

VERBAL ABILITY

MODULE 4 – CHANGE OF SPEECH

What is change of Speech?

There are many occasions in which we need to describe an event or action that happened, and very often that includes repeating what someone said. In order to describe what people said there are two different types of speech – direct speech and indirect (or reported) speech.

Direct Speech

We use direct speech when we simply repeat what someone says, putting the phrase between speech marks:

Paul came in and said, "I'm really hungry."

It is very common to see direct speech used in books or in a newspaper article. For example:

The local MP said, "We plan to make this city a safer place for everyone."

As you can see, with direct speech it is common to use the verb 'to say' ('said' in the past). But you can also find other verbs used to indicate direct speech such as 'ask', 'reply', and 'shout'. For example:

When Mrs. Diaz opened the door, I asked, "Have you seen Lee?"

She replied, "No, I haven't seen him since lunchtime."

The boss was angry and shouted, "Why isn't he here? He hasn't finished that report yet!"

Indirect Speech

When we want to report what someone said without speech marks and without necessarily using exactly the same words, we can use indirect speech (also called reported speech). For example:

Direct speech: "We're quite cold in here."

Indirect speech: They say (that) they're cold.

When we report what someone says in the present simple, as in the above sentence, we normally don't change the tense, we simply change the subject. However, when we report things in the past, we usually change the tense by moving it one step back. For example, in the following sentence the present simple becomes the past simple in indirect speech:

Direct speech: "I have a new car."

Indirect speech: He said he had a new car.

Rules:

When we change from direct to indirect or vice versa, we change the following:

- a) Verb tenses and Verb forms
- b) Pronouns
- c) The adverbs of time and place
- d) Reported Questions

a) Verb tenses: We change the tenses in the following way:

- **Present - past**
"I never understand you," she told me. - She told me she never understood me.
- **Present perfect - past perfect**
"I have broken the window," he admitted. - He admitted that he had broken the window.
- **Past - past perfect**
"She went to Rome," I thought. - I thought that she had gone to Rome.
- **Will- would.**
I will come on Sunday," he reminded me. - He reminded me that he would come on Sunday

DIRECT SPEECH	INDIRECT SPEECH
<i>He said, "I live in the city center."</i> (present simple)	<i>He said he lived in the city center.</i>
<i>He said, "I'm going out."</i> (present continuous)	<i>He said he was going out.</i>
<i>He said, "I've finished."</i> (present perfect)	<i>He said he had finished.</i>
<i>He said, "I've been studying a lot."</i> (present perfect continuous)	<i>He said he had been studying a lot.</i>
<i>He said, "I arrived before you."</i> (past simple)	<i>He said he had arrived before you.</i>
<i>He said, "I had already left."</i> (past perfect)	<i>He said he had already left. (remains the same)</i>
<i>He said, "I'll be there at 2pm."</i> (future simple)	<i>He said he would be there at 2pm.</i>
<i>He said, "I'm going to call Alan."</i> (be going to)	<i>He said he was going to call Alan.</i>

The same rule of moving the tenses one step back also applies to modal verbs. For example:

DIRECT SPEECH	INDIRECT SPEECH
<i>She said, "I can swim."</i>	<i>She said she could swim.</i>
<i>She said, "I must go."</i>	<i>She said she had to go.</i>
<i>She said, "I may drive there."</i>	<i>She said she might drive there.</i>
<i>She said, "Shall we start?"</i>	<i>She asked if we should start.</i>
<i>She said, "I'll call you."</i>	<i>She said she would call me.</i>

Note: The verb forms remain the same in the following cases:

- If we use the past perfect tense.
Eva: "I had never seen him." - Eva claimed that she had never seen him.
- When we report something that is still true.
Dan: "Asia is the largest continent." - Dan said Asia is the largest continent.
Emma: "People in Africa are starving." - Emma said people in Africa are starving.
- When a sentence is made and reported at the same time and the fact is still true.
Michael: "I am thirsty." - Michael said he is thirsty.
- With modal verbs would, might, could, should, ought to, used to.
George: "I would try it." - George said he would try it.
Mel: "I used to have a car." - Mel said he used to have a car.
- In if-clauses.
Martha: "If I tidied my room, my dad would be happy." - Martha said that if she tidied her room, her dad would be happy.
- In time clauses.
Joe: "When I was staying in Madrid I met my best friend." - He said that when he was staying in Madrid he met his best friend.

b) Pronouns

- We have to change the pronouns to keep the same meaning of a sentence.
"We are the best students," he said. - He said they were the best students.
"They called us," he said. - He said they had called them.
"I like your jeans," she said. - She said she liked my jeans.
"I can lend you my car," he said. - He said he could lend me his car.
- Sometimes we have to use a noun instead of a pronoun, otherwise the new sentence is confusing.
"He killed them," Kevin said. - Kevin said that the man had killed them.
If we only make mechanical changes (Kevin said he had killed them), the new sentence can have a different meaning - Kevin himself killed them.

- This and these are usually substituted.
"They will finish it this year," he said. - He said they would finish it that year.
"I brought you this book," she said. - She said she had brought me the book.
"We want these flowers," they said. - They said they wanted the flowers.

C) Time and place

Let's suppose that we talked to our friend Mary on Friday. And she said: "Greg came yesterday." It means that Greg came on Thursday. If we report Mary's sentence on Sunday, we have to do the following:

Mary: "Greg came yesterday." - Mary said that Greg had come the day before.

If we say: Mary said Greg had come yesterday, it is not correct, because it means that he came on Saturday.

The time expressions change as follows.

now - then, today - that day, tomorrow - the next day/the following day, the day after tomorrow - in two days' time, yesterday - the day before, the day before yesterday - two days before, next week/month - the following week/month, last week/month - the previous week/month, a year ago - a year before/the previous year

Bill: "She will leave tomorrow." - Bill said she would leave the next day.

Sam: "She arrived last week." - Sam said she had arrived the previous week.

Julie: "He moved a year ago." - Julie said he had moved a year before.

D) Reported questions

- Direct questions (WH-questions) become reported questions with the same word order but instead of question style, the sentence in the indirect speech has a statement style.

"Where have you been?" he said. - He asked me where I had been.

"What time did it start?" he said. - He wanted to know what time it had started.

"Why won't he do it?" she said. - She wondered why he wouldn't do it.

(The reporting verb *say* changes into *ask, want to know, wonder...*)

- In yes/no questions the same rule applies, i.e., the question style changes to statement style. However, we use *if* or *whether* in yes/no questions.

"Will you come?" she asked me. - She asked me if/whether I would come.

"Did he marry Sue?" she said. - She wondered if/whether he had married Sue.

ANSWER KEY

DIRECTIONS for questions 1 to 10: A sentence has been given in Direct Speech. Out of the four alternatives suggested, select the one which best expresses the same sentence in Indirect Speech.

1. His father says "Honesty is the best policy."

a. His father called honesty is the best policy.
b. His father asked if honesty is the best policy.

c. His father exclaimed that honesty is the best policy.
d. His father says that honesty is the best policy.

The correct option is D. This is a quote hence it will remain as it is. The tense won't change.

2. Rama said, 'I am very busy now.'

a. Rama said that he was very busy then.
b. Rama said that he would be very busy now.

c. Rama said that he is very busy then.
d. Rama said that he is very busy now.

The correct option is A .Simple present tense changes into simple past; first person 'I' in the reported speech changes to 'he'. The time 'now' changes to 'then'.

3. He said to him, 'Is not your name Khalid?'

a. He said that his name was Khalid.
b. He inquired whether his name was not Khalid.

c. He asked is his name was not Khalid.
d. He asked why his name was Khalid.

The correct option is B. In interrogative sentences conjunction 'if' or 'whether' is used in place of 'that' in the indirect speech and question mark is removed. Simple present will change into simple past.

4. Ram remarked "What a wonderful day!"

a. Ram exclaimed that it was a wonderful day.
b. Ram asked if it was a wonderful day.

c. Ram said what a wonderful day.
d. Ram asked what a wonderful day.

The correct option is A. Due to the usage of exclamation mark exclaimed is the right option

5. All said to the beggar, 'I know you very well'

a. Ali recognized the beggar.
b. Ali told the beggar that he knew him very well.

c. Beggar knew Ali too.
d. Beggar was recognized by Ali.

The correct option is B. 'Said' to should be changed to 'told'. 'Know' should be changed to 'knew' and pronouns changed from 1st person to 2nd person and from 2nd person to 3rd. Ali told the beggar that **he** knew **him** very well.

6. The monk said to the followers "Anger kills Intellect".

a. The monk said to the followers anger kills intellect.

b. The monk told the followers that anger kills intellect.

c. The monk asked followers if anger kills intellect.

d. The monk told the followers that anger has killed intellect.

The correct option is B. Said should change to told. But the sentence ' Anger kills intellect' will remain the same as it's the truth. Hence tense won't change.

7. Rahul asked me, 'Did you see the cricket match on TV last night?'

a. Rahul asked me if I had seen the cricket match on TV the previous night.

b. Rahul asked me if I saw the cricket match on TV the previous night.

c. Rahul asked me did I see the cricket match on TV last night.

d. Rahul asked me whether I had seen the cricket match on TV last night.

The correct option is A. Past tense will change to past perfect. Hence Did becomes Had seen. Since it's a yes or no question, we introduce the conjunction 'If'. Last night becomes previous night as per the rules of change of speech.

8. James said to his mother, 'I am leaving for New York tomorrow.'

a. James told his mother that he was leaving for New York tomorrow.

b. James told his mother he is leaving for New York tomorrow.

c. James told his mother that he was leaving for New York the next day.

d. James told his mother he would be leaving for New York the next day.

The correct option is C. James said will change to told. Present tense changes to past. Hence I am leaving changes to was leaving. Tomorrow changes to the next day.

9. I said to him, 'Why don't you work hard?'

a. I asked him why you didn't work hard.
b. I asked him why he didn't work hard.

c. I asked him why he wouldn't work hard.
d. I asked him why he wasn't working hard.

The correct option is B. Since it's a Wh-question, we don't introduce any conjunction. 'Why' acts as the conjunction here. However in the indirect sentence, the question style changes to answer style. Hence 'why don't you' becomes 'why you didn't'. Change of tense too. Hence 'don't' becomes 'didn't'.

10. He said to her, 'What a hot day!'

- a. He exclaimed sorrowfully that it was hot day. b. He told her that it was a hot day.
c. **He exclaimed that it was a hot day.** d. He said that it was a hot day.

The correct option is C. It's an exclamation hence the word exclaimed. Present tense changes to past hence 'was a hot day.'

DIRECTIONS for questions 11 to 20: A sentence has been given in Indirect Speech. Out of the four alternatives suggested select the one which best expresses the same sentence in Direct Speech.

11. His father ordered him to go to his room and study.

- a. **His father said, "Go to your room and study."** b. His father said to him, "Go and study in your room."
c. His father shouted, "Go right now to your study room." d. His father said firmly, "Go and study in your room."

The correct option is A. This is the only sentence that sounds like it is an order (not shouting or saying firmly). Option B is incorrect because it unnecessarily introduces and changes words in the sentence.

12. He assured them that he would soon return.

- a. He assures them, "I will soon return." b. **He assured them, "I will soon return."**
c. He assured them, "I may soon return." d. He assured them, "I might soon return."

The correct option is B. No need to change assured to assures. Hence option A eliminated. No need to add words 'may and might'. Hence options C & D are eliminated. If indirect sentence has the word 'would' then direct sentence should have 'will'. Hence option A.

13. He said he was very sorry for the fault he had committed.

- a. **He said, "I am very sorry for the fault I have committed."**
b. He said, "I was very sorry for the fault I have committed."
c. He said, "I have been very sorry for the fault I have committed."
d. He said, "I am very sorry for the fault I had committed."

The correct option is A. As per the rules, the following will change when changing from indirect to direct.
Change of tense- Was to am; had committed to have committed.
Change of pronouns - He to I.

14. She ordered her servant to bring her a cup of tea.

- a. **She said to her servant, "Bring me a cup of tea."** b. She told her servant, "Bring a cup of tea."
c. She said, "Please bring a cup of tea." d. She told her servant, "Bring her that cup of tea."

The correct option is A. This is the only sentence that sounds like an order. Also bring her a cup of tea will change to bring me a cup a tea. Hence option B is eliminated.

15. Ram said his sister was getting married.

- a. Ram said, "His sister is getting married." b. Ram told, "His sister is getting married."
c. **Ram said, "My sister is getting married."** d. Ram said, "My sister was getting married."

The correct option is C. Past tense changes to present; hence 'was' changes to 'is'. Pronoun 'his' changes to 'my'.

16. I told him that he was not working hard.

- a. I said to him, "He is not working hard." b. **I said to him, "You are not working hard."**
c. I said, "You are not working hard." d. I told to him, "You are not working hard."

The correct option is B. Told him changes to said to him. Was not working hard changes to are not working hard. He changes to you.

17. Winston Churchill said that he woke up at six every day.

- a. **Winston Churchill said: "I wake up at six every day."**
b. Winston Churchill said: "I woke up at six every day."
c. Winston Churchill said: "I will wake up at six every day."
d. Winston Churchill said: "I would wake up at six every day."

The correct option is A. Woke up changes to wake up.

18. She exclaimed with joy that she had won the match.

- a. She cried, "Oh! I have won the match."
- b. She said, "Hurrah! I will win the match."
- c. She said, "Hurrah! I have won the match."**
- d. She said, "Alas! I have won the match."

The correct option is C. Hurrah is the fitting expression for exclaiming with joy. Had won the match changes to have won the match.

19. He said that he knew he would cheat her.

- a. He said, "I know he will cheat her."**
- b. He said, "I knew he will cheat her."
- c. He said, "I know he would cheated her."
- d. He told, "I knew he will cheat you."

The correct option is A. As per the rules, tense and pronouns change. 'Knew' changes to 'know', 'would' changes to 'will' and the first person 'He' changes to 'I'. The second 'he' remains the same as that is the third person.

20. Rose says that she is known for her intelligence.

- a. Rose says, "I am known for my intelligence."**
- b. Rose says, "I was known for my intelligence."
- c. Rose says, "You are known for your intelligence."
- d. Rose says, "I know for my intelligence."

The correct option is A. Here the tense remains the same. She is known remains as I am known because it's a fact. Facts, truths and quotes don't change in tense. However the pronoun changes. She changes to I.

DIRECTIONS for questions 21 to 30: Change the speech in the following sentences appropriately as per the given choices. (Mixed speech exercise)

21. The priest said, 'Be quiet and listen to my words.'

- a. The priest said them to be quiet and listen to his words.
- b. The priest told them that they should be quiet and listen to his words.
- c. The priest urged them to be quiet and to listen to his words.**
- d. The priest said they should be quiet and listen to him.

The correct option is C. Logically, no other option fits.

22. "Please bring your own plates and spoons," she told us.

- a. She suggested us to bring her own plates and spoons.
- b. She suggested us to bring their own plates and spoons.
- c. She suggested us to bring our own plates and spoons.**
- d. She suggested us to bring my own plates and spoons.

The correct option is C. Pronoun changes. Your own plates change to our own plates.

23. "Don't touch it! Leave it alone!" I said

- a. I told him not to touch it but to leave it alone.**
- b. I told him not to touch it but to have left it alone.
- c. I will tell him not to touch it but to leave it alone.
- d. I told him to touch it but to leave it alone.

The correct option is A. Logically, only this choice fits.

24. The father warned his son that he should beware of him.

- a. The father warned his son, "beware of him!"**
- b. The father warned his son, "Watch that chap!"
- c. The father warned his son, "Be careful about him."
- d. The father warned his son, "Don't fall into the trap."

The correct option is A. In all the other options the words are changed unnecessarily.

25. "Where will you be tomorrow," I said, "in case I have to ring you?"

- a. I asked where you will be the next day in case I will ring him.
- b. I asked where he would be the next day in case I had to ring him.**
- c. I said to him where he will be in case I have to ring him.
- d. I enquired about his where about the next day in case I would have to ring up.

The correct option is B. Wh-question needs no conjunction (that, if, whether). Said changes to asked as it's a question. Tomorrow changes to next day. Where will you be changes to where he would be and I have to ring changes to I had to ring.

26. The teacher said to Ram, "Congratulations! Wish you success in life."

- a. The teacher congratulated Ram and said wish you success in life.
- b. The teacher wished congratulations and success in life to Ram.
- c. The teacher wished congratulations to Ram and wished him success in life.
- d. The teacher congratulated Ram and wished him success in life.**

The correct option is D. This is the only choice that fits as per the rules of change of speech.

27. Bhishma said, 'Boys! Boys! Remember you are playing a game. If it be Arjuna's turn let him have it.'
- a. Bhishma asked the boys to remembered that they were playing a game. If it was Arjuna's turn he must have it.
 - b. Bhishma asked the boys to remembered that they were playing a game. If it is Arjuna's turn he must have it.
 - c. **Bhishma asked the boys to remember that they were playing a game. If it was Arjuna's turn he must have it.**
 - d. Bhishma asked the boys to remember that we were playing a game. If it was Arjuna's turn he must have it.

The only correct choice is option C.

28. The dwarf said to her, "Promise me that when you are a queen you will give me your first-born child."
- a. The dwarf advised her to promised that when she was a queen she would give him her first born child.
 - b. The dwarf requested her to promise that when she had been a queen she would give him her first born child.
 - c. The dwarf requested her to promise that when she is a queen she would give him her first born child.
 - d. **The dwarf asked her to promise him that when she was a queen she would give him her first born child.**

The correct option is D. 'When you are a queen' should change to 'when she was a queen'. 'You will give me your first born' should change to 'she would give him her first born'.

29. 'Do you suppose you know better than your own father?' shouted her angry mother.
- a. Her angry mother shouted and asked that she supposed whether she knew better than her own father.
 - b. Her angry mother shouted and asked that she supposed that she knew better than her own father.
 - c. Her angry mother shouted whether she supposed that she known better than her own father.
 - d. **Her angry mother shouted and asked her whether she supposed that she knew better than her own father.**

The correct option is D. It's a yes or no question, hence the answer should have the conjunction if or whether. Also change the tense- 'Do you know' will change to 'she knew'. Question style will change to answer style in indirect sentences.

30. Bhim asked his mother to cheer up because he would go and get work somewhere.
- a. 'Don't worry, mother, I'll go and get work somewhere,' said Bhim.
 - b. **'Cheer up, mother, I'll go and get work somewhere,' said Bhim.**
 - c. 'Cheer up, mother, I am going now to get work somewhere,' said Bhim.
 - d. 'Smile mother, I shall go and get work somewhere,' said Bhim.

The correct option is B. 'He would go and get work somewhere' should change to 'I will go and get work somewhere'.

DIRECTIONS for questions 31 to 40: Rewrite the following sentences by changing the speech.

31. John said, "I love this town."
John said that he loved that town.
32. "Do you like soccer?" He asked me.
He asked me if I liked Soccer.
33. "What have you decided to do?" she asked him.
She asked him what he had decided to do.
34. John's father reminded him to take his umbrella.
"Don't forget to take your umbrella, John" said his father.
35. John asked, "How long will it take to travel from Germany to South Africa?"
John asked how long it would take to travel from Germany to South Africa
36. The teacher said to the boys, 'If you do your best, you will surely pass.'
The teacher told the boys that if they did their best, they would surely pass.
37. 'Joseph, have you finished writing?' asked the teacher.
The teacher asked Joseph if he had finished writing.
38. David said to Anna, "Mona will leave for her native place tomorrow."
David told Anna that Mona would leave for her native place the next day.
39. Kiran asked me, "Did you see the cricket match on television last night?"
Kiran asked me whether I had seen the cricket match on television the earlier night.
40. "What about going for a swim," he said, "it's quite fine now."
He suggested going for a swim as it was quite fine then.