
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute Vocabulary

Reporting verbs



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Catherine

Hello! Welcome to 6 Minute Vocabulary with me, Catherine...

Neil

...and me, Neil. In this programme, we're looking at reporting verbs. They're verbs that we use when we talk about what someone else has said.

Catherine

So verbs like **suggest**, **deny** and **insist**. Let's start by listening to Simon. And Simon is a political news reporter.

Neil

And while you're listening to Simon's news report, here's a question for you to think about:

Catherine

Why did the minister lie in her previous interview?

INSERT

Simon

In a previous interview, the minister had **denied** knowing anything about the scandal. However, she later **apologised for** saying this and **admitted** that she had lied. She **insisted** that she had not intended to cause any harm and **suggested** that it had been necessary to protect certain important public figures. When **advised** to reconsider her position, she had initially **demand**ed to know why, but eventually **offer**ed to resign.

Catherine

We asked: Why did the minister lie in her previous interview?

Neil

And the answer is: she **suggested** that it had been necessary to protect certain important public figures.

Catherine

Scandal. Now it's interesting that the report uses the verb **suggested**. So why didn't Simon use **said** - She **said** that...?

Neil

Well, **suggested** tells us that the minister said it, but not in a very strong or direct way. And that's because she didn't want to embarrass the important public figures.

Catherine

And that's an example of why reporting verbs are useful. We can always use **say, tell** or **ask**, but other reporting verbs express slightly different meanings and attitudes.

Neil

Yes, they do. So reporting verbs make your writing or speaking more accurate and more interesting too. Now listen for more reporting verbs in this clip.

CLIP 1

In a previous interview, the minister had **denied** knowing anything about the scandal. However, she later **apologised for** saying this and **admitted** that she had lied.

Neil

So we heard **denied knowing anything**. **Denied** has a negative meaning. It means she said she didn't know anything about the scandal.

Catherine

Yes. But then she **apologised for saying this**. She said she was sorry for saying this.

Neil

And lastly, she **admitted that she had lied**. **Admit** is the opposite of **deny**. It means you say that something is true. We usually use **admit** when someone has to say that something is true, although they would prefer not to.

Catherine

And now on to the next clip.

CLIP 2

She **insisted** that she had not intended to cause any harm and **suggested** that it had been necessary to protect certain important public figures.

Neil

There we heard the verb **insisted**. **To insist** means to say something strongly, especially when other people say something different.

Catherine

Yes, the minister said strongly that it was incorrect that she had intended to cause harm.

Neil

Now we've already looked at the verb **suggested**. But it's worth noticing that **insist**, **suggest** and **admit** are all followed by a **that clause** in the news report.

Catherine

For example, **she suggested that it had been necessary**. But we often leave the word **that** out – **she suggested it had been necessary**.

Neil

Other reporting verbs have different patterns. Some verbs are followed by a **verb plus i-n-g**, such as **deny**.

Catherine

And some are followed by **to plus an infinitive**. You'll hear three examples of this in our final clip.

CLIP 3

When **advised** to reconsider her position, she had initially **demanded** to know why, but eventually **offered** to resign.

Catherine

Right. We heard **advised**, which means **told**, but in a polite or indirect way.

Neil

And **demanded**, which means **asked** in a slightly aggressive way.

Catherine

And finally she **offered to resign**. So she said that she was willing to resign if that's what people wanted.

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Neil

Right, quiz time! Which three reporting verbs from the show today can you use instead of **said** in these sentences? Number one. I didn't believe her at first but she **said** that it was true.

Catherine

It's **insisted**. She **insisted** that it was true.

Neil

That's right. Well done! Number two: When questioned by the police, the boy **said** that he had stolen the car.

Catherine

So the boy **admitted** that he had stolen the car.

Neil

Number three: Several people have said that there's a possibility that the actor's marriage might be in trouble.

Catherine

And the answer's **suggested**.

Neil

It is! And that's the end of the quiz. Congratulations if you got them all right!

Catherine

Well done indeed. And finally, here's a top tip to help you learn new words more quickly. Keep a list of reporting verbs and study their meanings. When you are writing, every time you use the words **said**, **asked** or **told**, check your list to see if there is a different verb that you can use in that context to add variety to your English.

Neil

And there's more about this at bbclearningenglish.com. Join us again soon for more 6 Minute Vocabulary.

Catherine

Bye!

Vocabulary points to take away:

deny

to say that something is not true, especially when other people are saying it is
When accused, she **denied** starting the fire.

admit

to say that something is true, although you don't want to say this
He **admitted** posting the video on the site.

apologise for

to say that you are sorry for something that you have done
Martha **apologised** for being late.

insist

to say firmly that something is or isn't correct, when other people are saying the opposite
Dad **insists** that the weather will be good, but that's not what the forecast says.

suggest (two meanings)

to tell someone your ideas about what to do, where to go, etc.
I **suggest** that we meet again at the same time next week.

to say something is true but not in a strong or direct way
The interviewer **suggested** that the government's figures may not be correct.

advise

to tell someone what you think they should do, in a polite way
He **advised** me to talk to my teacher about it.

demand

to ask for something very firmly or aggressively
The customer returned the goods and **demanded** his money back.

offer

to say that you are willing to do something
She **offered** to give me a lift to the party.