

DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH

ENGLISH LANGUAGE HAS TWO WAYS TO NARRATE THE SPOKEN-WORDS OF A PERSON. THESE TWO WAYS ARE AS FOLLOWS

- DIRECT SPEECH
- INDIRECT SPEECH

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS DIRECT & INDIRECT SPEECH?

Direct Speech: *the message of the speaker is conveyed or reported in his own actual words without any change.*

Indirect Speech: *the message of the speaker is conveyed or reported in our own words.*

Example on Process of Conversion from Direct to Indirect Speech

a) **Direct:** Radha said, “I am very busy now.”

b) **Indirect:** Radha said that she was very busy then.

1. All inverted commas or quotation marks are omitted and the sentence ends with a full stop.
2. Conjunction ‘that’ is added before the indirect statement.
3. The pronoun ‘I’ is changed to ‘she’. (*The Pronoun is changed in Person*)
4. The verb ‘am’ is changed to ‘was’. (*Present Tense is changed to Past*)
5. The adverb ‘now’ is changed to ‘then’.

TIP 1: CONVERSION RULES AS PER THE REPORTING VERB

When the reporting or principal verb is in the Past Tense, all Present tenses of the direct are changed into the corresponding Past Tenses.

- a) **Direct:** He **said**, “I am unwell.”
- b) **Indirect:** He **said** (that) he **was** unwell.

If the reporting verb is in the Present or Future Tense, the tenses of the Direct Speech do not change.

- a) **Direct:** He **says/will say**, “I am unwell.”
- b) **Indirect:** He **says/will say** he **is** unwell.

The Tense in Indirect Speech is NOT CHANGED if the words within the quotation marks talk of a universal truth or habitual action.

- a) **Direct:** They **said**, “We **cannot live** without water.”
- b) **Indirect:** They **said** that we **cannot live** without water.

TIP 2: CONVERSION RULES OF PRESENT TENSE IN DIRECT SPEECH

Simple Present Changes to Simple Past

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

Present Continuous Changes to Past Continuous

- a) **Direct:** "I am reading a book", he explained.
- b) **Indirect:** He explained that he **was reading** a book.

Present Perfect Changes to Past Perfect

- a) **Direct:** She said, "He **has finished** his food".
- b) **Indirect:** She said that he **had finished** his food.

Present Perfect Changes to Past Perfect

- a) **Direct:** "I **have been to** Gujarat", he told me.
- b) **Indirect:** He told me that he **had been to** Gujarat.

TIP 3: CONVERSION RULES OF PAST & FUTURE TENSE

Simple Past Changes to Past Perfect

- a) **Direct:** He said, "Ira **arrived** on Monday."
- b) **Indirect:** He said that Ira **had arrived** on Monday.

Past Continuous Changes to Past Perfect Continuous

- a) **Direct:** "We **were living** in Goa", they told me.
- b) **Indirect:** They told me that they **had been living** in Goa.

Future Changes to Present Conditional

- a) **Direct:** He said, "I **will be** in Kolkata tomorrow."
- b) **Indirect:** He said that he **would be** in Kolkata the next day.

Future Continuous Changes to Conditional Continuous

- a) **Direct:** She said, "I'll **be using** the car next Friday."
- b) **Indirect:** She said that she **would be using** the car next Friday.

TIP 4: CHANGES IN MODALS

CAN changes into COULD

- a) **Direct:** He said, "I **can** swim."
- b) **Indirect:** He said that he **could** swim.

MAY changes into MIGHT

- a) **Direct:** He said, "I **may** buy a house."
- b) **Indirect:** He said that he **might** buy a house.

MUST changes into HAD TO/WOULD HAVE TO

- a) **Direct:** He said, "I **must** work hard."
- b) **Indirect:** He said that he **had to** work hard.

Modals that DO NOT Change: Would, Could, Might, Should, Ought to.

- a) **Direct:** He said, "I **should** face the challenge."
- b) **Indirect:** He said that he **should** face the challenge.

TIP 5: CONVERSION OF INTERROGATIVE

Reporting Verb like 'said/ said to' changes to asked, enquired or demanded

- a) **Direct:** He **said to** me, "What are you doing?"
- b) **Indirect:** He **asked** me what I was doing.

If sentence begins with auxiliary verb, the joining clause should be if or whether.

- a) **Direct:** He said, "**Will** you come for the meeting?"
- b) **Indirect:** He asked them **whether they would** come for the meeting.

If sentence begins with 'wh' questions then no conjunction is used as the "question-word" itself act as joining clause.

- a) **Direct:** "**Where** do you live?" asked the girl.
- b) **Indirect:** The girl **enquired where** I lived.

TIP 6: COMMAND, REQUEST, EXCLAMATION, WISH

Commands and Requests

Indirect Speech is introduced by some verbs like ordered, requested, advised and suggested. Forbid(s)/ forbade is used for the negative sentences. The imperative mood is changed into the Infinitive.

- a) **Direct:** Rafique said to Ahmed, “Go away.”
- b) **Indirect:** Rafique **ordered** Ahmed **to go** away.
- c) **Direct:** He said to her, “Please wait.”
- d) **Indirect:** He **requested** her **to wait**.

Exclamations and Wishes

Indirect Speech is introduced by some words like grief, sorrow, happiness, applaud. Exclamatory sentence changes into assertive sentence and Interjections are removed.

- a) **Direct:** He said, “**Alas!** I am undone.”
- b) **Indirect:** He **exclaimed sadly** that he was broke.

TIP 7: CHANGE OF PRONOUNS

The first person of the reported speech changes according to the subject of reporting speech.

- a) **Direct:** She said, “**I am** in ninth class.”
- b) **Indirect:** She says that **she** was in ninth class.

The second person of reported speech changes according to the object of reporting speech.

- a) **Direct:** He says to **them**, “**You** have completed **your** job.”
- b) **Indirect:** He tells **them** that **they** have completed **their** job.

The third person of the reported speech doesn't change.

- a) **Direct:** He says, “**She** is in tenth class.”
- b) **Indirect:** He says that **she** is in tenth class.

TIP 8: CHANGE OF PLACE AND TIME

Words expressing nearness in time or place in Direct Speech are generally changed into words expressing distance in Indirect Speech.

Thus -- so

Today -- that day

Tomorrow -- the next day

This -- that

Yesterday -- the day before

These -- those

Next week/month -- following week/month

- a) **Direct:** She said, "My father came **yesterday.**"
- b) **Indirect:** She said that her father had come **the day before.**
- c) **Direct:** She **says/will say**, "My father came **yesterday.**"

Indirect: She **says/will say** that her father had come **yesterday.** (Here the reporting verb 'says' is in the present tense OR 'will say' is in future tense; hence the time expression 'yesterday' won't change.)

TIP 9: PUNCTUATION

The words that are actually spoken should be enclosed in quotes and begin with a capital letter

Example: **He said, “You are right.”**

Comma, full stop, question mark, or exclamation mark must be present at the end of reported sentences and are placed inside the closing inverted comma or commas.

Example: **He asked, “Can I come with you?”**

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

Example: **She shouted, “Stop talking!”**

Example: **“Thinking back,” she said, “he didn't expect to win.”** (*Comma is used to separate the two reported speech and no capital letter to begin the second sentence*).

TIP 10: CONVERSION OF INDIRECT TO DIRECT SPEECH

1. Use the reporting verb, "say" or "said to" in its correct tense.
2. Remove the conjunctions "that, to, if or whether etc" wherever necessary.
3. Insert quotation marks, question mark, exclamation and full stop, as per the mood of the sentence.
4. Put a comma before the statement.
5. Write the first word of the statement with capital letter.
6. Change the past tense into present tense wherever the reporting verb is in the past tense.
7. Convert the past perfect either into past tense or present perfect as found necessary.

Example

- a) **Indirect:** He **asked whether** he is coming.
- b) **Direct:** He **said** to him, **“Are you coming?”**

EXERCISE

Change Direct speech into Indirect speech

1. John said, 'I am trying to find a new job.'

Ans: John said that he was trying to find a new job.

2. The girl said, 'I want something to eat.'

Ans: The girl said that she wanted something to eat.

3. The man said, 'I have nowhere to go.'

Ans: The man said that he had nowhere to go. / The man lamented that he had nowhere to go.

4. Mother said, 'I have laid the table.'

Ans: Mother said that she had laid the table.

5. He said, 'Are you happy here?'

Ans: He enquired if I was happy there?'

6. He said, 'Let's go for a drive.'

Ans: He suggested going for a drive. / He suggested that we should go for a drive.

EXERCISE

Change Indirect speech into Direct speech

1. He said that he had written a letter.

Ans: He said, 'I wrote a letter.'

2. The teacher asked them to stop writing.

Ans: The teacher said, 'Stop writing.'

3. The girl said that she had been practicing the violin for six months.

Ans: The girl said, 'I have been practicing the violin for six months.'

4. He asked who I was.

Ans: He said, 'Who are you?'

5. The father told his son to go and pay his fee at once.

Ans: The father said to his son, 'Go and pay your fee at once.'

