

DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH

(With Rules and Examples)

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DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH

There are two ways of reporting the words spoken by a person. We can reproduce the words exactly spoken or we can express in our own words the substance of what he said. The first of these methods is called Direct speech or Direct Narration. The second is called Indirect Speech or Indirect Narration.

Imran said to his father, "I need more money".

Imran told his father that he needed more money.

REPORTED SPEECH, REPORTING VERB:

The exact words of the speaker which are put within inverted commas are called the Reported Speech.

The verb that introduces the Reported speech is called Reporting Verb. In the above example "said" is the reporting verb and "I need more money" is the reported speech.

The following points should be observed about these two modes of narration.

- (i) The Direct speech is always enclosed within inverted commas and it always begins with a capital letter. It is separated from the Reporting verb by a comma.
- (ii) (a) In the Indirect Speech, no inverted commas are used and no comma is used to separate the Reporting Verb from the Reported Speech.
(b) The tense of the Reporting verb is never changed.
(c) A conjunction, if necessary, is used after the Reporting verb.
(d) Tenses, pronouns and words denoting nearness of time and position undergo certain change in the Indirect Speech.

TRANSFORMATION OF DIRECT SPEECH INTO INDIRECT:

Roles for the change of Tenses:

If the Reporting Verb is in a present Tense (e.g. *says, is/am/are saying, has/have said, has/have been saying*) or a future tense (e.g. *shall/will say, shall/will have said, etc*) the tense of the verb in the Reported speech remains unchanged.

As;

- (i) *He says, "Children like to play".*
He says that children like to play.
- (ii) *Your brother will say, "Life was very hard during the war".*
Your brother will say that life was very hard during the war.
- (iii) *Ali has said, "Dogs would be hard to beat in faithfulness".*
Ali has said that dogs would be hard to beat in faithfulness.

If the Reporting Verb is in a past Tense (e.g *said, had said, was saying, had been saying, used to say*), the tenses in the Reported speech are changed into the past tense.

- *do/deos* is changed to *did*.
- *did* is changed to *had done*.
- *had done* remains unchanged.
- *is/am/are doing* is changed to *was/were doing*.
- *was/were doing* is changed to *had been doing*.
- *had been doing* is remains unchanged.
- *will/shall do* is changed to *would/should do*.
- *will/shall be doing* is changed to *would/should be doing*.
- *will/shall have done* is changed to *would/should have done*.
- *will/shall have been doing* is changed to *would/should have been doing*.
- *would/should do, would/should be doing, would/should have done, would/should have been doing* remain unchanged.
- *may* is changed to *might*.
- *Can* is changed to *could*.
- *Has/have to* is changed to *had to*.
- *will/shall have done* is changed to *would/should have done*.
- *Might, could, had to, ought to, used to* and *had better* remain unchanged.
- *Must* is changed to *had to, would have* or left unchanged according as it expresses present, obligation, future obligation or permanent commands and prohibitions.

Examples are:

- 1- *He said, "Asif comes to the college daily".*
He said that Asif came to the college daily.
- 2- *Seema said, "I am coming for dinner".*
Seema said that she was coming for dinner.
- 3- *The poor beggar said, "The rich should try to be kind to the poor".*
The poor beggar said that the rich should try to be kind to the poor.
- 4- *He said, "It was very hot in the morning".*
He said that it had been very hot in the morning.
- 5- *He said, "It had been very hot since morning".*
He said that it had been very hot since morning.

Exceptions to the rule stated above:

- a) If the Reported Speech expresses a universal truth or a habitual fact, its tense remains unchanged.
As;
 - (i) *The teacher said, "The earth revolves round the sun".*
The teacher said that the earth revolves round the sun.
 - (ii) *She said, "Girls are usually more sincere than boys".*
She said that girls are usually more sincere than boys.

- b) When the Reported Speech contains a time clause and both the main verb and the verb in the time clause are the simple past, these verbs are left unchanged.
- As;
- (i) *He said, "The boy stuck to his post till his father ordered him to leave".*
He said that the boy stuck to his post till his father ordered him to leave.
- (ii) *She said, "The rude girl was disappointed when the fairy refused to help her".*
She said that the rude girl was disappointed when the fairy refused to help her.
- However, if the main verb is in the simple past while the verb in the time clause as in past continuous, it is usual to change the main verb to past perfect and leave the verb in the time clause unchanged:
- As;
- (i) *He said, "Asif slipped when he was trying to board a bus".*
He said that Asif had slipped when he was trying to board a bus.
- (ii) *He said, "Aslam died when his son was still struggling to get established in business".*
He said that Aslam had died when his son was still struggling to get established in business.
- c) If the Reported Speech describes a state of affairs which still exists when the speech is reported, its tense normally remains unchanged: As;
- (i) *She said, "Whatever Asim does displeases his father".*
She said that whatever Asim does displeases his father.
- (ii) *He said, "Kamran's wife wants to become rich by winning a lottery".*
He said that Kamran's wife want to become rich by winning a lottery.

RULES FOR THE CHANGE OF PRONOUNS:

(a) First Person:

Pronouns of the first person are changed into pronouns of the same person as the person of the subject of the Reporting Verb:

As;

- (i) *I said, "I have done my home work".*
I said that I had done my home work.
- (ii) *You said, "I have done my home work".*
You said that you had done your home work.
- (iii) *He said, "I have done my home work".*
He said that he had done his home work.

(b) Second Person:

Pronouns of the second person are changed into pronouns of the same person as that of the object of the Reporting Verb:

As;

- (i) *The teacher said to me, "You have not done your work well".*
The teacher told me that I had not done my work well.
- (ii) *The teacher said to you, "You have not done your work well".*
The teacher told you that you had not done your work well.
- (iii) *The teacher said to him, "You have not done your work well".*
The teacher told him that he had not done his work well.

(c) **Third Person:**

Pronouns of the third person generally remain unchanged: As;

- (i) *I said to you, "He should not be trusted".*
I told you that he should not be trusted.
- (ii) *You said to me, "He should not be trusted".*
You told me that he should not be trusted.

➤ When there are two or more third person pronouns in the Indirect Speech, the name of the person referred to by each may be written in brackets against each of them to avoid confusion: As;

The servant said to his master, "I have told you the truth and I can do no more".
The servant told his master that he had told him (master) the truth and he (servant) could do no more

One has to be little careful while changing the Personal Pronoun "we". "we" can be retained as "we" or changed to "you" or "they" depending upon the relationship of the speaker, the person(s) addressed and the person reporting the speech:

As;

- (i) *He said to me, "We should have tried harder".*
He told me that we should have tried harder.
- (ii) *He said to you, "We should have tried harder".*
He told you that you should have tried harder.
- (iii) *He said to Asif, "We should have tried harder".*
He told Asif that they should have tried harder.
- (iv) *The Prime Minister said, "We, the members of the Muslim League, should be united"*
The Prime Minister said that they, the members of Muslim League, should be united.
- (v) *The President said, "We should be united to fight the enemy tooth and nail".*
The President told said that we should be united to fight the enemy tooth and nail.

Conversion of Assertive Sentences (Statement)

Rules:

- ❖ The Reporting Verb "said" should be changed into "told", if it is followed by an object; If there is no object it should be left unchanged.
- ❖ Reply, answer, inform, state etc, may also be used instead of said or told to give clarity of meaning.
- ❖ "That" is used as a conjunction. Its use is optional, but usually it is not omitted.
- ❖ Tenses, pronouns and words denoting nearness should be changed according to the rule

For Example:

- (i) *The Old man said, "My son! I live for you. But it does 'nt mean that you can treat me as you like".*
The Old man told his son that he lived for him but it did 'nt mean that he could treat him as he liked.
- (ii) *A student came to me and said, "Sir! I shall be obliged to you if you will grant me three days leave. I have to go to my village to see my mother"*
A student came to me and respectfully said that he would be obliged to me if I would grant hem three days leave as he had to go to his village to see his mother.
- (iii) *"Aslam" said the Princess sternly, "I commond you to tell me what the old man had said".*
The Princess sternly commanded Aslam to tell her what the old man had said.
- (iv) *When Asif approached his father, he said, "My son, I shall forgive you if you confess all your sins".*
When Asif approached his father, he(father) told him(Asif) that he would forgive him if he confessed all his sins.

Conversion of Interrogative Sentences

(From Direct to Indirect Speech)

While changing the interrogative sentences into Indirect Speech, the following rules should be observed:

Rules (1):

In converting an Interrogative sentence into Indirect Speech, the following rules should be observed.

- a) Change the Reporting Verb into ask, enquire, demand, wonder, want to know, etc. Note that enquire and demand are followed by the preposition "of".
- b) Change the Interrogative form into the Assertive form and remove the sign of Interrogative
- c) No conjunction is used when the sentence begins with question words like who, whose, whom, what, which, when, why, where, how, etc.
- d) Tenses, pronouns and words denoting nearness are changed according to the rules.
As;
 - (i) *She said to me, "What can I do for you, dear?"*
She asked me affectionately what she could do for me.
 - (ii) *The old man said to his son, "What harm have I done to you?"*
The old man asked his son what harm he had done to him.

Rules (2):

If the question *is* not introduced by any question word, but “*is*” one of the types that can take yes or no for answer, we use conjunction “*if*” or “*whether*”.

- (i) *The girl said, “May I wear this saree, mother?”*
The girl asked her mother whether she might wear that saree.

(Note: *Whether* is a better conjunction since it includes the two meanings if and if not though, being short, *if* is more frequently used.)

Questions beginning with “*shall I*”:

Questions beginning with “*shall I*” are of two types:

Pure Future:

As;

- (i) *He said to me, “Shall I return these notes by Monday?”*
He asked me if he would return those notes by Monday.
- (ii) *He said, “Shall I have a happy married life?”*
He wondered if he would have a happy married life.

Polite Request:

As;

- (i) *He said to me, “Shall I post these letters for you?”*
He asked me if he should post those letters for me.
- (ii) *The clerk said to him, “Shall I ask these people to wait for you?”*
The clerk asked him if he (clerk) should ask those people to wait for him.

“Yes” or “No” answers to questions:

While changing from direct to Indirect, *yes* or *no* are paraphrased: as;

- (i) *She said to Madam Sultana, “Can you lend me this necklace?”*
Madam Sultana said, “Yes” (Direct)
She asked Madam Sultana whether she (Madam Sultana) could lend her that necklace,
Madam Sultana replied that she could.
- (ii) *I said to Asif, “Are you willing?”*
Asif said, “No”
I asked Asif if he was willing. Asif said that he was not.
- (iii) *I Said, “How many discoveries go unheeded?”*
I wondered how many discoveries went unheeded.
- (iv) *I said to him, “Where have you lost the pen, I brought for you yesterday?”*
I asked him where he had lost the pen, I had brought for him a previous day.
- (v) *She said to me, “Is there any possibility of my getting promotion this year?”*
I said, “Yes”.
She asked me whether there was any possibility of her getting promotion that year. I
replied that there was.

Conversion of Imperative Sentences

While changing the imperative sentences into Indirect Speech, the following rules should be observed:

Rules (1):

The Reporting Verb is changed into a verb signifying a command, request, advice.

- Command can be expressed by the words command, order, tell, charge etc.
- Request can be expressed by the words request, beg, ask, implore, entreat, desire, beseech, solicited, etc.

Besides these words, forbid, persuade, incite, etc. May also be used according to the context.

Rules (2):

The verb of the Reported Speech is changed into an Infinitive.

Rules (3):

If the Reported Speech is negative, the word “not” is placed before the infinitive.

Rules (4):

Tenses, pronouns and words denoting nearness are changed according to the rules.

Examples are:

- (i) *He said to me, “Help him in setting the accounts”.*
He requested me to help him in setting the accounts.
- (ii) *My friend said to me, “Please accept this invitation”.*
My friend entreated me to accept that invitation.
- (iii) *The Doctor said to the patient, “ Give up smoking”.*
The Doctor advised the patient to give up smoking.
- (iv) *The Commander said to his men, “ March further”.*
The Commander urged his men to march further.
- (v) *The young man said to his father, “Pardon me sir”.*
The young man begged his father to pardon him.
- (vi) *He said to me, “Wait here till I come back”.*
He ordered me to wait here till I come back.
- (vii) *The father said, “Sons, do not quarrel over trifles”.*
The father forbade his sons to quarrel over trifles.
- (viii) *I said to him, “Don’t worry about me”.*
I told him not to worry about me.
- (ix) *The magician said to the boy, “Make haste and give me the lamp”.*
The magician commanded the boy to make haste and to give him the lamp.
- (x) *The mother said, “Run away children, do not disturb me”.*
The mother ordered the children to run away and forbade them to disturb her.

Conversion of Imperative Sentences with “Let”

“Let” is often used to make proposals in such cases, *he said, “ Let us do it”* is changed to *they suggested / proposed doing it* or *he suggested / proposed that they should do it*.

As;

- (i) *I said to my brother, “Let us go to some hill station for a change”*
I suggested to my brother that we should go to some hill station for a change.
- (ii) *“Let us invite some friends to our son’s birthday”, said the father.*
The father proposed that they should invite some friends to their son’s birthday.
- (iii) *The teacher said, “ Let no child speak to Asif for the whole afternoon”.*
The teacher said that no child was to speak to Asif for the whole afternoon.
- (iv) *He said to his friend, “Let me go home now”.*
He requested his friend that he might be allowed to go home.
or
He suggested to his friend that he might be allowed to go home.
- (v) *The beggar said, “Madam, let me stay here a while and refresh myself”.*
The beggar requested her respectfully to let him stay there a while and refresh himself.

Conversion of Exclamatory and Optative Sentences

(From Direct to Indirect Speech)

While converting exclamatory and Optative Sentences from Direct to Indirect Speech the following general rules have to be observed:

Rules (1):

In the case of exclamatory sentences the Reporting Verb is changed to exclaim with sorrow/Joy/fear/anger, etc., applaud, regret, curse, coy out or any other such verb that properly conveys the tone of exclamation.

Rules (2):

In the case of Optative Sentences the Reporting Verb is changed to wish/pray/long for/yearn/earnestly desire, etc.

Rules (3):

The Conjunction “*that*” is used to introduce the Reported Speech

Rules (4):

The Exclamatory or Optative sentence is changed into an assertive one before it is put into Indirect Speech.

Rules (5):

Interjections and exclamations are omitted and their sense conveyed by means of adverbs or adverbial phrases.

Rules (6):

Tenses, pronouns and words showing nearness are changed according to the rules already stated.

As;

- (i) *“Hurrah! I have topped again”, he said.
He exclaimed with joy that he had topped again.*
- (ii) *She said, “How ugly do I look in this dress!”
She exclaimed that she looked ugly in that dress.*
- (iii) *He said to me, “what a pity! You did not come”.
He exclaimed that it was a real pity I had not come.*
- (iv) *“Fie! A soldier and afraid of fighting”, said the General.
The General exclaimed that it was shameful for soldier to be afraid of fighting.*
- (v) *He said, “Alas! How foolish have I acted!”
He exclaimed with regret that he had acted very foolishly.*
- (vi) *He said, “Just my luck! I never thought I would fail this time too”
He exclaimed that he was as usual unlucky and added that he had never thought he would fail that time too.*
- (vii) *The Captain said to the goalkeeper, “brave! Well done”
The Captain applauded the goalkeeper.*
- (viii) *Asim said to his friend, “Good morning, How do you do?”
Asim wished his friend good morning and asked him how he was.*
- (ix) *He said, “would that I could re-live my past!”
He wished that he could re-live his past.*
- (x) *The Old beggar said to me, “May Allah bless you, my son!”
The Old beggar called me his son and prayed that Allah might bless me.*

Msc. Exercise

- (i) My mother said to me, “You look hungry. Shall I go and bring you some fruit?”
My mother told me that I looked hungry. She asked me if she should go and bring me some fruit.
- (ii) “Welcome”, he said, “be seated. It is my misfortune that I can not rise to receive you. Now will you tell me what brings you here at this late hour?”
He welcomed me and requested me to be seated. He said that it was his misfortune that he could not rise to receive me, then he asked me to tell him what brought me there at that late hour.
- (iii) She said, “You scoundrel! How dare you tease me? I shall take you to the police station”.
She called him a scoundrel and asked him how he dared to tease her. She threatened to take him to the police station.
- (iv) The servant said to his master, “The refrigerator has arrived. Where is it to be put?”
The servant told his master that the refrigerator had arrived and asked him where it was to be put.
- (v) I said to the servant, “How dare you disobey my orders? Don’t you deserve to be punished?”
I asked the servant how he dared to disobey my orders and whether he did not deserve to be punished.

(vi) The King said to the two brothers, “ You speak like brave men. You may under take the adventure May good fortune be with you.”

The King said that the two brothers spoke like brave men. He agreed to allow them to under take the adventure. He prayed that good fortune might be with them.

Change the narration:

1. The master of the house asked him who he was and what he wanted.
2. He wanted to know if Seema was going to the market and suggested that they should go together.
3. I told the artist to show a few designs. I said that this outlines were sharp and expressive but his colours lacked harmony.
4. The peon said, “It is already past nine. May I go home sir?”
5. The young man said to her, “I love you. Will you marry me?”
6. “How can I marry you?” she said, “There appear to be a number of girls whom you love”.
7. I said my friend, “Please take your seat. Why are you looking so sad? Is there ought I can do for you?”
8. The children called to the nurse and said, “Please come quickly. Our brother has been bitten by a snake”
9. The children exclaimed with joy that their father had come.
10. The teacher enquired of the boys angrily why they had insulted the old man.
11. The teacher wished the boys good morning and asked them if they would like to play a friendly match with their seniors.
12. She said, “Alas! I am the innocent cause of our sorrows”.
13. The health officer instructed the chemist that those medicines were not to be sold without a physicians prescription.
14. The police officer suggested that they should a wrecked car there for a while, for it would remind the other drivers to be more careful.
15. I said to the servant, “Keep these boxes away from fire, for they contain some highly inflammable matter.
16. I said to the peon, “Take these papers to the Principal and request him on my behalf to go through them immediately”.
17. He said that his father was not at home at the moment but he would return in a few days.
18. I called my friends and told them that I wanted all of them to attend my birthday.
19. He told you that he could not get time to buy the medicines prescribed for you.
20. He fells me that he will have a great pleasure in coming to my home.
21. She says that she would like to be a doctor when she grow up.
22. The mother said that she could not leave the child alone.
23. The clerk said, “I am sorry I can not return the pass book immediately. It will be sent to you by post”.
24. “Son”, his father said in dream, you can continue your profession as a doctor. You will make a good living”.
25. He said, “We practiced at the nets for two hours yesterday morning and we shall practice for another two hours tomorrow.