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.

To ace the verbal ability section, it is important to have a clear conceptual knowledge of Direct and Indirect Speech, their usage and applications in English language. Therefore, candidates can go through the video on Direct and Indirect Speech rules in English Language, given below for better understanding-

For the preparation of the English language section in a better way, it is important that you go through the following topics thoroughly.

1. Tenses rules
2. Conjunctions rules
3. Prepositions Rules
4. List of Prefix and Suffix With Examples
5. Active And Passive Voice Rules
6. List of Homophones/Homonyms
7. List of Synonyms and Antonyms

Candidates are advised to check the General English for Competitive Exams page for more articles on rules for English grammar, list of idioms and phrases, synonyms & antonyms, etc.

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, 'W**ill** 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.

Candidates can also check the links given below to understand the concept of word formation in English and to learn the common words in English Language that appear in most of the competitive exams-

1. English Root Words
2. Most asked English Vocabulary Words

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 becomes 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.

Aspirants are well aware that English is an important component of the syllabus of various competitive exams and it is important to be clear with the basic concepts. Therefore, given below are a few articles to clarify the confusion between usage of common but confusing words in the English Language.

Difference Between Affect and Effect	Difference Between Center and Centre
Difference Between Principal and Principle	Difference Between Program and Programme

More such concept-wise, subject-wise differences can be found on the 100 Difference between Articles page linked here.

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.”

Direct And Indirect Speech Rules PDF:-

Direct-Indirect Speech – Sample Questions For the English Language

The significance of knowing the rules of direct and indirect speech for the English language section of various competitive exams can only be understood by knowing the type of questions asked in the examination, based on the same.

Given below are samples of direct and indirect speech questions asked in the English language section of various government examinations:

Q.1. 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.

Q.2. 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.

Q.3. 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

Q.4. 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.

Q.5. 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.

To prepare well for the English section, it is essential to practise and revise regularly for conceptual clarity. Hence, go through the exercise on Direct and Indirect Speech Questions and Answers in the given link.

For more variety and scope of direct and indirect speech questions asked in the English section of various competitive exams, go through Previous Year Question Papers PDF with Solutions.

Candidates can also check the variations and scope of questions asked in the competitive exams on the other relevant topics of English language below:

- One Word Substitution Questions & Answers
- Tenses Questions And Answers
- Idioms and Phrases Questions and Answers
- Synonyms Questions And Answers

Check the Verbal Ability page to get more Question and Answer articles based on different general English topics.

Candidates who are preparing for the upcoming government exams must carefully go through the concept of Direct and Indirect speech rules, as candidates tend to score the least in the English Language section of these exams.

Aspirants of various government exams can refer to the detailed exam syllabus in the links given below: