

Reported Speech (Indirect Speech)

What is reported speech?

Reported speech: is when you tell somebody else what you or another person said before.

A. Reporting Statements:

- When transforming statements, check whether you have to change: **pronouns, tenses, places and time expressions.**

1- Pronouns: In reported speech, you often have to change the pronoun depending on who says what. **Example:** She says, "**My** father works in Italy." – She says that **her** father works in Italy.

2- Tenses: a. If the sentence starts in the **present**; there is **no backshift of tenses in reported speech.**

B. If the sentence starts in **the past**; there is often **backshift of tenses in reported speech.**

No backshift: Do not change the tense if the introductory clause is in a present tense (e. g. *He says*). Example: He **says**, "**I write** poems." – He **says** that he **writes** poems.

Backshift: You must change the tense if the introductory clause is in a past tense (e. g. *He said*). Example: He **said**, "**I am** rich." – He **said** that he **was** rich.

Examples of the main changes in tense:

Direct speech	Reported speech
Simple Present He said: "I am happy"	Simple Past He said that he was happy
Present Progressive(present continuous) He said: "I' m looking for my keys"	Past Progressive(past continuous) He said that he was looking for his keys
Simple Past He said: "I visited New York last year"	Past Perfect Simple He said that he had visited New York the previous year.
Present Perfect He said: " I' ve lived here for a long time "	Past Perfect He said that he had lived there for a long time
Past Perfect He said: "They had finished the work when I arrived "	Past Perfect He said that they had finished the work when he had arrived
Past Progressive He said: "I was playing football when the accident occurred "	Past Perfect Progressive He said that he had been playing football when the accident had occurred

Present Perfect Progressive He said: "I have been playing football for two hours."	Past Perfect Progressive He said that he had been playing football for two hours
Past Perfect Progressive He said: "I had been reading a newspaper when the light went off "	Past Perfect Progressive He said that he had been reading a newspaper when the light had gone off
Future Simple (will+ verb) He said: "I will open the door."	Conditional (would+ verb) He said that he would open the door.
Conditional (would +verb) He said: "I would buy Mercedes if I were rich"	Conditional (would +verb) He said that he would buy Mercedes if he had been rich"

-The modal verbs **could, should, would, might, needn't, ought to, and used to** do not change. Example: He said, "She **might** be right." – He said that she **might** be right.

Other modal verbs may change:

Model	Direct speech	Reported speech
Can	"I can do it."	He said he could do it
May	" May I go out?"	He wanted to know if he might go out.
Must	"She must apply for the job."	He said that she must/had to apply for the job.
Will	"They will call you."	He told her that they would call her.

3- Place, demonstratives and time expressions

In the following table, you will find the different changes of time expressions; demonstratives and place.

Direct speech	Reported speech
Time Expressions	
Today	That day
Now	Then
Yesterday	The day before
.....Days agodays before
Last week	The week before
Next year	The following year
Tomorrow	The next day /the following day
Demonstratives	
This	That
These	Those
Place	
Here	There

B. Reporting Questions: also note that you have to:

- transform **the question** into an **indirect question**
- use the question word (**where, when, what, how**) or **if / whether**

Types of questions	Direct speech	Reported speech
With question word (what, why, where, how...)	"Why" don't you speak English?"	He asked me why I didn't speak English.
Without question word (yes or no questions)	"Do you speak English?"	He asked me whether / if I spoke English.

C. Reporting requests / commands and negative requests:

Direct speech	Reported speech
"Nancy, do the exercise."	He told Nancy to do the exercise.
She said, "don't be lazy"	She asked me not to be lazy
"Nancy, give me your pen, please."	He asked Nancy to give him her pen.

D. Other transformations :

- Expressions of advice with **must, should** and **ought** are usually reported using *advise / urge*.
Example: "You **must** read this book ."
He **advised / urged** me to read that book.
- The expression **let's** is usually reported using *suggest*. In this case, there are two possibilities for reported speech: gerund or statement with *should*.
- Example:**
"Let's go to the cinema." 1. He **suggested going** to the cinema.
2. He **suggested** that we **should** go to the cinema.

Exercise 01 :

- John said, "I love this town."
John said.....
- "Do you like soccer?" He asked me.
He asked me
- "I can't drive a lorry," he said.
He said.....
- "Be nice to your brother," he said.
He asked me.....
- "Don't be nasty," he said.
He urged me.....

6. "Don't waste your money" she said.
She told the boys.....
7. "What have you decided to do?" she asked him.
She asked him.....
8. "I always wake up early," he said.
He said.....
9. "You should revise your lessons," he said.
He advised the students
10. "Where have you been?" he asked me.
He wanted to know.....

Correction :

1. John said, "I love this town."
John said that he loved that town.
2. "Do you like soccer ", He asked me.
He asked me if / whether I liked soccer.
3. "I can't drive a lorry," he said.
He said that he couldn't drive a lorry.
4. "Be nice to your brother," he said.
He asked me to be nice to my brother.
5. "Don't be nasty," he said.
He urged me not to be nasty.
6. "Don't waste your money" she said.
She told the boys not to waste their money.
7. "What have you decided to do?" she asked him.
She asked him what he had decided to do.
8. "I always wake up early," he said
He said that he always woke up early.
9. "You should revise your lessons," he said.
He advised the students to revise their lessons.
10. "Where have you been?" he asked me.
He wanted to know where I had been.