

Reported Speech

Abhishek Sir

Concept Notes

The act of reporting the words of a speaker is called narration. There are basically two ways in which a speaker can convey the intended message/idea to the listener.

Direct Speech (Direct Narration)

Direct speech is the speech inside quotation marks. It is used to tell/report the words of a speaker as it is.

Example:

- Neha said, "I like to study English".

Indirect Speech (Indirect Narration)

While Direct narration is okay for sharing stories with friends, this is not the best way to, report a conversation, either in speech or in writing. Therefore, we need to report the words spoken by somebody else in our own words. This is called indirect narration.

Therefore, the above statement in indirect narration will be:

- Neha said that she liked to study English.

Some Basic Rules to Change Direct Speech to Indirect Speech

Direct Speech

- Put the statement within “ ” (inverted commas).
- The Reporting verb is separated from the Direct speech by a comma.

- The first word in inverted commas begins with a capital letter.

Indirect Speech

- No inverted commas are used.
- The comma separating the Reporting verb from the Reported speech is removed.
- The Indirect speech is introduced by some connectors like – that, if, whether, what, where, how, why etc depending on whether you want to transform a statement, question or request etc into Indirect speech.
- The Reporting verb changes according to the sense conveyed by the speech.
- The tense of the Reporting verb remains unchanged.
- All kinds of sentences turn into assertive statements.
- Other changes in the person, verb forms, time and place expressions follow.
- Remove separating comma, inverted commas and use the connector ‘that’ when there is no object in the sentence.

Examples:

- 1) He said, “I work in a shipyard.” (Direct)
He said that he worked in a shipyard. (Indirect)
 - 2) Sheena said, “My teacher is highly educated.” (Direct)
Sheena said that her teacher was highly educated. (Indirect)
- The reporting verb ‘said’ becomes ‘told’ along with the subject and the connector ‘that’ when it is followed by an object.

Examples:

- 1) Kamya said to me, “You have been a great help.” (Direct)
Kamya told me that I have been a great help. (Indirect)
- 2) He said to me, “I shall go to the party.” (Direct)
He told me that he would go to the party. (Indirect)

Changes in Reported Speech with Respect to the Tense

Present Tense

Rules:

- **Simple Present changes into Simple Past**

- 1) He said, “I do not like computers.”
He said that he did not like computers.
- 2) They said, “We love our country.”
They said that they loved their country.

- **Present continuous changes into past continuous**

- 1) I said, "It is raining."
I said that it was raining.
- 2) She said, "I am not laughing."
She said that she was not laughing.

- **Present perfect changes into past perfect**

- 1) She said, "He has finished his work."
They said, "We have not gone to New York."
- 2) She said that he had finished his work.
They said that they had not gone to New York

- **Present perfect continuous changes into past perfect continuous**

- 1) He said, "I have been studying since 3 o'clock."
Radha said, "It has been raining for three days."
- 2) He said that he had been studying since 3 o' clock.
Radha said that it had been raining for three days.

Past Tense

Rules:

- **Simple past changes into past perfect**

- 1) My teacher said to me, "You answered correctly."
My teacher told me that I had answered correctly.
- 2) He said, "I didn't buy a car."
- 3) He said that he had not bought a car.

- **Past continuous changes into past perfect continuous**

- 1) They said, "We are enjoying the weather."
They said that they had been enjoying the weather.
- 2) He said, "Mohit was listening to the music."
He said that Mohit had been listening to the music.

- **Past perfect remains past perfect (tense does not change)**

- 1) He said, "I had started a business."
He said that he had started a business.
- 2) I said, "She had eaten the meal."
I said that she had eaten the meal.

Future Tense

Rules:

- **Simple future: will changes into would**

- 1) He said, "I will study the book."
They said to me, "We will send you gifts."
- 2) He said that he would study the book.
They told me that they would send me gifts.

- **Future continuous : will be changes into would be**

- 1) Shreya told him, "I will be waiting for you."
Shreya told him that she would be waiting for him.
- 2) He said, "He will not be flying kites."
He said that he would not be flying kites.

- **Future perfect : will have changes into would have**

- 1) He said, "I will have finished the work."
Narayan said, "I will have gone."
- 2) He said that he would have finished the work.
Narayan said that he would have gone.

Change of Helping verbs

Is/am – was

are – were

was/ were- had been

may – might

can – could

will – would

do/does – did

Direct Speech to Indirect Speech Conversion – Change of Time

In direct speeches, the words that express nearness in time or place are changed to words that express distance in indirect speech. Such as :

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

- Hither becomes thither
- Come becomes go
- Hence becomes thence
- Next week or month becomes following week/month.

Examples:

- 1) Mary said, "The train will probably arrive on time."
- 2) He said, "I have to finish this report by five o'clock."
- 3) The doctor said, "Mr. Smith will improve quickly."
- 4) William said to me, "I am leaving in the morning."
- 5) The teacher said, "Everyone has to write a composition."
- 6) John said, "I saw that movie on Wednesday."
- 7) Helen said, "I have read that book."

Interrogative Sentences

Interrogative sentences are of two types

- (i) Yes-No type questions or verbal questions
- (ii) Wh-type questions

Yes-No Type Questions

- When the Reported speech is a yes-no type question, the conjunction 'if' or 'whether' is used and the interrogative sentence (or question) is converted into an assertive sentence.
 - The other changes (tense, pronouns etc) are made as usual and the question mark is removed.
 - Most importantly, the Reporting verb is changed from 'says', 'said' to 'asks', 'asked' as the Reported speech is a question.
- 1) She said to Shyam, "Do you have an extra copy?"
She asked Shyam if he had an extra copy.
 - 2) She said to me, "Do you like tea or coffee?"
 - 3) She asked, "Do you live with your family, Rohit?"
 - 4) He asked, "Can I borrow your pen, Meet?"
 - 5) He asked me, "Does your uncle live in England?"
 - 6) Jay asked Mira, "Will you come to my party tomorrow?"
 - 7) Mohit asked, "Did you phone me last night, John?"

Wh-Type Questions

- No conjunction is used whereas the Wh-word itself works as a conjunction to join the Reporting verb with the Reported speech.
 - All other changes are made in the same manner as the yes-no type questions.
- 1) He said to me, "What is your problem?"
He asked me what my problem was.
 - 2) She said to him, "Why are you not coming?"
 - 3) He asked, "How long does it take you to have lunch?"
 - 4) He asked me, "What are you doing at the weekend?"
 - 5) She asked, "Why are you late, Ram?"
 - 6) My mother asked me, "Where is your umbrella?"
 - 7) The secretary asked the man, "Who do you want to see?"

Imperative Sentences

Changing Commands and Requests into Indirect Speech:

- In case of imperative sentences, the preposition 'to' is used in place of conjunction after the Reporting verb.
 - Depending upon the type of imperative sentence (i.e. order, suggestion, advice, request etc) the Reporting verb is changed into ordered, suggested, advised, requested etc.
 - In case of negative imperative sentences (such as don't play there), 'to' is put after not that follows Reporting verb.
 - In case of sentences beginning with 'Let's', the Reporting verb is changed to proposed or suggested.
- 1) I said to Hari, "Do not pluck the flowers."
I ordered Hari not to pluck the flowers.
 - 2) The Principal said to the students, "Get out of the office."
The Principal ordered the students to get out of the office.
 - 3) He said, "Let us keep quiet in this matter."
He suggested that we should keep quiet in this matter.

Exersice:

1. She said to me, "Open the window."
2. The captain said to the soldiers, "Attack the enemy."
3. I said to him, "Please bring me a glass of water."
4. The Principal said to the peon, "Ring the bell."
5. The master said to the servant, "Fetch me a glass of water."

6. I said to my friend, "Please lend me your book."
7. My friend said, "have coffee with me."
8. The traveller said, "tell me the way to the bus station?"
9. "Be punctual," my teacher said, "otherwise you will be punished."
10. She said to her teacher, "Please explain this poem to me."
11. The saint said to the pupils, "Be quiet and listen to me carefully."
12. "Come quickly," he shouted, "and help me as I am in danger."
13. The Principal ordered the peon to ring the bell.
14. The master ordered the servant to fetch him a glass of water.
15. I requested my friend to lend me his book.

Abhishek Sir