

Narration (Direct-Indirect Speech)

1. Introduction to Narration

Definition: Narration refers to the act of reporting what someone has said. It is derived from the word "narrate," meaning "to tell" or "to report." In English grammar, there are two principal methods of reporting speech: Direct Speech and Indirect Speech.

Grammar Rules:

- 1. Direct Speech (Quoted Speech):** Involves quoting the exact words of the speaker, meticulously reproduced and enclosed within inverted commas (quotation marks). It is accompanied by a reporting verb (e.g., 'said', 'asked').
 - He said, "I am busy."
 - She exclaimed, "What a beautiful day!"
 - The teacher asked, "Have you completed your homework?"
- 2. Indirect Speech (Reported Speech):** Involves reporting the speaker's words in one's own words, or from the perspective of the reporter, without using inverted commas. The original meaning is retained, but grammatical adjustments (tense, pronouns, adverbs) are typically made.
 - He said that he was busy.
 - She exclaimed that it was a beautiful day.
 - The teacher inquired if they had completed their homework.

Errors & Exceptions & Nuance:

Identification: The definitive marker for Direct Speech is the presence of inverted commas.

Indirect Speech is identified by the absence of inverted commas and often the use of a conjunction to introduce the reported clause.

Note: Understanding the shift in perspective (from speaker's direct words to reporter's account) is fundamental to mastering narration.

2.1 Removal of Inverted Commas and Introduction of Conjunctions

Grammar Rules:

- The inverted commas enclosing the reported speech in Direct Speech are invariably removed during conversion to Indirect Speech.
- A suitable conjunction is employed to link the reporting verb with the reported clause. The choice of conjunction ('that', 'if', 'whether', or a WH-word) depends on the grammatical type of the reported sentence (assertive, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory, optative).
 - (Assertive):** He said, "I like coffee." → He said **that** he liked coffee.
 - She asked, "Are you well?" → She asked **if** I was well.
 - They inquired, "Where is he going?" → They inquired **where** he was going.

2.2 Change in Reporting Verb

Grammar Rules:

- The reporting verb (e.g., 'say', 'tell', 'ask') is modified according to the nature of the reported statement (e.g., statement, question, command, wish).
- When the reporting verb 'said' is followed by an object (i.e., 'said to'), it is typically changed to 'told' in assertive sentences. 'Told' is a transitive verb and is not followed by 'to' before its object. Similarly, 'says to' becomes 'tells', and 'will say to' becomes 'will tell'.
 - He said to me, "You are right." → He **told** me that I was right.
 - She says to him, "I will wait." → She **tells** him that she will wait.
 - They will say to us, "Come here." → They **will tell** us to go there.

Errors & Exceptions & Nuance:

'Said' vs. 'Told': 'Say' can be used with or without an object (e.g., 'He said' or 'He said to me'). 'Tell' *always* requires an object immediately after it (e.g., 'He told me').

Note: The appropriate reporting verb enhances the clarity and precision of the reported speech, reflecting the original speaker's intent.

3.1 Conditions for Tense Change

Grammar Rules:

1. The tense of the verb in the reported speech undergoes a backshift (changes to a past equivalent) **only** if the reporting verb is in the **past tense**.

Examples:

- a) He said, "I am unwell." (Reporting verb 'said' is past) → He said that he **was** unwell.
 - b) She says, "I am unwell." (Reporting verb 'says' is present) → She says that she **is** unwell.
 - c) They will say, "We are unwell." (Reporting verb 'will say' is future) → They will say that they **are** unwell.
2. If the reporting verb is in the present or future tense, the tense of the reported speech remains unchanged. However, other conversions (pronouns, adverbs) may still occur.
 - a) She says, "He works hard." → She says that he works hard.
 - b) He will say, "They are coming." → He will say that they are coming.
 - c) My friend tells me, "I live nearby." → My friend tells me that he lives nearby.

- 1) Simple Present → Simple Past (V2).
- 2) Present Continuous → Past Continuous.
- 3) Present Perfect → Past Perfect
- 4) Present Perfect Continuous → Past Perfect Continuous
- 5) Simple Past → Past Perfect.
- 6) Past Continuous → Past Perfect Continuous
- 7) Past Perfect and Past Perfect Continuous → No Change.
- 8) Modals:
 - a) 'Will' → 'would'; 'Shall' → 'should'
 - b) 'Can' → 'could'; 'May' → 'might'.
 - c) 'Must' → 'must' or 'had to' (for obligation).
 - d) 'Could', 'would', 'should', 'might', 'ought to', 'used to' → **No Change**.
- i) **Example:** She said, "I could swim." → She said that she could swim.

Errors & Exceptions & Nuance:

Universal Truths/Habitual Facts/Proverbs:

The tense of the reported speech remains unchanged if it expresses a universal truth, a scientific fact, a habitual action, or a proverb, irrespective of the reporting verb's tense.

1. The guru said, "Water boils at 100°C." → The guru said that water boils at 100°C.
2. My mother always says, "Early to bed, early to rise." → My mother always says that early to bed, early to rise.

Hypothetical/Unreal Conditions: Sentences expressing hypothetical conditions (e.g., 'If I were a bird...') generally retain their tense.

Note: The backshift in tenses is crucial for maintaining chronological consistency in reported speech, but logical sense overrides strict rule application in exceptions.

4. Change in Pronouns

Grammar Rules (SON Rule): Pronouns in the reported speech change according to the subject and object of the reporting verb, or remain unchanged if they are third person. This rule is often memorized as 'SON/123'.

1. **First Person Pronouns (I, We, My, Our, Me, Us):** Change according to the **Subject (S)** of the reporting verb.
2. **Second Person Pronouns (You, Your, Yours):** Change according to the **Object (O)** of the reporting verb. If no object is explicitly stated, an object is typically understood (e.g., 'me', 'him', 'them').
 1. She said, "You must leave." (Assumed object 'me') → She said that I must leave.
3. **Third Person Pronouns (He, She, It, They, Him, Her, It, Them, His, Hers, Its, Their, Theirs):** Generally undergo **No Change (N)**.
 - Examples:**
 1. She said, "He is sleeping." → She said that he was sleeping.
 2. He said, "They arrived late." → He said that they had arrived late.

Errors & Exceptions & Nuance:

Ambiguity with Understood Object: When 'you' is used and no object is given, assuming 'me' (resulting in 'I') is a common default.

However, if the subject of the reporting verb is already 'he' or 'she', and assuming 'him' or 'her' for 'you' would lead to ambiguity (e.g., 'He said that he was happy' could mean the speaker or the person spoken to), it's often preferable to assume 'me'.

Example: He said, "You are a genius." → He said that I was a genius (to avoid potential ambiguity with 'He said that he was a genius', which could mean the speaker himself).

Note: Consistent and logical pronoun substitution is essential for accurate reporting. Always re-read the indirect speech to ensure the referents are clear.

5. Change in Adverbs and Time/Place Expressions

Grammar Rules: Certain words indicating time, place, or demonstrative relationships change in Indirect Speech to maintain consistency with the new context of reporting. This rule is applied **only** when the reporting verb is in the **past tense**.

1. This → That
2. These → Those
3. Now → Then
4. Here → There
5. Today → That day
6. Tonight → That night
7. Tomorrow → The next day / The following day
8. Yesterday → The previous day / The day before
9. Last (week/month/year) → The previous (week/month/year)
10. Next (week/month/year) → The following (week/month/year)
11. Ago → Before / Earlier
12. Thus → So
13. Come (if indicating movement towards speaker) → Go (if indicating movement away from speaker)

Errors & Exceptions & Nuance:

Immediate Reporting/Unchanged Context: If the speech is reported almost immediately or if the place and time of speaking remain unchanged, these words may not necessarily change. However, for exam purposes, apply the changes unless context strongly dictates otherwise.

Example: (Said just moments ago in the same room) He said, "I need this now." → He said that he needed this now. (Less common in exams for such ambiguity).

Expert Note: These adverbial changes are crucial for accurate contextual relocation of the reported event.

6. Conversion of Interrogative Sentences

Definition: Interrogative sentences are questions. In Indirect Speech, they are transformed into **assertive sentences**, and the question mark is always replaced by a full stop.

Grammar Rules:

1. **Reporting Verb:** 'Said' or 'said to' is replaced by an interrogative verb such as '**asked**', '**inquired**', '**wondered**', '**demanded**', etc. '**Inquired**' often takes 'of' before the object (e.g., '**inquired of me**').
2. **Conjunctions:**
 1. **WH-questions (beginning with Who, What, When, Where, Why, Which, How):** The WH-word itself functions as the conjunction. No additional conjunction like 'that' is used.
 1. He said, "What are you reading?" → He asked **what** I was reading.
 2. She asked, "When will he return?" → She asked **when** he would return.
 2. **Yes/No questions:** If the sentence is beginning with auxiliary verb, the conjunction '**if**' or '**whether**' is used. '**Whether**' is preferred when there is an **explicit** or **implied** alternative ('or not').
 1. He said, "Are you coming?" → He asked **if** I was coming.
 2. She asked, "Did you go or not?" → She asked **whether** I had gone or not.
 3. They said, "Can you help us?" → They asked **if** I could help them.

- 3. No Inversion:** In Indirect Speech, the word order changes from interrogative (verb-subject) to assertive (subject-verb). The question mark is replaced by a full stop.

Examples:

1. He asked what **was** I doing.
2. He asked what I **was** doing.

- 4. Auxiliary Verb Removal:** Auxiliary verbs 'do', 'does', and 'did' are typically dropped in Indirect Speech, with the main verb adjusted for tense.

Examples:

1. He asked, "Do you smoke?" → He asked if I smoked.
2. She asked, "Did you finish?" → She asked if I had finished.

- 5. Tense, Pronoun, Adverb Changes:** Regular rules for tense backshift, pronoun changes, and adverbial changes are applied.

Errors & Exceptions & Nuance:

Conjunction Usage: A common error is using 'that' with WH-questions (e.g., 'He asked that what I was doing'). Remember, the WH-word itself serves as the conjunction.

Inversion Error: Failing to revert to assertive sentence structure is the most frequent mistake. Always ensure the subject precedes the verb in indirect questions.

Note: Indirect questions become embedded clauses and therefore follow standard clause structure (subject-verb), not interrogative structure.

7. Conversion of Imperative Sentences

Definition: Imperative sentences express commands, requests, advice, prohibitions, or suggestions.

Grammar Rules:

1. **Reporting Verb:** 'Said' or 'said to' is replaced by a verb that conveys the specific mood or intention of the imperative sentence. Common choices include '**ordered**', '**commanded**', '**requested**', '**begged**', '**advised**', '**suggested**', '**proposed**', '**forbade**', '**warned**', '**urged**', '**entreated**', etc.

2. Conjunction:

Affirmative Imperative: The infinitive 'to' is used to connect the reporting verb to the reported verb. The original verb (V1) follows 'to'.

1. He said to me, "Open the door." → He ordered me **to open** the door.

- **Negative Imperative:** 'Not to' is used.

She said to him, "Do not waste time." → She advised him **not to waste** time.

Pronoun/Adverb Changes: Regular changes for pronouns and adverbs are applied.

Errors & Exceptions & Nuance:

- **Transitivity of 'Order':** Verbs like 'order', 'command', 'ask', 'tell' are transitive and require an object before the infinitive. Even if the object is implied in Direct Speech, it must be stated in Indirect Speech.

Example:

1. The captain ordered to fire.(X)
The captain ordered **his men** to fire.
- **'Forbid' as Inherently Negative:** The verb 'forbid' inherently means 'to prohibit' or 'to not allow'. Therefore, 'not' should not be used with 'forbade' in the reported speech, as it creates a double negative.
1. The teacher forbade us **not to** make a noise.(X)
The teacher forbade us **to** make a noise.
- **Removal of 'Please/Kindly':** Words like 'please' or 'kindly' are removed as their meaning is incorporated into the reporting verb 'requested'.
1. He said, "Please lend me your pen." → He requested me to lend him my pen.

- **Sentences beginning with 'Let':**

Suggestions/Proposals ('Let us...'): The reporting verb changes to 'suggested' or 'proposed'. The conjunction 'that' is used, and 'let us' is converted to 'we/they should'.

1. He said, "Let us go for a picnic." → He suggested **that they should** go for a picnic.

2. **Permission ('Let me/him/her...'):** The reporting verb changes to 'requested' or 'wished'.
'Let' may be replaced by 'might be allowed to' or handled with an infinitive phrase using 'to let'.
 1. He said, "Let me go home." → He requested **that he might be allowed to** go home.
 2. She said, "Let him finish his work." → She asked **to let him finish** his work.
- **Note:** The key to converting imperatives is choosing the most contextually appropriate reporting verb and forming the infinitive clause correctly.

8. Conversion of Exclamatory Sentences

Definition: Exclamatory sentences express sudden and strong emotions such as **joy, sorrow, surprise, wonder, approval, or contempt**. They are typically marked by an exclamation mark (!).

1. **Reporting Verb:** 'Said' or 'said to' is replaced by verbs that convey the emotion, such as '**exclaimed', 'cried', 'shouted', 'applauded', 'wished'**'.

This is often combined with an adverbial phrase (e.g., 'exclaimed with joy', 'cried out in sorrow', 'exclaimed in surprise').

2. **Conjunction:** The conjunction '**that**' is used to introduce the reported clause.

3. **Conversion to Assertive:** The exclamatory sentence is converted into an assertive sentence. The exclamation mark is replaced by a full stop.

4. **Words like 'What' and 'How' in Exclamations:** When '**what**' or '**how**' are used **to express intensity** (not to ask questions), they are replaced by 'very', 'great', 'wonderful', 'terrible', etc., to convey the degree of emotion.

Examples:

1. He said, "What a foolish idea!" → He exclaimed that it was a very foolish idea.
2. She said, "How beautiful the scenery is!" → She exclaimed that the scenery was very beautiful.

5. **Interjections (Hurrah!, Alas!, Bravo!, Oh!):** These are removed, and their emotional content is expressed through the reporting verb and accompanying adverbial phrase.

Examples:

1. He said, "Hurrah! We have won!" → He exclaimed with joy that they had won.
2. The old woman said, "Alas! My son is no more." → The old woman exclaimed with sorrow that her son was no more.
3. The captain said, "Bravo! You have done well." → The captain applauded them, saying that they had done well.

Errors & Exceptions & Nuance:

- **Distinguishing 'What/How':**
- **No Inversion:** Ensure the reported clause has a subject-verb order (assertive form), even if the original exclamatory sentence might seem to imply a different structure.

9. Conversion of Optative Sentences

Definition: Optative sentences express a **wish, prayer, curse, or blessing**. They often begin with 'May' or convey a strong desire.

Grammar Rules:

1. **Reporting Verb:** 'Said' or 'said to' is replaced by verbs like '**wished', 'prayed', 'blessed', or 'cursed**', according to the sentiment of the sentence.
2. **Conjunction:** The conjunction '**that**' is used to introduce the reported clause.
3. **'May' to 'Might':** If 'May' is present in the Direct Speech, it is changed to 'might' in Indirect Speech.

Even if 'May' is absent but the sentence clearly expresses a wish, 'might' is often introduced.

4. **Conversion to Assertive:** The optative sentence is converted into an assertive sentence, and any exclamation mark is replaced by a full stop.
1. He said, "May you succeed!" → He wished **that I might succeed**.
2. The priest said, "May God forgive you!" → The priest prayed **that God might forgive** me.
3. She said, "Long live the King!" → She wished **that the King might live** long.

Errors & Exceptions & Nuance:

- **Implicit 'May':** In sentences like "Long live the King!", 'May' is understood and must be explicitly included as 'might' in the Indirect Speech.
- **Greetings and Farewells:** For expressions like 'Good morning', 'Good night', 'Good-bye', specific reporting verbs are used without 'that'.
 - He said, "Good morning, friend!" → He wished his friend good morning.
 - She said, "Good-bye, all!" → She bade farewell to all.
- **Past Unreal Wish ('Oh that I were...'):** An unreal wish in the past typically changes to a past perfect construction in indirect speech.
 - He said, "Oh that I were rich!" → He wished that he had been rich.

Note: Distinguish between a simple wish and a prayer. 'Prayed' is appropriate for wishes directed towards a divine power, while 'wished' is for personal desires or others' well-being.