

## Reported Speech Exercises

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- You have learned that we can report the words of a speaker in two ways.
- We may quote the speaker's actual words. This is called direct speech.
- My friends said, "We enjoyed our holiday in London."
- Kavish said, "I was working on my project."
- "I shall come to your party," Navya promised.

### Note that indirect speech:

- Inverted commas are used to indicate the exact words of the speaker. (You may use either single and double inverted commas.)
- A comma is placed immediately after the reporting verb. (In the third example the sentence ends with the reporting verb and is, therefore, followed by a full stop.)
- The punctuation at the end of the sentence in direct speech is placed before the closing inverted comma(s).

We can also report what the speaker said without quoting his/her exact words. This is called indirect speech or reported speech.

My friends said that they had enjoyed their holiday in London.  
Kavish said that he was/had been working on his project.  
Navya promised that she would come to my party.

In indirect speech, we:

- use the conjunction that immediately before the reported words.
- change the person of the first and second-person pronouns.
- change the tense of the verb.
- do not use inverted commas.

Tense	Direct Speech	Reported Speech
Present simple	I like ice cream	She said (that) she liked ice cream

Present Continuous	I am living in London	She said (that) she was living in London.
Past simple	I bought a car	She said (that) she had bought a car OR She said (that) she bought a car.
Past continuous	I was walking along the street	She said (that) she had been walking along the street.
Present perfect	I haven't seen Julie	She said (that) she hadn't seen Julie.
Past perfect	I had taken English lessons before	She said (that) she had taken English lessons before.
Will	I'll see you later	She said (that) she would see me later.
would	I would help, but..."	She said (that) she would help but...

Can	I can speak perfect English	She said (that) she could speak perfect English.
could*	I could swim when I was four	She said (that) she could swim when she was four.
Shall	I shall come later	She said (that) she would come later.
should*	I should call my mother	She said (that) she should call her mother
might	I might be late	She said (that) she might be late
Must	I must study at the weekend	She said (that) she must study at the weekend Or She said she had to study at the weekend

\* doesn't change.

### **Different types of Sentence:**

When you use reported, you either report:

- statements
- questions
- requests / commands
- other types

## A. Reporting Statements:

When transforming statements, check whether you have to change:

- pronouns
- tense
- place and time expression

1. Pronouns: In reported speech, you often have to change the pronoun depending on who says what.

Example:

- She says, "My dad likes roast chicken."
- she says that her dad likes roast chicken.

2. Tenses:

- If the sentence starts in the present, there is no backshift to tenses in reported speech.
- If the sentence starts in the past, there is often backshift of tense in reported speech.

	Direct speech	Reported speech
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(no backshift)	"I write poems."	He says that he writes poems.
(backshift)	"I write poems."	He said that he wrote poems.

## B. Place, Demonstratives and Time expressions

Place, demonstratives, and time expressions change if the context of the reported statement (i.e. the location and/or the period of time) is different from that of the direct speech.

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

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
<b>Time Expressions</b>	
<p>Today</p> <p>Now</p> <p>yesterday</p> <p>... days ago</p> <p>last week,</p> <p>next year</p> <p>tomorrow</p>	<p>that day</p> <p>then</p> <p>the day before</p> <p>... days before</p> <p>the week before</p> <p>the following years</p> <p>the next day / the following day</p>
<b>Place</b>	
Here	there
<b>Demonstratives</b>	
<p>This</p> <p>these</p>	<p>that</p> <p>those</p>

**Reporting Questions**

When transforming questions, check whether you have to change:

- pronouns
- place and time expressions
- tenses (backshift)

**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 questions 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**

We transforming requests and commands, check whether you have to change:

- pronouns
- place and time expressions

Direct speech	Reported speech
"Nancy, do the exercise."	He told Nancy to do the exercise.
"Nancy, give me your pen, please"	He asked Nancy to give him her pen.

Tenses are not relevant for requests – simply use to / not be + verb (infinitive without "to")

Example:

- She said, "sit down." – she asked me to sit down.
- She said, "don't be lazy" – she asked me not to be lazy.
- For affirmative use to + infinitive (without to)
- For negative requests, use not to + infinite (without to).

#### **D. Other transformations**

Expressions of advice with must, should, and ought are usually reported using advice/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.

- He suggested going to the cinema.
- He suggested that we should go to the cinema.

#### **Main clauses connected with and/but**

If two complete main clauses are connected with, and or, but, put, that after the conjunction.

Example:

- He said, "I saw her but she didn't see me."
- He said that he had seen her but that she hadn't seen him."

If the subject is dropped in the second main clause (the conjunction is followed by a verb), do not use, that'.

Example:

- She said, "I am a nurse and work in a hospital."
- He said that she was a nurse and worked in a hospital."
- Here's a table of some possible conversions:

#### **Question 1.**

Sentences are given indirect speech. Change them into indirect speech.

- (i) The teacher said to the boys, 'Have you done your homework?'
- (ii) The little girl asked the man, 'Will you help me?'
- (iii) Janaki said, 'I have been reading this book.'

- (iv) Mother said to the daughter, 'Go and change your dress.'
- (v) Susie said, "I had read this book before I gave it to you."
- (vi) Mike said, 'I will bring my piano.'
- (vii) The officer told the clerk, 'Bring me that file.'
- (viii) Jane asked, 'Have you read that book?'
- (ix) Malathi asked, 'Where is your watch?'
- (x) Sophia said, 'I watched this movie last week.'

**Answer:**

- (i) The teacher asked the boys if they had done their homework.
- (ii) The little girl asked the man if he would help her.
- (iii) Janaki said that she had been reading that book.
- (iv) The mother told the daughter to go and change her dresses.
- (v) Susie said that she had read that book before she gave it to me.
- (vi) Mike said that he would bring his piano.
- (vii) The officer told the clerk to bring him that file.
- (viii) Jane asked if I had read that book.
- (ix) Malathi asked where my watch was.
- (x) Sophia said that she had watched that movie the previous week.

**Question 2.**

Sentences are given indirect speech. Change them into indirect speech.

- (i) Helen asked me, "What does he do for a living?"
- (ii) They asked me, "How are you going?"
- (iii) Craig asked Anne, "Are you married?"
- (iv) "Sally asked Harry, "How long have you been back?"
- (v) Jack asked Jill, "Can you go up the hill?"
- (vi) Dillon asked me, "Do you smoke?"
- (vii) Sol asked me, "What are you doing now?"
- (viii) Sylvia asked me, "Why did you come late?"
- (ix) Jenny asked me, "How many times did you ring?"
- (x) Emma asked me, "Are you Ok?"

**Answer:**

- (i) Helen asked me what he did for a living.
- (ii) They asked me how I was going.
- (iii) Craig asked Anne if she was married. Or Craig asked Anne whether she was married.
- (iv) Sally asked Harry how long he had been back.
- (v) Jack asked Jill if she could go up the hill. Or Jack asked Jill whether she could go up the hill.
- (vi) Dillon asked me if I smoked. Or Dillon asked me whether I smoked.
- (vii) Sol asked me what I was doing now.
- (viii) Sylvia asked me why I had come late. Or Sylvia asked me why I came late.
- (ix) Jenny asked me how many times I had rung. Or Jenny asked me how many times I

rang.

(x) Emma asked me if I was Ok. Or Emma asked me whether I was Ok?"

**1. Choose the correct option**

(i) "Where do you live?"

(a) Miho asked me where do I live

(b) Miho asked me where I lived

(c) Miho asked me where did I live

(ii) "What is the time?"

(a) Can you tell me what is the time?

(b) Can you tell me what the time is?

(iii) "Why did he say that?"

(a) I would like to know why he said that

(b) I would like to know why did he say that

(iv) "Do we have a test tomorrow?"

(a) I've forgotten do we have a test tomorrow?

(b) I've forgotten if we have a test tomorrow.

(c) I've forgotten have we have a test tomorrow?

(v). "Don't talk!"

(a) The teacher told us not to talk.

(b) The teacher told us to not talk.

(vi) "Have you finished with the computer"

(a) She asked if had I finished with the computer.

(b) She asked if I had finished with the computer.

(vii) "I'll give you your money back tomorrow."

(a) She promised me to give the money back the next day.

(b) She promised to give me back the money the next day.

(viii) "Can I use your phone?"

(a) I asked her could I use her phone.

(b) I asked her if could us her phone.

(c) He begged me not to tell her what he had said.

(ix) "When are you going back to Japan?"

(a) He asked when I was going back to Japan.

- (b) He asked when was I going back to Japan.
- (x) "Why did you have to wait so long?"
- (a) She wanted to know why we had to wait so long.
- (b) She wanted to know why did we have to wait so long.

2. Complete these indirect speech sentences with the correct pronoun or determiner.  
The first one has been done for you.

	<b>Indirect speech</b>
"My head is aching," said Sarah.	Sarah said told her head was aching.
"I like your new bike," Dan told me.	Dan told me that he liked the new bike.
Tom and Peter said, " We'll give you our seats	Tom and Peter said that they would give us seats."
"You can borrow my book," Michael said.	Michael said that I could borrow a book.
"I haven't brushed my teeth," said Paul.	Paul said that he hadn't brushed teeth.

<p>"You are late again," Mr. Chen told me.</p>	<p>Mr. Chen said that was late again.</p>
<p>"We have finished our homework," said the boys</p>	<p>The boys said that they finished homework.</p>
<p>Sue and Maggie said, "We want to watch football on TV."</p>	<p>Sue and Maggie said that wanted to watch football on TV.</p>
<p>"I don't like your green hair," said Uncle David.</p>	<p>Uncle David said that didn't like my green hair.</p>
<p>Dad Said, "We'll have to phone for a taxi."</p>	<p>Dad said that would have to phone for a taxi.</p>