

# Reported Speech

The act of reporting the words of a speaker is called **narration**. There are basically two ways in which the words of the speaker can be conveyed in writing.

- (a) **Direct Speech (Direct Narration)** The reporting of the words of the speaker without making any changes to it is known as **Direct Speech**. Direct speech is shown inside double quotation marks.
- (b) **Indirect Speech (Indirect Narration)** The act of reporting the words of the speaker by making necessary changes to it is called **Indirect Speech**. In indirect speech, while narrating something, changes are made in the original words of the person. For example, tenses and pronouns are changed according to the reporting verb.

e.g. (i) My mother told me, "You have to work harder at school." (Direct speech)  
 (ii) My mother told me that I had to work harder at school. (Indirect speech)

*In sentence (i) we can notice that this is the speaker's direct narration as it is shown inside double quotation marks, but in sentence (ii) tense and pronouns are changed and quotation marks are removed.*

**TIP** The first verb part of the sentence (i.e. he said, she said, he says, she says, they said etc) before the statement (quotation marks) of a person in the sentence is called the **reporting clause**. The reporting clause contains the reporting verb (in many cases *said* or *told*) and usually comes first.

Observe the following changes carefully.

- He said, "I work in a factory."  
He said that he worked in a factory.
- They said, "We are going to the cinema."  
They said that they were going to the cinema.
- She said, "I am playing."  
She said that she was playing.
- He said to me, "You have been a great help to me."  
He told me that I had been a great help to him.
- Ashish said to me, "I shall go to the market today."  
Ashish told me that he would go to the market that day.

(Direct speech)  
 (Indirect speech)  
 (Direct speech)  
 (Indirect speech)  
 (Direct speech)  
 (Indirect speech)  
 (Direct speech)  
 (Indirect speech)  
 (Direct speech)  
 (Indirect speech)

## Basic Rules of Speech and Conversion

### (a) In Direct Speech

- (i) Put the words spoken by the speaker within " " (double quotes or double inverted commas).
- (ii) Separate the reporting verb from the direct speech by a comma.
- (iii) Begin the first word inside inverted commas with a capital letter.

### (b) In Indirect Speech

- (i) Change the reporting verb according to the sense conveyed by the speech.
- (ii) Do not change the tense of the reporting verb.
- (iii) Remove the comma separating the reporting verb from the direct speech.
- (iv) Remove inverted commas.
- (v) Introduce the indirect speech by some connector like *that*, *if*, *whether*, *what*, *where*, *how*, *why* etc depending on whether you want to transform a statement, question or request, as the case may be.
- (vi) Convert all kinds of sentences into assertive statements.
- (vii) Make other necessary changes in person, verb forms, time, place and expressions.

### Some changes to consider

- (a) 1st person (I, we etc) → change according to the subject of the reporting verb.
- (b) 2nd person (You, your etc) → change according to the object of the reporting verb.
- (c) 3rd person (He, she, it, they, his, her etc) → make no change.
- (d) Change 1st person into 3rd person if the reporting verb has no object mentioned.

### Rules for Changing Simple Direct Speech into Indirect Speech

| Rules                                                                                                                      | Direct Speech                                                                                                                                            | Indirect Speech                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Remove separating comma, inverted commas and use the connector 'that' when there is no object in the sentence.             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He said, "I work in a shipyard."</li> <li>• Sheena said, "My teacher is highly educated."</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He said that he worked in a shipyard.</li> <li>• Sheena said that her teacher was highly educated.</li> </ul> |
| The reporting verb 'said' becomes 'told' along with the subject and the connector 'that' when it is followed by an object. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kamya said to me, "You have been a great help."</li> <li>• He said to me, "I shall go to the party."</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kamya told me that I had been a great help.</li> <li>• He told me that he would go to the party.</li> </ul>   |

## Changes into Reported Speech with Respect to the Tense

### Present Tense

| Rules of Conversion                             | Direct Speech                                                                                                                        | Indirect Speech                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Simple Present changes into Simple Past         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He said, "I do not like computers."</li> <li>• They said, "We love our country."</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He said that he did not like computers.</li> <li>• They said that they loved their country.</li> </ul> |
| Present continuous changes into past continuous | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I said, "It is raining."</li> <li>• She said, "I am not laughing."</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I said that it was raining.</li> <li>• She said that she was not laughing.</li> </ul>                  |

| Rules of Conversion                                             | Direct Speech                                                                                                                                                      | Indirect Speech                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Present perfect changes into past perfect                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She said, "He has finished his work."</li> <li>• They said, "We have not gone to New York."</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She said that he had finished his work.</li> <li>• They said that they had not gone to New York.</li> </ul>                   |
| Present perfect continuous changes into past perfect continuous | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He said, "I have been studying since 3 o' clock."</li> <li>• Radha said, "It has been raining for three days."</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He said that he had been studying since 3 o' clock.</li> <li>• Radha said that it had been raining for three days.</li> </ul> |

### Past Tense

| Rules of Conversion                                       | Direct Speech                                                                                                                                          | Indirect Speech                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Simple past changes into past perfect                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My teacher said to me, "You answered correctly."</li> <li>• He said, "I didn't buy a car."</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My teacher told me that I had answered correctly.</li> <li>• He said that he had not bought a car.</li> </ul>                |
| Past continuous changes into past perfect continuous      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They said, "We were enjoying the weather."</li> <li>• He said, "Mohit was listening to the music."</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They said that they had been enjoying the weather.</li> <li>• He said that Mohit had been listening to the music.</li> </ul> |
| Past perfect remains past perfect (tense does not change) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He said, "I had started a business."</li> <li>• I said, "She had eaten the meal."</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He said that he had started a business.</li> <li>• I said that she had eaten the meal.</li> </ul>                            |

### Future Tense

| Rules of Conversion                                             | Direct Speech                                                                                                                                        | Indirect Speech                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Simple future: <i>will</i> changes into <i>would</i>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He said, "I will study the book."</li> <li>• They said to me, "We will send you gifts."</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He said that he would study the book.</li> <li>• They told me that they would send me gifts.</li> </ul>             |
| Future continuous: <i>will be</i> changes into <i>would be</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shreya told him, "I will be waiting for you."</li> <li>• He said, "He will not be flying kites."</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shreya told him that she would be waiting for him.</li> <li>• He said that he would not be flying kites.</li> </ul> |
| Future perfect: <i>will have</i> changes into <i>would have</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He said, "I will have finished the work."</li> <li>• Narayan said, "I will have gone."</li> </ul>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He said that he would have finished the work.</li> <li>• Narayan said that he would have gone.</li> </ul>           |

**Rules for Changing Interrogative Sentences into Indirect Speech**  
(The reporting verb 'said' becomes 'asked' and 'to' is removed)

| Rules                                                                                                                                                                       | Direct Speech                                                               | Indirect Speech                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Use 'if' or 'whether' in place of 'that' as a connector.                                                                                                                    | • She said to me, "Do you like tea or coffee?"                              | • She asked me whether I liked tea or coffee.                              |
| Remove the question mark while forming an assertive sentence.                                                                                                               | • She said to Shyam, "Do you have an extra copy?"                           | • She asked Shyam if he had an extra copy.                                 |
| The questions starting with question words like <b>when, why, where</b> , do not use 'if' or 'whether'. The question words are retained to introduce the reported question. | • He said, "What is your problem?"<br>• She said, "Why are you not coming?" | • He asked me what my problem was.<br>• She asked me why I was not coming. |

**Rules for Changing Imperative Sentences into Indirect Speech**  
(Commands, Requests and Suggestions)

| Rules                                                                                          | Direct Speech                                                                                                   | Indirect Speech                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Use conjunction 'to' instead of 'that'.                                                        | • I said to Hari, "Do not pluck the flowers."<br>• The Principal said to the students, "Get out of the office." | • I ordered Hari not to pluck the flowers.<br>• The Principal ordered the students to get out of the office. |
| In sentences beginning with 'Let', the reporting verb is changed to 'proposed' or 'suggested'. | • He said, "Let us keep quiet in this matter."                                                                  | • He suggested that we should keep quiet in this matter.                                                     |

**Rules for Changing Exclamatory Sentences into Indirect Speech**

| Rules                                                                                 | Direct Speech                           | Indirect Speech                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Words such as <b>Alas, Bravo, Oh, Wow, Wah</b> should be left out in indirect speech. | • Ram said, "Alas! I have been ruined." | • Ram exclaimed with sorrow that he had been ruined.        |
| Forms of the verb 'wish' is used if the sentence conveys a wish.                      | • She said, "If I were a bird."         | • She wished to be a bird./She wished that she were a bird. |

**Summary of Changes**

| Change of Verb Forms                                                                                                                                                 | Change of Pronouns                                                                                                                                                            | Time, Place, Expression and Other Changes                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| is, am, are – was, were<br>has, have – had<br>go – went<br>did – had + 3rd form of the verb<br>was, were – had been<br>will – would<br>shall – should<br>can – could | 1st Person – according to the subject<br>2nd Person – (i) according to the object<br>(ii) changed to 3rd person if the reporting verb has no object<br>3rd Person – unchanged | now – then<br>ago – before<br>today – that day<br>last night – the previous night or the night before<br>next week – the following week<br>here – there<br>hither – thither<br>this – that<br>thus – so |

# PRACTICE QUESTIONS

## 1 Fill in the Blanks.

- A. 1. Mum said, "I am angry with you."

Mum said she ..... angry with me.

2. Jaya said, "I am cooking lunch today."

Jaya said that she ..... lunch .....

3. My friend said, "I will go to the cinema tomorrow."

My friend said that he ..... to the cinema .....

4. Her teacher said, "You must do your homework every day."

Her teacher said that she ..... do her homework every day.

5. Their father said, "I can speak three languages."

Their father said that he ..... speak three languages.

6. Kavita said, "I have been on holidays."

Kavita said that she ..... on holidays.

7. Mary said, "I will play cards the day after tomorrow."

Mary said that ..... cards the following day.

8. Sangeeta said, "I went to bed early last night."

Sangeeta said that ..... to bed early the night before.

9. My dad said to the immigration officer, "This is my first visit to England."

My dad told the immigration officer that it ..... his first visit to England.

10. He said to me, "You are the most beautiful girl I have ever seen."

He told me that I ..... the most beautiful girl he.....

- B. 1. Nikhil said, "I am going to see my parents next month."

Nikhil said that ..... to see his parents the following month.

2. Garima said to me, "I am sorry but I can't come to your birthday party because I am going away for the weekend."

Garima said that she ..... sorry but she ..... to my birthday party because she ..... away for the weekend.

3. Judy said, "I have already written this paragraph four times."

Judy complained that ..... that paragraph four times.

4. Prakash said, "I will not stop until this factory is shut down."

Prakash promised that ..... until that factory..... shutdown.

5. Jagan said, "I don't think so." Jagan said that ..... so.

6. My friends said to me, "We want to leave at once."

My friends told me that ..... to leave at once.

7. Uncle John said, "Please take off your shoes when you come in."

Uncle John told us to take off ..... shoes when we ..... in.

8. Pankaj said, "I haven't brushed my teeth yet."

Pankaj said that ..... brushed ..... teeth yet.

9. Maya said, "You can borrow my book."

Maya told me that ..... borrow.....book.

10. Sanjay said, "My head is aching."

Sanjay said that ..... head ..... aching.

## 2 Read the conversations and complete the passages that follow

- A. 1. Shylock : I am unwell

Duke : What can I do for you, sir?

Shylock : Will you take me to the doctor?

Duke : Yes, Sir.

Shylock told the Duke (a) ..... The

Duke asked (b) .....

Shylock asked the Duke (c) ..... The Duke replied in affirmative.

2. Divya : I am planning to buy a car.

Arti : Which car do you intend to buy?

Divya : I intend to buy the latest model of any popular company.

Arti : It is a wise decision.

- Divya told Arti that (a)..... Then Arti asked her (b) ..... Divya said that (c)..... Arti said that (d) .....
3. Susan : Why have you not brought my party dress?  
Jenny : I haven't brought it because I had gone to my uncle's house with my parents, so I forgot to keep it.  
Susan : Don't give me silly excuses. I want to know the truth.  
Jenny : I am sorry Susan. I was chatting with my friends till late. I forgot that you needed it urgently today.  
Susan asked Jenny (a) ..... Jenny said that she (b) ..... Susan (c)..... Jenny said that (d)..... She was chatting with her friends till late and (e)..... that Jenny needed it urgently that day.
4. Dilip : I have been watching the sea and there hasn't been any trace of a ship.  
Rohan : I told you yesterday too that we'll be rescued, so have patience.  
Dilip : Why do you ask me to keep quiet whenever I say something?  
Rohan : Have you ever said anything sensible?  
Dilip said that (a)..... the sea and that (b) ..... any trace of a ship. Rohan replied that (c)..... that they (d)..... and asked him to have patience. Dilip angrily asked Rohan (e)..... to keep quiet whenever he said something to which Rohan wanted to know (f).....
5. Sanjay : I am surprised to see you here in Delhi. When did you come?  
Madan : I came here yesterday. I have been offered a job here.  
Sanjay told Madan (a) ..... and asked (b) ..... Madan replied that (c) ..... and added that (d) .....
6. Kanak : Have you seen "Three Idiots"?  
Kartik : I saw them yesterday in the class.  
Kanak : I was talking about the movie.  
Kartik : I thought that you were talking about the three idiots in the class.  
Kanak asked Kartik (a) ..... 'Three Idiots'. Kartik replied that (b) ..... in the class. Kanak further said that (c) ..... Kartik replied that (d) ..... in the class.
7. Ananya : I want to order a big pineapple cake for my birthday.  
Confectioner : When is your birthday?  
Ananya : It is tomorrow.  
Confectioner : You can collect it by noon.  
Ananya told the confectioner (a) ..... a big pineapple cake for her birthday. The confectioner asked (b) ..... Ananya replied that it was (c)..... The confectioner told her that (d) ..... by noon.
8. Mother : Why are you late from school, Kabir?  
Kabir : While coming from school to bus stop, I slipped by stepping on a banana peel.  
Mother : O, my son! Did you hurt yourself?  
Kabir : I got a bad bruise on my left knee.  
Mother asked Kabir (a) ..... Kabir replied that while coming from school to bus stop (b) ..... on a banana peel. Mother was shocked to hear this. She asked (c) ..... Kabir said that (d) ..... a bad bruise on his left knee.
9. Rahul : Do you know that Ranjit met with an accident and is in hospital?  
Sukrit : Oh! I don't know Is he badly hurt? Which hospital is he in?  
Rahul : The doctors say that there is nothing to worry. He is admitted to City Hospital.  
Rahul asked Sukrit (a) ..... that Ranjit (b) .....with an accident and was in hospital. Sukrit expressed his ignorance and enquired (c) ..... He also asked (d)..... Rahul told him that according to the doctors (e)..... and said that he (f)..... to the City Hospital.
10. Shilpa : Can I borrow your English textbook?  
Jaya : Sure you can. But when will you return it?  
Shilpa : I will return it to you after two days from today.  
Jaya : Please do as I have to prepare for the exams.  
Shilpa asked Jaya (a) ..... Jaya replied that (b) ..... and asked her (c) ..... Shilpa said she (d) ..... Jaya urged her (e) ..... since she (f) .....

### 3 Change the following into indirect speech.

- A.**
1. The teacher said to the boys, "Have you done your homework?"
  2. The little girl said to the man, "Will you help me?"
  3. Janaki said, "I have been reading this book."
  4. Mother said to the daughter, "Go and change your dress."
  5. Rachna said, "I had read this book before I gave it to you."
  6. Anjali said, "I watched this movie last week."
  7. Shyam said, "I can solve this problem."
  8. She said, "I have found my keys."
  9. They asked me, "Did you see Ravi at cinema last night?"

10. The news said, "There has been a big earthquake in Japan."

- B.**
1. Rajesh said, "I can't come to the meeting on Saturday."
  2. My brother said, "I am going to learn to cook."
  3. Sujata said to me, "You don't know what Manish is doing."
  4. He said, "The Sun rises in the East."
  5. He says, "Ram is a good player."
  6. He said to her, "Can you lend me your umbrella?"
  7. I said to her, "I wrote a letter."
  8. She said, "Keep this room open."
  9. She said, "What a pitiful scene!"
  10. The Principal said, "well done! my boys."

## Answers

- I. A.**
1. was
  2. was cooking, that day
  3. would go, the next day
  4. had to
  5. could
  6. had been
  7. she would play
  8. she had gone
  9. was
  10. was, had ever seen
- B.**
1. he was going
  2. was, couldn't come, was going
  3. she had already written
  4. he would not stop, was
  5. he didn't think
  6. they wanted
  7. our, came
  8. he hadn't, his
  9. I could, her
  10. his, was
- II. A.**
1. (a) that he was unwell  
(b) what he could do for him  
(c) if he would take him to the doctor
  2. (a) she was planning to buy a new car  
(b) which car she intended to buy  
(c) she intended to buy the latest model of any popular company  
(d) it was a wise decision
  3. (a) Why she had not brought her party dress  
(b) hadn't brought it as she had gone to her uncle's house with her parents so she had forgotten to keep it  
(c) told her not to give silly excuses and that she wanted to know the truth  
(d) she was sorry  
(e) had forgotten
  4. (a) he had been watching

- (b) there had not been  
(c) he had told him the day before  
(d) would be rescued  
(e) why he asked him  
(f) if he had ever said anything sensible
5. (a) that he was surprised to see him there in Delhi  
(b) When he had come  
(c) he had come there the previous day  
(d) he had been offered a job there
6. (a) if he had seen  
(b) he had seen them the day before  
(c) she had been talking about the movie  
(d) he had thought that he had been talking about the three idiots
7. (a) that she wanted to order  
(b) when her birthday was  
(c) the following day  
(d) she could collect it
8. (a) why he was late from school  
(b) he had slipped by stepping  
(c) if he had hurt himself  
(d) he had got
9. (a) if he knew  
(b) had met  
(c) if he was badly hurt  
(d) which hospital he was in  
(e) there was nothing to worry  
(f) was admitted

10. (a) if she could borrow her English textbook  
(b) she could  
(c) when she would return it  
(d) would return it to the after two days from that day  
(e) to do that  
(f) had to prepare for the exams

III. A. 1. The teacher asked the boys if they had done their homework.

2. The little girl asked the man if he would help her.
3. Janaki said that she had been reading that book.
4. Mother told the daughter to go and change her dress.
5. Rachna said that she had read that book before she gave it to me.
6. Anjali said that she had watched that movie the previous week.
7. Shyam said that he could solve that problem.
8. She said that she had found her keys.

9. They asked me if I had seen Ravi at cinema the previous night.

10. The news said that there had been a big earthquake in Japan.

B. 1. Rajesh said that he couldn't come to the meeting on Saturday.

2. My brother said that he was going to learn to cook.
3. Sujata told me that I didn't know what Manish was doing.
4. He said that the Sun rises in the East.
5. He says that Ram is a good player.
6. He asked her if she could lend him her umbrella.
7. I told her that I had written a letter.
8. She ordered to keep that room open.
9. She exclaimed that it was a pitiful scene.
10. The Principal exclaimed with joy that the boys had done well.