

## Indirect speech or reported speech

When we want to describe what someone said, one option is to use **direct speech**. We use direct speech when we simply repeat what someone says, putting the phrase between speech marks:

the quotation marks “.....” colon:

- *Sami said: “I’m really hungry.”*

### ***Indirect Speech***

When we want to report what someone said **without speech marks** and without necessarily using exactly the same words, we can use **indirect speech**

(also called **reported speech**)

For example:

- *Direct speech: “We’re quite cold in here.”*
- *Indirect speech: They say (that) they’re cold.*

## What is indirect speech or reported speech?

When we tell people what another person said or thought, we often use **reported speech** or indirect speech. To do that, we need to change verb tenses (present, past, etc.) and pronouns (**I, you, my, your, etc.**) if the time and speaker are different. For example, **present tenses** become **past**, **I** becomes **he** or **she**, and **my** becomes **his** or **her**, etc.

- Amina : '*I don't have time.*'  $\Rightarrow$  Amina said that *she didn't have time.*
- karim: '*I am tired.*'  $\Rightarrow$  He said that *he was tired.*

### Omission of **that**

We often leave out **that** after reporting verbs like **say, think, etc.**

- *She said she was late.* (=She said **that** she was late.)

### Say or tell?

The most common verbs we use in reported speech are **say** and **tell**. We must pay attention here. We say **tell somebody something** and **say something (to somebody)**.

Use "**tell**" when there is a direct object indicating who was spoken to, as it means to inform or instruct someone. Use "**say**" when the listener is not mentioned or if the focus is on the words themselves.

- *They said me (that) they would help me.* **✗**
- *They told me (that) they would help me.* **✓**
- *He told (that) he didn't have a car.* **✗**
- *He said (that) he didn't have a car.* **✓**

## 1- Tense changes in indirect speech

# REPORTED SPEECH - VERB FORMS

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## VERB FORMS

'I am exhausted.'

PRESENT SIMPLE

PAST SIMPLE

He said (that) he **was** exhausted.

'I am studying.'

PRESENT CONTINU.

PAST CONTINU.

She told me (that) she **was** studying.

'I loved the concert.'

PAST SIMPLE

PAST PERFECT

He told me (that) he **had** loved the concert.

'I have never been to Rome.'

PRESENT PERFECT

PAST PERFECT

She said (that) she **had** never **been** to Rome.

'I will help you.'

WILL

WOULD

He said (that) he **would** help me.

'You must pay attention.'

MUST

HAD TO

She told me (that) I **had to** **pay** attention.

'You can stay with me.'

CAN

COULD

She said (that) I **could** stay with her.

'I may arrive late.'

MAY

MIGHT

He told me (that) he **might** arrive late.

'We should help Tom.'

COULD  
MIGHT  
SHOULD

COULD  
MIGHT  
SHOULD

She said (that) we **should** help Tom.

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## Direct speech

**S** said: "s + V<sub>1</sub> + ...."

- 1- The quotation marks are removed “...”
- 2- That
- 3- V<sub>1</sub>-----V<sub>2</sub>

## Indirect speech

**S** said **that** V<sub>2</sub> + .....

V<sub>1</sub>-----V<sub>2</sub>

All – Present ----- All – Past

All – Past ----- Past perfect

Will ... **would**

Can..... **could**

May ..... **might**

Must .... **had to**

Would / could ..... **would / could**

## 2- Changes in expressions

# REPORTED SPEECH - EXPRESSIONS

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## EXPRESSIONS



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### 3- Questions and imperatives in indirect speech

## REPORTED SPEECH QUESTIONS AND IMPERATIVES

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### QUESTIONS

'When did they arrive?'

WH- WORD  
+ AUXILIARY  
VERB

WH- WORD  
+ SUBJECT  
+ VERB

He asked me **when they had** arrived.

'Did they call?'

YES/NO  
QUESTION

'IF/WHETHER'  
+ SUBJECT  
+ VERB

He asked me **if/whether** they **had** called.

t e s t - e n g l i s h c o m

### IMPERATIVES

'Give me the money.'

POSITIVE  
IMPERATIVE

ASKED/TOLD  
ME + TO-  
INFINITIVE

He **told me to give him** the  
money.

'Don't answer the door.'

NEGATIVE  
IMPERATIVE

ASKED/TOLD  
ME + NOT TO  
+INFINITIVE

He **asked me not to answer** the door.

t e s t - e n g l i s h c o m

In reported or indirect speech, we must also pay attention to the use of pronouns. When a person tells us something, he or she uses the first person (**I, me, my, we, us, our**) to talk about himself or herself and the second person (**you, your**) to talk about us, the person listening. But when we tell someone else what that person said, we are going to use the third person (**he, she, his, her, etc.**) to talk about the speaker and the first person (**I, me, my**) to talk about ourselves, the listener.

- '*I will help you.*'  $\Rightarrow$  ***He*** said that ***he would help me.***
- '*That's my pen.*'  $\Rightarrow$  ***She*** said that it was ***her pen.***
- '*I need your help.*'  $\Rightarrow$  ***She*** said that ***she needed my help.***

## Exercise

1- 'I work in a bank.' ⇒ He said that he **worked** ✓ in a bank.

- Present simple (direct speech) ⇒ past simple (reported speech).

2- 'I am working today.' ⇒ She told us she **was working** ✓ that day.

- Present continuous (direct speech) ⇒ past continuous (reported speech).
- today** ⇒ **that day**

3- 'I've been ill for a couple of weeks.' ⇒ He told me he **had been ill** ✓ for a couple of weeks.

- Present perfect (direct speech) ⇒ past perfect (reported speech).

4- 'I was at the doctor's all morning.' ⇒ She told me that she **had been** ✓ at the doctor's all morning.

- Past simple (direct speech) ⇒ past perfect (reported speech).

5- 'I'll lend you the money.' ⇒ He told me he **would lend** ✓ me the money.

- will** (direct speech) ⇒ **would** (reported speech).

6- 'I can't do it without your help.' ⇒ She said she **couldn't do** ✓ it without my help.

- can** (direct speech) ⇒ **could** (reported speech).

7- 'The meeting may start early.' ⇒ He told us that the meeting **might start** ✓ early.

- may** (direct speech) ⇒ **might** (reported speech).

8- 'I must leave early today.' ⇒ He said that he **had to leave** ✓ early that day.

- must** - obligation (direct speech) ⇒ **had to** (reported speech).

9- 'You should talk to Jim.' ⇒ She said that I **should talk** ✓ to Jim.

- could, might, should** (direct speech) ⇒ **could, might, should** (reported speech).

10- 'Get out!' ⇒ She told me **to get out** ✓.

- Orders or requests (direct speech) ⇒ **told me / asked me + to** infinitive (reported speech).