavy work.

# Exercises

45.1 Write these sentences in another way, beginning as shown. Use the underlined word each time.

- 1 It is expected that the strike will end soon. The strike *is expected to end soon.*
- 2 It is expected that the weather will be good tomorrow.  
The weather is .....
- 3 It is believed that the thieves got in through a window in the roof.  
The thieves .....
- 4 It is reported that many people are homeless after the floods.  
Many people .....
- 5 It is thought that the prisoner escaped by climbing over a wall.  
The prisoner .....
- 6 It is alleged that the man was driving at 110 miles an hour.  
The man .....
- 7 It is reported that the building has been badly damaged by the fire.  
The building .....
- 8 a It is said that the company is losing a lot of money.  
The company .....
- b It is believed that the company lost a lot of money last year.  
The company .....
- c It is expected that the company will make a loss this year.  
The company .....

45.2 There are a lot of rumours about Alan. Here are some of the things people say about him:

- 1 Alan speaks ten languages.
- 2 He knows a lot of famous people.
- 3 He is very rich.
- 4 He has twelve children.
- 5 He was an actor when he was younger.



Nobody is sure whether these things are true. Write sentences about Alan using **supposed to**.

- 1 Alan is supposed to speak ten languages.
- 2 He .....
- 3 .....
- 4 .....
- 5 .....

45.3 Complete the sentences using **supposed to be** + the following:

on a diet      a flower      my friend      a joke      ~~a secret~~      working

- 1 How is it that everybody seems to know about the plan? It *is supposed to be a secret.*
- 2 You shouldn't criticise me all the time. You .....
- 3 I shouldn't be eating this cake really. I .....
- 4 I'm sorry for what I said. I was trying to be funny. It .....
- 5 What's this drawing? Is it a tree? Or maybe it .....
- 6 You shouldn't be reading the paper now. You .....

45.4 Write sentences with **supposed to** + the following verbs:

block      depart      ~~park~~      phone      start

Use the negative (**not supposed to**) where necessary.

- 1 You *'re not supposed to park* here. It's private parking only.
- 2 We ..... work at 8.15, but we rarely do anything before 8.30.
- 3 Oh, I ..... Helen last night, but I completely forgot.
- 4 This door is a fire exit. You ..... it.
- 5 My flight ..... at 11.30, but it was an hour late.

A Study this example situation:



You want to tell somebody what Paul said. There are two ways of doing this:

You can repeat Paul's words (direct speech): Paul said 'I'm **feeling ill**.'

Or you can use reported speech: Paul said **that he was feeling ill**.

Compare:

*direct*

Paul said 'I am feeling ill.'

In writing we use these quotation marks to show direct speech.

*reported*

Paul said that he was feeling ill.

B When we use reported speech, the main verb of the sentence is usually past (Paul **said** that ... / I **told** her that ... etc.). The rest of the sentence is usually past too:

- Paul **said** that he **was feeling ill**.
- I **told** Lisa that I **didn't have** any money.

You can leave out **that**. So you can say:

- Paul **said that** he was feeling ill. or Paul **said** he was feeling ill.

In general, the *present* form in direct speech changes to the *past* form in reported speech:

am/is → **was**                      do/does → **did**                      will → **would**  
are → **were**                      have/has → **had**                      can → **could**  
want/like/know/go etc. → **wanted/liked/knew/went** etc.

Compare direct speech and reported speech:

You met Anna. Here are some of the things she said in *direct* speech:

My parents **are** fine.  
I'm going to learn to drive.  
  
I **want** to buy a car.  
John **has** a new job.  
I **can't** come to the party on Friday.  
I **don't** have much free time.  
I'm going away for a few days.  
I'll phone you when I **get** back.



ANNA

Later you tell somebody what Anna said. You use *reported* speech:

- Anna said that her parents **were** fine.
- She said that she **was** going to learn to drive.
- She said that she **wanted** to buy a car.
- She said that John **had** a new job.
- She said that she **couldn't** come to the party on Friday.
- She said she **didn't** have much free time.
- She said that she **was** going away for a few days and **would** phone me when she **got** back.

C The *past simple* (**did/saw/knew** etc.) can usually stay the same in reported speech, or you can change it to the *past perfect* (**had done / had seen / had known** etc.):

- direct* Paul said 'I **woke** up feeling ill, so I **didn't go** to work.'
- reported* Paul said (that) he **woke** up feeling ill, so he **didn't go** to work. or Paul said (that) he **had woken** up feeling ill, so he **hadn't gone** to work.