

Direct and Indirect Speech

13 Direct and Indirect Speech

13.1 Direct Speech

A kind of sentence structure in which we report people's exact words is called 'direct speech'. These words are placed between inverted commas.

Examples:

Maheen said, "I want to work hard."

He said, "I am sick."

13.2 Indirect Speech

A kind of sentence structure in which we make people's words a part of our own sentence by using conjunctions (e.g. that), and changing tenses, pronouns, and other words where necessary. There are no inverted commas in indirect speech.

Examples:

Maheen said that she wanted to work hard.

He said that he was sick.

13.3 Rules for Conversion of Direct Speech to Indirect Speech

In order to change a sentence from direct speech to indirect speech, we apply some general rules.

These rules involve:

- Change of tenses
- Change of pronouns
- Change of expressions of time and place
- The comma and the inverted commas are omitted.
- The conjunction 'that' is generally used.

13.3.1 Conversion of Direct Speech to Indirect Speech Reporting Verb

| Rules | Examples |
|---|---|
| If the reporting verb is in past tense, the verb of the reported speech is changed to the corresponding past tense. | Direct: She said, "I am happy." Indirect: She said that she was happy. |

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| If the reporting verb is in present tense or future tense, the tense of the reported speech remains unchanged. | Direct: She says, "I am going." Indirect: She says that she is going. Direct: She will say, "I am going." Indirect: She will say that she is going. |
| If the reported speech has a universal truth or a habitual action, the tense of the reported speech usually remains unchanged. | Direct: He said, "Man is mortal." Indirect: He said that man is mortal. |

13.3.2 Change of Present Tenses

| Rules | Examples |
|---|---|
| The simple present tense is changed to the simple past tense. | Direct: She said, "I am unwell." Indirect: She said that she was unwell. Direct: They said, "We play cricket." Indirect: They said that they played cricket. |
| The present continuous tense is changed to the past continuous tense. | Direct: She explained, "I am playing a guitar." Indirect: She explained that she was playing a guitar. |
| The present perfect tense is changed to the past perfect tense. | Direct: She said, "I have already completed my work." Indirect: She said that she had already completed her work. |
| The present perfect continuous tense is changed to the past perfect continuous tense. | Direct: He said, "I have been living in Lahore since 2001." Indirect: He said that he had been living in Lahore since 2001. |

13.3.3 Change of Past Tenses

| Rules | Examples |
|--|---|
| The simple past tense is changed to the past perfect tense. | Direct: They said, "We played cricket." Indirect: They said that they had played cricket. |
| The past continuous tense is changed to the past perfect continuous tense. | Direct: She explained, "I was playing a guitar." Indirect: She explained that she had been playing a guitar. |
| The past perfect tense remains unchanged. | Direct: She said, "I had already completed my work." Indirect: She said that she had already completed her work. |

| | |
|--|---|
| The past perfect continuous tense remains unchanged. | Direct: He said, "I had been living in Lahore since 2001." Indirect: He said that he had been living in Lahore since 2001. |
|--|---|

13.3.4 Change of Future Tenses

| Rules | Examples |
|---|---|
| The simple future tense ('will and shall' are changed to 'would') | Direct: They said, "We shall play cricket." Indirect: They said that they would play cricket. |
| The future continuous tense ('will be and shall be' are changed to 'would be') | Direct: She explained, "I shall be playing a guitar." Indirect: She explained that she would be playing a guitar. |
| The future perfect tense ('will have and shall have' are changed to 'would have') | Direct: She said, "I shall have already completed my work." Indirect: She said that she would have already completed her work. |
| The future perfect continuous tense ('will have been and shall have been' are changed to 'would have been') | Direct: He said, "I shall have been living in Lahore since 2001." Indirect: He said that he would have been living in Lahore since 2001. |

13.3.5 Change of Modal Verbs

| Direct | Indirect |
|--|---|
| will → would | Direct: He said, "The test will be difficult." Indirect: He said that the test would be difficult. |
| can → could | Direct: He said, "I can help the poor." Indirect: He said that he could help the poor. |
| may → might | Direct: He said, "It may rain at night." Indirect: He said that it might rain at night. |
| Note: Past modal verbs (e.g. would, could, should, might, must, ought) usually remain unchanged. | Direct: He said, "It might rain at night." Indirect: He said that it might rain at night. |

13.3.6 Conversion of Interrogative Sentences from Direct Speech to Indirect Speech

| Rules | Examples |
|---|---|
| <p>If a sentence in the direct speech begins with a question word (e.g. what/where/when, etc.), the reporting verb is usually changed to verbs such as 'enquire' and 'asked'.</p> <p>The inverted commas and the question mark are omitted, and no conjunction is used.</p> <p>The structure of the direct speech is changed from interrogative form to assertive form.</p> | <p>Direct: The boy said, "Where do you live?" Indirect: The boy enquired where I lived.</p> <p>Direct: She said to me, "What were they doing at home?" Indirect: She asked me what they had been doing at home.</p> |
| <p>If a sentence in the direct speech begins with an auxiliary verb (helping verb), we use the conjunction 'if' or 'whether' after the reporting verb.</p> | <p>Direct: She said to me, "Will you come to the party?" Indirect: She asked me whether I would come to the party.</p> |

13.3.7 Conversion of Imperative Sentences from Direct Speech to Indirect Speech

| Rules | Examples |
|---|--|
| <p>The reporting verb is generally changed to another verb such as:</p> <p>Command: ordered, told, commanded, etc.</p> <p>Request: asked, requested, pleaded, begged, etc.</p> <p>Advice: suggested, urged, forbade (for negative sentences only), warned, etc.</p> <p>The inverted commas are omitted. No conjunction is introduced.</p> <p>The verb of the reported speech is changed to an infinitive (e.g. to+be).</p> | <p>Direct: She said to me, "Polish my shoes." Indirect: She ordered me to polish her shoes.</p> <p>Direct: She said to me, "Please help me." Indirect: She requested me to help her.</p> <p>Direct: She said to me, "Do not waste your time." Indirect: She forbade me to waste my time.</p> |

13.3.8 Conversion of Exclamatory Sentences from Direct Speech to Indirect Speech

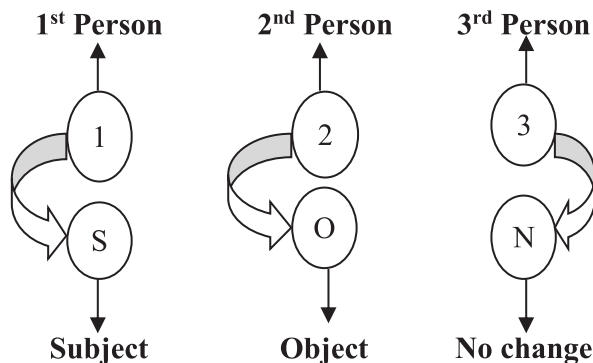
| Rules | Examples |
|--|---|
| The reporting verb is changed to another verb such as exclaimed with joy, sorrow, surprise, anger, admiration, etc. | Direct: She said, "What a beautiful flower it is!" Indirect: She exclaimed with admiration that it was a beautiful flower. |
| The commas and the interjection are omitted, and the conjunction 'that' is used. | Direct: He said, "Alas! We have lost the match." Indirect: He exclaimed with sorrow that they had lost the match. |
| The structure of the direct speech is changed from exclamatory form to assertive form. | |

13.3.9 Conversion of Wish (Optative Sentences) from Direct Speech to Indirect Speech

| Rules | Examples |
|--|--|
| The reporting verb is changed to words such as wished, desired, prayed , etc. | Direct: She said, "May you live long!" Indirect: She prayed that I might live long. |
| The commas and the interjection are omitted, and the conjunction 'that' is generally used. | Direct: He said to me, "May Allah bless you!" Indirect: He wished me that Allah might bless me. |
| The structure of the direct speech is changed from optative form to assertive form. | |

13.3.10 Change of Pronouns

The pronouns are changed in the manner:



| Rules | Examples |
|---|---|
| The pronoun of the first person in direct speech is changed with the subject of the reporting speech. | Direct: He said, “ I always help the poor.” Indirect: He said that he always helped the poor. |
| The pronoun of the second person in direct speech is changed with the object of the reporting speech. | Direct: He said to me, “ You always help the poor.” Indirect: He told me that I always helped the poor. |
| The pronoun of the third person in reported speech remains unchanged. | Direct: He said, “ She has completed her work.” Indirect: He said that she had completed her work. |

13.3.11 Change of Typical Words of Time and Place

| Rules | Examples |
|---|---|
| In direct speech, the words that express nearness in time or place are changed to words that express distance in the indirect speech. | Direct: He said, ‘His friend came yesterday.’ Indirect: He said that his friend had come the day before. |
| If the reporting verb is in the present tense or the future tense, the expression of time/place remains unchanged. | Direct: He says, ‘My friend came yesterday.’ Indirect: He says that his friend came yesterday. |

| Change of Time/Place | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Direct Speech | Indirect Speech |
| now | then |
| here | there |
| ago | before |
| thus | so |
| today | that day |
| tomorrow | the next day |
| this | that |
| yesterday | the day before |
| these | those |
| hither | thither |
| hence | thence |
| the next week/month | the following week/month |



Grammar Exercise — 6

1. Pick out the correct indirect speech for the given sentences.

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.

Ali said, “What a beautiful rainbow it is!”

1. Ali exclaimed wonderfully that it was a beautiful rainbow.
2. Ali said with wonder that the rainbow was beautiful.
3. Ali exclaimed with wonder that the rainbow is beautiful.
4. Ali exclaimed with wonder that it was a beautiful rainbow.

She said, “They did not invite her for the dinner.”

1. She said that they did not invite her for the dinner.
2. She said that they have not invited her for the dinner.
3. She said that they had not invited her for the dinner.
4. She said that we had not invited her for the dinner.

The policeman said, “Where are the weapons?”

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

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.

2. Change the following sentences into indirect speech.

1. Junaid said, ‘I am very busy now.’
2. He said, ‘They have not watered the plants.’
3. ‘Alas, there is nobody to support me,’ said John.
4. ‘German is easy to learn,’ she said.
5. He said to me, ‘Open the door, please.’
6. ‘It is too late to go out,’ said Ali.

7. He said to me, 'I don't believe in you.'
8. He says, 'I am glad to be here this evening.'
9. He said to me, 'What a pleasant day it is!'
10. 'Oh no! I lost my mobile phone.' said the stranger.
11. He said, 'You ought to respect your parents.'
12. Saad said to Asad, 'Go away.'
13. She said to me, 'You must work hard to pass the test.'
14. 'Call the witness', said the judge.
15. The boy said, 'Hurrah! We have won the match.'

3. Change the following sentences into indirect speech.

1. 'What do you want?' she asked him.
2. 'Are you coming with us?' he asked me.
3. He asked, 'When do you intend to make the payment?'
4. 'Do you come from China?' said the prince to the girl.
5. The poor man exclaimed, 'Will none of you help me?'
6. 'Which way should I go?' asked the little girl.
7. Aladdin said to the magician, 'What have I done to deserve so severe a punishment?'
8. 'Don't you know the way home?' I said to her.
9. 'Do you write a good hand?' said the teacher.
10. 'Have you anything to say on behalf of the accused?' said the judge finally.
11. 'Have you anything to tell me, little bird?' asked Ulysses.
12. 'Who are you, sir, and what do you want?' they asked.
13. The king was impressed with the magician and asked, 'What can I do for you?'
14. She asked, 'What is it that makes you stronger and braver than other men?'
15. 'Can you solve this problem?' he asked me.