

DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH

What is Direct & Indirect Speech?

Direct speech - reporting the message of the speaker in exact words as spoken by him.

Direct speech example: Rama said 'I am busy now'.

Indirect speech: reporting the message of the speaker in our own words

Indirect speech example: Rama said that he was very busy then.

Direct and Indirect Speech Rules

To change a sentence of direct speech into indirect speech there are various factors that are considered such as reporting verbs, modals, time, place, pronoun, tense, etc. we will take up all the factors one by one.

Rule #1 - Direct to Indirect Speech Conversion - Reporting Verb

- 1. When the reporting verb of direct speech is in past tense then all the present tenses are changed to corresponding past tense in indirect speech.**

Direct to indirect speech example:

- Direct: she said, "I am happy."
- Indirect: She said (that) she was happy.

- 2. In indirect speech tenses do not change if the words used within the quotes (" ") talk of a habitual action or universal truth.**

Direct to indirect speech example:

- Direct: He said, "we cannot live without air."
- Indirect: He said that we cannot live without air.

- 3. The tenses of direct speech do not change if the reporting verb is in future tense or present tense.**

Direct to indirect speech example:

- Direct: She says/will say, "she is going."
- Indirect: She says/will say she is going.

Rule #2 - Direct Speech to Indirect Speech conversion - Present Tense

- 1. Present Perfect Changes to Past Perfect.**

Direct to indirect speech example:

- Direct: "I have been to Boston", She told me.
- Indirect: She told me that she had been to Boston.

2. Present Continuous Changes to Past Continuous

Direct to indirect speech example:

- Direct: "I am playing the guitar", she explained.
- Indirect: She explained that she was playing the guitar.

3. Present Perfect Changes to Past Perfect

Direct to indirect speech example:

- Direct: He said, "she has finished her homework".
- Indirect: He said that she had finished her homework.

4. Simple Present Changes to Simple Past

Direct to indirect speech example:

- Direct: "I am unwell", she said.
- Indirect: She said that she was unwell.

Rule #3 - Direct Speech to Indirect Speech conversion - Past Tense & Future Tense

1. Simple Past Changes to Past Perfect

Direct to indirect speech example:

- Direct: She said, "Irvin arrived on Sunday."
- Indirect: She said that Irvin had arrived on Sunday.

2. Past Continuous Changes to Past Perfect Continuous

Direct to indirect speech example:

- Direct: "We were playing basketball", they told me.
- Indirect: They told me that they had been playing basketball.

3. Future Changes to Present Conditional

Direct to indirect speech example:

- Direct: She said, "I will be in Scotland tomorrow."
- Indirect: She said that she would be in Scotland the next day.

4. Future Continuous Changes to Conditional Continuous

Direct to indirect speech example:

- Direct: He said, "I'll be disposing the old computer next Tuesday."
- Indirect: He said that he would be disposing the old computer next Tuesday.

Rule #4 - Direct Speech to Indirect Speech Conversion - Interrogative Sentences

- 1. No conjunction is used, if a sentence in direct speech begins with a question (what/where/when) as the "question-word" itself acts as a joining clause.**

Direct to indirect speech example:

- Direct: "Where do you live?" asked the boy.
- Indirect: The boy enquired where I lived.

2. If a direct speech sentence begins with auxiliary verb/helping verb, the joining clause should be if or whether.

Direct to indirect speech example:

- Direct: She said, "will you come for the party?"
- Indirect: She asked whether we would come for the party.

3. Reporting verbs such as 'said/ said to' changes to enquired, asked, or demanded.

Direct to indirect speech example:

- Direct: He said to me, "what are you wearing?"
- Indirect: He asked me what I was wearing.

Rule #5 - Direct Speech to Indirect Speech Conversion - Changes in Modals

1. While changing direct speech to indirect speech the modals used in the sentences changes like:

- Can becomes Could
- May becomes Might
- Must becomes had to /Would have to

Examples:

- Direct: She said, "She can dance."
- Indirect: She said that she could dance.
- Direct: She said, "I may buy a dress."
- Indirect: She said that she might buy a dress.
- Direct: Rama said, "I must complete the assignment."
- Indirect: Rama said that he had to complete the assignment.

2. There are Modals that do not change like - Could, Would, Should, Might, Ought to.

Direct speech to indirect speech examples:

- Direct: She said, "I should clean the house."
- Indirect: She said that she should clean the house.

Rule #6 - Direct Speech to Indirect Speech Conversion - Pronoun

1. The first person in the direct speech changes as per the subject of the speech.

Direct speech to indirect speech examples:

- Direct: He said, "I am in class Twelfth."
- Indirect: He says that he was in class Twelfth.

2. The second person of direct speech changes as per the object of reporting speech.

Direct speech to indirect speech examples:

- Direct: She says to them, "You have done your work."
- Indirect: She tells them that they have done their work.

3. The third person of direct speech doesn't change.

Direct speech to indirect speech examples:

- Direct: He says, "She dances well."
- Indirect: He says that she dances well.

Rule #7 - Direct Speech to Indirect Speech Conversion - Request, Command, Wish, Exclamation

1. Indirect Speech is supported by some verbs like requested, ordered, suggested and advised. Forbid-forbade is used for the negative sentences. Therefore, the imperative mood in direct speech changes into the Infinitive in indirect speech.

Direct speech to indirect speech examples:

- Direct: She said to her, "Please complete it."
- Indirect: She requested her to complete it.
- Direct: Hamid said to Ramid, "Sit down."
- Indirect: Hamid ordered Ramid to sit down.

2. In Exclamatory sentences that express (grief, sorrow, happiness, applaud) Interjections are removed and the sentence is changed to an assertive sentence.

Direct speech to indirect speech examples

- Direct: She said, "Alas! I am undone."
- Indirect: She exclaimed sadly that she was broke.

Rule #8 - Direct Speech to Indirect Speech Conversion - Punctuations

1. In direct speech the words actually spoken should be in (" ") quotes and always begin with a capital letter.

Example: She said, "I am the Best."

2. Full stop, Comma, exclamation or question mark, are placed inside the closing inverted commas.

Example: They asked, "Can we sing with you?"

3. If direct speech comes after the information about who is speaking, comma is used to introduce the speech, placed before the first inverted comma.

Direct speech example: He shouted, "Shut up!"

Direct speech example: "Thinking back," he said, "she didn't expect to win." (Comma is used to separate the two direct speeches and no capital letter to begin the second sentence).

Rule #9 - Direct Speech to Indirect Speech Conversion - Change of Time

1. 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 becomes those
- Hither becomes thither
- Come becomes go
- Hence becomes thence
- Next week Or month becomes following week/month

Direct speech to indirect speech examples:

- Direct: He said, "His girlfriend came yesterday."
- Indirect: He said that his girlfriend had come the day before.

2. The time expression does not change if the reporting verb is in present tense or future tense.

Rules for converting Indirect Speech into Direct Speech

The following rules should be followed while converting an indirect speech to direct speech:

1. Use the reporting verb such as (say, said to) in its correct tense.
2. Put a comma before the statement and the first letter of the statement should be in capital letter.
3. Insert question mark, quotation marks, exclamation mark and full stop, based on the mood of the sentence.
4. Remove the conjunctions like (that, to, if or whether) wherever necessary.
5. Where the reporting verb is in past tense in indirect, change it to present tense in the direct speech.
6. Change the past perfect tense either into present perfect tense or past tense as necessary.

Examples:

- Indirect: She asked whether she was coming to the prom night.
- Direct: She said to her, "Are you coming to the prom night?"
- Indirect: The girl said that she was happy with her result.
- Direct: The girl said. "I am happy with my result."

Practice Questions:

Directions: Given below are questions sentences in Direct/Indirect Speech along with four options. You are required to read the Direct and Indirect Speech questions carefully and select the option that expresses the same sentence in the reverse speech i.e., Indirect/Direct Speech:

1. The designer said to her, "will you have the dress ready by tomorrow evening?"

1. The designer asked her if she would have the dress ready by next evening.
2. The designer asked her that she would have the dress ready by next evening.
3. The designer asked her that if she will like to have the dress by next evening.
4. The designer asked her that she will have the suit ready by next evening.

Answer: 1

2. They said, "Let us come in".

1. They told that let them be allowed to come in.
2. They requested that they might be allowed to come in.
3. They said that if they are allowed to come in.
4. They requested me to let them come in.

Answer: 2

3. Reshma said to Priya, "Why are you sketching on the wall?"

1. Reshma asked Priya why was she sketching on the wall.
2. Reshma asked Priya why had she been sketching on the wall
3. Reshma asked Priya that why is she sketching on the wall.
4. Reshma asked Priya why she was sketching on the wall.

Answer: 4

4. 'Jacob fell as he'd have wished', the father said.

1. The father said that Jacob has fallen as he would have wished.
2. The father said that Jacob had fallen as he would have wished.
3. The father said that Jacob had fallen as he had wished.
4. The father said that Jacob had been fallen as he would have been wished.

Answer: 2

5. Arya said to Tara, "David will leave for his mother's place tomorrow."

1. Arya told Tara that David will leave for his mother's place tomorrow.
2. Arya told Tara that David will leave for his mother's place the next day.
3. Arya told Tara that David would leave for his mother's place the next day.
4. Arya informed Tara that David would be leaving for his mother's place the next day.

Answer: 3

6. The Professor said that nobody could solve the problem.

1. The Professor said, 'Nobody can solve the problem'.
2. The Professor said, 'Nobody could solve the problem'
3. The Professor exclaimed, 'Nobody could solve the problem'
4. The Professor exclaimed, 'Nobody can solve the problem?'

Answer: 1

7. She said, "Why didn't you send a friend request to me?"

1. She asked me why had i not sent a friend request to her
2. She enquired why I had not sent a friend request to her.
3. She enquired why I did not send a friend request to her.
4. She questioned why I had not sent a friend request to her.

Answer: 2

8. The judge commanded them to call the accused in the court.

1. The Judge said, 'Call the accused in the court'.
2. The Judge ordered, 'Call the accused in the court'
3. The Judge command, 'Call the accused in the court'
4. The Judge said to them, 'Call the accused in the court'.

Answer: 4

9. The instructor asked Ronny if he was ready for the race.

1. 'Ronny, are you ready for the race?', the instructor asked.
2. 'Are you ready for the race Ronny?', the instructor asked.
3. 'Ronny, ready for race?' the instructor said.
4. 'Ronny, are you ready for the race?', said the instructor.

Answer: 1

10. Manager said to Shekher, "Why didn't you attend the meeting yesterday?"

1. The manager enquired shekhar why did not he attend the meeting the day before.
2. The manager asked Shekhar why he did not attend the meeting the previous day.
3. The manager asked Shekhar why he had not attended the meeting the day before.
4. The manager enquired Shekhar that why didn't he attended the meeting yesterday.

Answer: 3