

Lec4

Reported Speech (Indirect Speech)

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What Is Reported Speech?

Reported speech is when you tell somebody what you or another person said before. When reporting a speech, some changes are necessary.

For example, the statement:

Jane said she was waiting for her mom.

is **a reported speech**, whereas:

Jane said "I'm waiting for my mom."

is **a direct speech**

Note:

Reported speech is also referred to as indirect speech or indirect discourse.

Direct Speech Vs Reported Speech

1. We use direct speech to quote a speaker's exact words. We put their words within quotation marks. We add a reporting verb such as "he said" or "she asked" before or after the quote.

Example:

He said, "I am happy."

2. Reported speech is a way of reporting what someone said without using quotation marks. We do not necessarily report the speaker's exact words. Some changes are necessary: the time expressions, the tense of the verbs, and the demonstratives.

Example:

He said that he was happy.

More examples:

Direct speech	Reported speech
She says: "I like tuna fish."	She says that she likes tuna fish.
She said: "I'm visiting Paris next weekend."	She said that she was visiting Paris the following weekend.
He asked Betty: "Do you like cheese?"	He wanted to know if Betty liked cheese.

Different Types Of Reported Speech

When you use reported speech, you either report:

- Statements
- Questions
- Requests / commands
- Other types

A. Reporting Statements

When transforming statements, check whether you have to change:

-pronouns

-tense

-place and time expression

1- Pronouns

In reported speech, you often have to change the pronoun depending on who says what.

Example:

She says, "My dad likes roast chicken." – She says that her dad likes roast chicken

2- Tenses

If the sentence starts in the present, there is no backshift of tenses in reported speech.

If the sentence starts in the past, there is often a backshift of tenses in reported speech

Shifting back tense	Direct speech	Reported speech
(no backshift)	"I write poems."	He says that he writes poems.
(backshift)	"I write poems"	He said that he wrote poems.

No backshift

Do not change the tense if the introductory clause (i.e., the reporting verb) is in the present tense (e. g. He says). Note, however, that you might have to change the form of the present tense verb (3rd person singular).

Example:

He says, "I write poems." – He says that he writes English.

Backshift

You must change the tense if the introductory clause (i.e., the reporting verb) is in the past tense (e. g. He said).

Example:

He said, "I am happy." – He said that he was happy.

Examples Of The Main Changes In Verb Tense

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
Simple Present He said: "I am happy"	Simple Past He said that he was happy
Present Progressive He said: "I'm looking for my keys"	Past Progressive He said that he was looking for his keys
Simple Past He said: "I visited New York last year"	Past Perfect Simple He said that he had visited New York the previous year.
Present Perfect He said: "I 've lived here for a long time "	Past Perfect He said that he had lived there for a long time
Past Perfect He said: "They had finished the work when I arrived "	Past Perfect He said that they had finished the work when he had arrived "
Past Progressive He said: "I was playing football when the accident occurred "	Past Perfect Progressive He said that he had been playing football when the accident had occurred
Present Perfect Progressive He said: "I have been playing football for two hours."	Past Perfect Progressive He said that he had been playing football for two hours
Past Perfect Progressive He said: "I had been reading a newspaper when the light went off "	Past Perfect Progressive He said that he had been reading a newspaper when the light had gone off
Future Simple (will+verb) He said: "I will open the door."	Conditional (would+verb) He said that he would open the door.
Conditional (would+verb) He said: "I would buy Mercedes if I were rich"	Conditional (would+verb) He said that he would buy Mercedes if he had been rich"

3. Modal Verbs

The modal verbs could, should, would, might, needn't, ought to, and used to do not normally change.

Example:

He said: "She might be right." – He said that she might be right.

He told her: "You needn't see a doctor." – He told her that she needn't see a doctor.

Other modal verbs such as can, shall, will, must ,and may change:

Modal	Direct speech	Reported speech
can	"I can do it."	He said that he could do it.
may	" May I go out?"	He wanted to know if he might go out.
must	"She must apply for the job."	He said that she must/had to apply for the job.
will	"They will call you."	He told her that they would call her.

4- Place, Demonstratives, And Time Expressions

Place, demonstratives, and time expressions change if the context of the reported statement (i.e. the location and/or the period of time) is different from that of the direct speech.

In the following table, you will find the different changes of place; demonstratives, and time expressions.

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
Time Expressions	
today	that day
now	then
yesterday	the day before
... days ago	... days before
last week	the week before/the previous week
next year	the following year/the next year/ the year after
tomorrow	the next day / the following day
Place	

here	there
Demonstratives	
this	that
these	those

B. Reporting Questions

When transforming questions, check whether you have to change:

- The pronouns
- The place and time expressions
- The tenses (backshift)

Also, note that you have to:

transform the question into an indirect question

use the question word (where, when, what, how) or if/whether

Types of questions	Direct speech	Reported speech
With question words (what, why, where, how...)	"Why" don't you speak English?"	He asked me why I didn't speak English.
Without question words (yes or no questions)	"Do you speak English?"	He asked me whether/if I spoke English.

C. Reporting Requests / Commands

When transforming requests and commands, check whether you have to change:

- pronouns
- place and time expressions

Direct speech	Reported speech
"Nancy, do the exercise."	He told Nancy to do the exercise.
"Nancy, give me your pen, please."	He asked Nancy to give him her pen.

Tenses are not relevant for requests – simply use *to* / *not to* + verb (infinitive without "to")

Example:

She said, "Sit down." - She asked me to sit down.

She said, "don't be lazy" - She asked me not to be lazy

For affirmative use *to* + infinitive (without *to*)

For negative requests, use *not to* + infinitive (without *to*).

D. Other Transformations

Expressions of advice with *must*, *should*, and *ought* are usually reported using *advise/urge*.

Example:

"You must read this book."

He advised/urged me to read that book.

The expression *let's* is usually reported using *suggest*. In this case, there are two possibilities for reported speech: gerund or statement with *should*.

Example:

"Let's go to the cinema."

1. He suggested going to the cinema.
2. He suggested that we should go to the cinema.

Main Clauses Connected With And/But

If two complete main clauses are connected with *,and or ,but, put ,that* after the conjunction.

Example:

He said, "I saw her but she didn't see me." – He said that he had seen her but that she hadn't seen him."

If the subject is dropped in the second main clause (the conjunction is followed by a verb), do not use *,that*.

Example:

She said, “I am a nurse and work in a hospital.” – He said that she was a nurse and worked in a hospital.“

The Punctuation Rules Of The Reported Speech**Direct speech:**

We normally add a comma between the reporting verbs (e.g., she/he said, reported, he replied, etc.) and the reported clause in direct speech. The original speaker's words are put between inverted commas, either single ('...') or double ("...").

Example:

She said, “I wasn't ready for the competition”.

Note that we insert the comma within the inverted commas if the reported clause comes first:

Example:

“I wasn't ready for the competition,” she said.

Indirect speech:

In indirect speech, we don't put a comma between the reporting verb and the reported clause and we omit the inverted quotes.

Example:

She said that she hadn't been ready for the competition.

In reported questions and exclamations, we remove the question mark and the exclamation mark.

Example:

She asked him why he looked sad?

She asked him why he looked sad.

Can We Omit That In The Reported Speech?

Yes, we can omit that after reporting verbs such as he said, he replied, she suggested, etc.

Examples:

He said that he could do it. - He said he could do it.

She replied that she was fed up with his misbehavior. - She replied she was fed up with his misbehavior.

Note:

In reported speech, we put the words of a speaker in a subordinate clause introduced by a reporting verb such as - 'he said' and 'she asked'- with the required person and tense adjustments.

Direct speech	Reported speech
simple present	simple past
simple past	past perfect
present continuous	past continuous
past continuous	past perfect continuous
will	would
shall	should
may	might
can	could
must	had to

Homework:

Transform these direct speech into reported speech

1-John said, "I love this town."

2- "Do you like soccer ?" He asked me.

3- "I can't drive a lorry," he said.

- 4- "Be nice to your brother," he said.
- 5- "Don't be nasty," he said.
- 6- "Don't waste your money" she said.
- 7- "What have you decided to do?" she asked him.
- 8- "I always wake up early," he said.
- 9- "You should revise your lessons," he said.
- 10- "Where have you been?" he asked me.