

3th Chapter : **The reported speech**

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Definition :

Reporting a someone's speech is repeating what he has said, and it can happen in different ways. There are two ways of reporting what someone has said ; **Direct speech** and **indirect speech**.

In **direct** speech, we repeat the exact words of the speaker

Ex : "I bought a car last week" he said.

When doing so, we use quotation marks ("..."), and if the reporting verb «say » or « tell » is placed before the statement, it is followed by a comma.

In **indirect** speech (or **reported speech**), we report what someone has said without necessarily using his own words.

Ex : He said that he had bought a car the week before.

Direct speech is useful to write dialogues, especially in plays and novels, while **reported speech** is very useful in journalism and also for passing on messages

When we move from direct to **reported** speech, there is a certain number of changes that are necessary and a certain number of rules that are to be followed.

I – The reporting verb :

The mostly used reporting verbs are « say » and « tell », they have exactly the same meaning, but they are different in use.

« Tell requires a direct object, whereas « say » does not.

Ex : With « say » : He *said* that it was late.

With « tell » : He *told* me that it was late.

Other reporting verbs can be used depending on the kind of statement which is reported. Verbs such as : Order, Ask, Suggest, Think, Suppose, Claim, Want to know, Confess, Deny, Regret...

II – The conjunction « That » :

In **reported** speech we use the conjunction « that »

Ex : He told me *that* he was a doctor.

→ But « that » is optional.

Ex : He told me he was a doctor.

III – The tense of the reporting verb :

When the reporting verb is in the present simple, continuous, the present perfect or future, the verb tense in the statement doesn't change.

1st ex : **Direct :** ‘I work in a bank’ she *says*.
 Indirect : She *says* she *works* in a bank.

2nd ex : If you ask her she will say that she *works* in a bank.

When the reporting verb is in the past simple, past perfect or conditional, the verb tense in the statement changes into a past tense.

Direct speech	Reported speech
Present simple	<i>Simple past</i>
Simple past	<i>Past perfect</i>
Past continuous	<i>Past perfect continuous</i>
Present continuous	<i>Past continuous</i>
Present perfect continuous	<i>Past perfect continuous</i>
Past perfect	<i>Past perfect</i>
Past perfect continuous	<i>Past perfect continuous</i>

Note that :

→The past continuous normally becomes past perfect continuous, but only when it refers to a complet action.

Ex : **Direct :** They said, ‘we were thinking of selling our house but we decided not to’
 Indirect : They said they had been thinking of selling their house but the had decided not to.

But when the past continuous describes an action in progress in the past, especially when this action was interrupted by another action, the past continuous doesn't change, and the second part of the statement can change or remain the same.

Ex : **Direct :** He said, ‘I was crossing the street when I had this accident.
 Indirect : He said that he *was crossing* the street when he had had that accident. (*or* : when he had had that accident.)

IV – Conditional :

Conditional type 1 sentences become conditional type 2 sentences in **reported** speech.

Ex : **Direct :** ‘If I see her I'll give her the book’ he said.
 Indirect : He said that if he saw her he would give her the book.

Note that :

→ Conditional type 2 and conditional type 3 sentences do not change.

Ex : **Direct :** ‘If I saw her I'd give her the book’ he said.
 Indirect : He said that he would give her the book if he saw her.

Mixed type conditional sentences don't change either.

Ex : **Direct :** ‘‘If you had started a business when you inherited that money you would be very rich now’’ he told me.

Indirect : He told me that if I had started a business when I inherited that money I would be very rich now.

V – The futur :

The futur continuous changes into the conditional continuous.

Ex : **Direct :** She said, ‘‘I’ll be travelling this time next week’’

Indirect : She said that she would be travelling that time the week after. (*or* : the next/following week)

The futur perfect changes.

Ex : **Direct :** ‘‘We will have moved house by the end of the month’’ they said.

Indirect : They said that they would have moved house by the end of the month.

VI – Other changes :

Sometimes the speaker is reporting his/her own speech. In this case subject pronouns, object pronouns, possessive adj. And adv. do not change.

Ex : **Direct :** ‘‘I’m writing a book in my study at the moment’’ I said.

Indirect : I said that I was writing a book in my study at that moment.

But when the person reporting the speech is different, pronouns and possessive adj. must change.

Ex : **Direct :** ‘‘I went to the cinema with my best friend’’ she said.

Indirect : She said that she had gone to the cinema with her best friend.

• Adverbs of times generally change.

- Now → Then
- This moment → that moment
- Today → That day
- Yesterday → The day before (*or* : the previous day)

All adv. of time beginning with « last » change to expressions with « before » or « previous »
« Ago » can change into « before » or stay the same

In the futur :

Tomorrow → The next/following day (*or* : the day before)

The same with expressions beginning with « tomorrow » :

Tomorrow morning → The next/following morning (*or* : the morning after)

Similarly expressions beginning with « next » :

Next week → The next/following week (*or* : the week after)

→ **Exceptions :**

The day after tomorrow → The day after the next/following day (*or* : the day after the day after)

- **Adverbs of place :**

- Here → There
- This place → That place

Sometimes, the adv. « here » doesn't indicate clearly what place it means, in this case we use the most appropriate word or expression.

1st ex : **Direct :** "They don't sell cigarettes here" he said.
Indirect : He said that they didn't sell cigarettes *there*.

2nd ex : **Direct :** "Come and sit here" she told him.
Indirect : she told him to come and sit *next to* her.

Note that :

→ "Come here !" becomes « she called him/her.. »

- **Demonstratives :**

- This → That
- These → Those

Demonstratives only change when they are linked to a place or time.

This moment/place... → That moment/place...

When « this » or « those » are only used to point to an object or some objects, they change into « the ».

1st ex : **Direct :** "My father is the one on the left of this picture" he said.
Indirect : He said that his father was the one on the left of *the* picture.

2nd ex : **Direct :** "Could you please take these books to the library ?" she asked.
Indirect : She asked me politely to take *the* books to the library.

- **Greetings/wishes...**

Many expressions expressing greetings, wishes and others can be replaced by verbs.

1st ex : **Direct :** "Hello !" he said.
Indirect : He *greeted* me.

2nd ex : **Direct :** "Happy birthday !" he said.
Indirect : He *wished* me a happy birthday.

3th ex : **Direct :** "Congratulations !" he said.
Indirect : He *congratulated* me.