

Direct and Indirect Speech

TENSE CHANGES

DIRECT	INDIRECT
Present Simple He said, “I write letters.”	Past Simple He said that he wrote letters.
Present Continuous He said, “I am writing letters.”	Past Continuous He said that he was writing letters.
Present Perfect Simple He said, “I have written letters.”	Past Perfect Simple He said that he had written letters.
Present Perfect Continuous He said, “I have been writing letters.”	Past Perfect Continuous He said that he had been writing letters.
Past Simple He said, “I wrote letters.”	Past Perfect Simple He said that he had written letters.
Past Continuous He said, “I was writing letters.”	Past Perfect Continuous He said that he had been writing letters.
Future Simple He said, “I will write letters.”	Conditional Simple He said that he would write letters.
Future Continuous He said, “I will be writing letters.”	Conditional Continuous He said that he would be writing letters.
Imperative I said, “Write letters!”	to + root of verb I told him to write letters.
Modals He said, “I can write letters.” He asked, “Shall I write letters?” He said, “I may write letters.” He said, “I have to / must write letters.”	He said that he could write letters. He asked if he should write letters. He said that he might write letters. He said that he had to write letters.

Note:

1. The Past perfect Simple and Past Perfect Continuous do not change in indirect speech.
2. The modals should, could, would, might and ought to do not change.
3. When we report questions, we also change the word order to that of a regular sentence.

“Why are you late? = She asked why I was late.

Other changes in indirect speech include: time expressions, demonstratives and pronouns.

DIRECT	INDIRECT
Time expressions now today yesterday tomorrow next week / month last week / month a week ago	then that day the day before, the previous day the next / following day, the day after the next / following week / month the previous week / month, the week / month before the week before
Demonstratives this these here	that those there
Pronouns The change in pronouns will depend on the person being referred to in the indirect speech. “I gave you my notebook,” Sally said to Peter.	Sally told Peter that she had given him her notebook.

Indirect Speech Introductory Verbs

Purpose	Verb	Construction
accusation	accuse	someone of doing something
admission	admit	something that you have done something (to) having done something
advice	advise	someone / something someone on / about something doing something someone to do something
agreement	agree	to an idea, suggestion etc. (say "All right") with someone / something (have the same opinion) to do something that something is a good idea etc. (plural) on a plan etc.
apology	apologise	(to someone) for (having done) something
begging	beg	someone to do something
complaint	complain	(to someone) about something that something has (not) been done
denial	deny	something that you have done something having done something
exclamation	exclaim	that something has happened
explanation	explain	something to someone that something has happened how, why, what ...

information	inform	someone of / about something someone that something has happened
invitation	invite	someone to something someone to do something
offer	offer	something to someone someone something to do something (for someone)
order	order	someone to do something
preference	would rather prefer	do one thing rather than other (doing) one thing to another to do one thing rather than to do another
promise	promise	to do something (someone) that you will do something
refusal	refuse	to do something something
reminder	remind	someone of someone / something someone to do something someone that something must be done
request	request	someone to do something something
suggestion	suggest	(doing) something (to someone) that someone should do something
threat	threaten	to do something (to someone) someone with something that you will do something (to someone)
warning	warn	someone of / against / about something someone (not) to do something

wonder	wonder	someone that something may happen if / what / why ...
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