

## DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH - RULES

We may report the words of a speaker in two ways.

### 1. Direct Speech

We may quote the actual words of the speaker. This method is called Direct Speech.

### 2. Indirect Speech

We may report what he said without quoting his exact words. This method is called Indirect Speech or Reported Speech.

Example:

- Direct: Clinton said, "I am very busy now."
- Indirect: Clinton said that he was very busy then.
- Direct : He said, " my mother is writing letter."
- Indirect: He said that his mother was writing letter.

### How to change Direct to Indirect Speech?

It will be noticed that in Direct Speech, we use inverted commas to mark off the exact words of the speaker. In Indirect Speech we do not use the inverted commas.

It will be further noticed that in changing the above Direct Speech into Indirect speech, certain changes have been made.

Thus:

- i. We have used the conjunction 'that' before the Indirect Statement.
- ii. The pronoun "I" is changed to "HE". (The Pronoun is changed in Person)
- iii. The verb "am" is changed to "was".
- iv. The adverb "now" is changed to "then".

### Rules for changing Direct into Indirect Speech

A. When the reporting or principal verb is in the Past Tense, all the Present Tenses in the Direct Speech are changed into Past Tense.

a. A simple present tense becomes simple past tense.

Example:

- Direct : He said, "I am unwell."
- Indirect: He said that he was unwell.

b. A present continuous tense becomes a past continuous.

Example:

- Direct : He said, " my mother is writing letter."
- Indirect: He said that his mother was writing letter.

c. A present perfect becomes a past perfect:

Example:

- Direct: He said, "I have passed the examination."
- Indirect: he said that he had passed the examination.

d. As a rule the simple past tense in the Direct Speech becomes the past perfect tense in Indirect Speech.

Example:

- Direct: He said, "His horse died in the night."
- Indirect: he said that his horse had died in the night.

**NOTE:**

The shall of the future is changed into should.

The will of the future is changed into would.

The can and may of the future are changed into could and might respectively.

B. The tenses will not change if the statement is still relevant or if it is a universal truth. We can often choose whether to keep The original tenses or change them.

Examples:

- Direct: "I know her address", said John.
- Indirect: John said that he knows/knew her address.

In this Indirect Speech, both the past tense and the present tense make the sentence a correct one.

- Direct: The teacher said, "The earth goes round the sun."
- Indirect: The teacher said that the earth goes/went round the sun.
- Direct: She said, "German is easy to learn."
- Indirect: She said that German was/is easy to learn.

The past tense is often used when it is uncertain if the statement is true or when we are reporting objectively.

C. The pronouns of the Direct Speech are changed where necessary, so that their relations with the reporter and his hearer, Rather than with the original speaker are indicated.

Examples:

- Direct: He said to me, "I do not believe you."
- Indirect: He said that he did not believe me.
- Direct: She said to him, "I do not believe you."
- Indirect: She said to him that she did not believe him.
- Direct: I said to him, "I did not believe you."
- Indirect: I said to him that I did not believe him.
- Direct: I said to you, "I do not believe you."
- Indirect: I said to you that I do not believe you.

D. Words expressing nearness in time or places are generally changed into words expressing distance.

Examples:

- Direct: He said, "I am glad to be here this evening."
- Indirect: he said that he was glad to be there that evening.

- Direct: He said, "I was here yesterday."
- Indirect: He said that he was there the day before.

Let us see the words which get changed when the Direct Speech is changed into Indirect Speech.

- Now becomes then
- Here becomes there
- Ago becomes before
- Thus becomes so
- Today becomes that day
- Tomorrow becomes the next day
- Yesterday becomes the day before
- Last night becomes the night before
- This becomes that
- These becomes those

#### E. How the questions in the Direct Speech are changed into Indirect Speech?

In reporting questions, the indirect Speech is introduced by such verbs as asked, inquired etc...

Examples:

- Direct: He said to me, "What are you doing?"
- Indirect: He asked me what I was doing.
  
- Direct: A stranger asked me, "Where do you live?"
- Indirect: A stranger enquired where I lived.
  
- Direct: The Policemen said to us, "Where are you going?"
- Indirect: The Policemen asked us where we were going.
  
- Direct: He said, "Will you listen to such a man?"
- Indirect: He asked them whether they would listen to such a man.
- Indirect: Would they, he asked, listen to such a man.
- Direct: His angry mother jeered, "Do you suppose you know better than your father?"
- Indirect: His angry mother jeered and asked whether he supposed that he knew better than his father.

#### F. How the Commands and the Requests in the Direct Speeches are changed when the Direct Speeches are changed into indirect Speeches?

In reporting commands and requests, the indirect speech is introduced by some verb expressing commands and requests, and the Imperative Mood is changed into Infinitive Mood.

Examples:

- Direct: Raja said to John, "Go away."
- Indirect: Raja ordered John to go away.
  
- Direct: He said to Mary, "Please wait here till I return."
- Indirect: he requested Mary to wait there till he returned.
  
- Direct: "Call the first witness", said the Judge.
- Indirect: The Judge commanded them to call the first witness.
  
- Direct: He shouted, "Let me go."
- Indirect: he shouted out to let him go.
  
- Direct: He said, "Be quite and listen to my words".
- Indirect: He urged them to be quite and listen to his words.

### G. How the Exclamation and the Wishes in the Direct Speeches are changed when the Direct Speeches are changed into Indirect Speeches?

In reporting exclamation and wishes, the Indirect Speech is introduced by some verb expressing Exclamation and Wishes.

Examples:

- Direct: He said, "Alas! I am undone".
- Indirect: He exclaimed sadly that he was undone.
  
- Direct: Alice said, "How clever I am?"
- Indirect: Alice exclaimed that he was very clever.
  
- Direct: He said, "Bravo! You have done well."
- Indirect: he applauded him, saying that he had done well.