



SNS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

(An Autonomous Institution)

COIMBATORE-35

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH



Direct and indirect speech, also known as reported speech, is two ways of conveying someone else's words or thoughts.

Direct Speech:

Direct speech is when you quote the exact words spoken by a person. It is presented within quotation marks and often includes a reporting verb that introduces the speech.

Example:

Direct: She said, "I am going to the store."

In this example, the exact words spoken by the person are enclosed in quotation marks.

Indirect Speech (Reported Speech):

Indirect speech is when you report what someone else has said without quoting their exact words. In indirect speech, the tense, pronouns, and other elements may change to fit the context of reporting.

Example:

Indirect: She said that she was going to the store.

In this example, the words spoken are reported without using quotation marks, and there is a change in pronouns and tense to match the reporting context.

Key differences between direct and indirect speech:

Quotation Marks:

Direct speech uses quotation marks to indicate the exact words spoken.

Indirect speech does not use quotation marks; instead, it may use conjunctions like 'that' to introduce the reported speech.

Pronouns and Tense Changes:

In indirect speech, there may be changes in pronouns, verb tenses, and other elements to match the reporting context.

Reporting Verbs:

Direct speech often includes reporting verbs like "said," "shouted," "asked," etc.

Indirect speech may use reporting verbs as well, but they are not always necessary.

Word Order:

The word order in indirect speech may change from the original direct speech.

Example illustrating the changes in indirect speech:

Direct Speech: "I will come tomorrow," she said.

Indirect Speech: She said that she would come the next day.

In the indirect speech example, there's a change in pronouns ("I" to "she") and tense ("will" to "would") to convey the reported information accurately.

To change a sentence of direct speech into indirect speech there are various factors that are considered, such as reporting verbs, modals, time, place, pronouns, tenses, etc. We will discuss each of these 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 the corresponding past tense in indirect speech.

Direct to indirect speech example:

Direct: She said, 'I am happy'.

Indirect: She said (that) she was happy.

1. 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.

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

Direct to indirect speech example:

Direct: She says/will say, 'I am going'

Indirect: She says/will say she is going.

Rule 2 – Direct Speech to Indirect Speech conversion – Present Tense

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

- Future Continuous Changes to Conditional Continuous

Direct to indirect speech example

Direct: He said, “I’ll be disposing of the old computer next Tuesday.”

Indirect: He said that he would be disposing of the old computer the following Tuesday.

Rule 4 – Direct Speech to Indirect Speech Conversion – Interrogative Sentences

- 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.

- If a direct speech sentence begins with an 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.

- 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

While changing direct speech to indirect speech, the modals used in the sentences change like:

1. Can becomes could
2. May becomes might
3. Must become had to /would have to

Check the 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.

There are modals that do not change – Could, Would, Should, Might, Ought to

- 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 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.

1. 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.

1. 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

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

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.

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

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.”

1. Full stop, comma, exclamation or question mark, are placed inside the closing inverted commas.

Example: They asked, “Can we sing with you?”

1. If direct speech comes after the information about who is speaking, a 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 become those
- Hither becomes thither
- Come becomes go
- Hence becomes thence
- Next week or month becomes following week/month

Examples:

Direct: He said, ‘His girlfriend came yesterday.’

Indirect: He said that his girlfriend had come the day before.

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

Examples:

Direct: He says/will say, ‘My girlfriend came yesterday.’

Indirect: He says/will say that his girlfriend had come the day before.

Rules of 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.

Check the 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."

Exercises

Find out the correct indirect speech for the given sentence.

She said, 'I have baked a cake'

1. She said that she baked a cake
2. She said that she had baked a cake.
3. She said that I baked a cake.
4. She said that she had bake a cake.

Answer (2) She said that she had baked a cake.

Choose the correct sentence.

Aviral said, 'What a beautiful rainbow it is'.

1. Aviral exclaimed wonderfully that the scenery was very beautiful.
2. Aviral said with wonder that the scenery was very beautiful.
3. Aviral exclaimed with wonder that the scenery is very beautiful.
4. Aviral exclaimed with wonder that the scenery was very beautiful.

Answer (4) Aviral exclaimed with wonder that the scenery was very beautiful.

The correct indirect speech for 'This world', she said, 'is full of sorrow. Wish that I were dead'. is?

1. She observed that the world is full of sorrow. She wished to be dead.
2. She said that the world was full of sorrow. She wished to be dead.

3. She observed that the world was full of sorrow. She wished to be dead.

4. She observed that the world was full of sorrow. She wished to die.

Answer (1) She observed that the world is full of sorrow. She wished to be dead

The policeman said, 'Where are the weapons?'

1. The policeman inquired where was the weapons.
2. The policeman enquired where are the weapons.
3. The policeman enquired where were the weapons.
4. The policeman questioned where were the weapon.

Answer (3) The policeman enquired where were the weapons.

The man said, 'Ah! I am ruined.'

1. The man cried that he was in ruined.
2. The man exclaimed in grief that he was ruin.
3. The man said that Ah, he is ruined.
4. The man exclaimed with sorrow that he was ruined.

Answer (4) The man exclaimed with sorrow that he was ruined.