

## Direct and Indirect Narration <http://engnation.blogspot.com>

Objectives: By the end of the lesson you will have

1. learnt the difference between direct & indirect speeches.
2. learnt the rules of narration according to tenses.
3. learnt to change the direct speech of statement or assertive sentence into indirect speech.

Read the following sentences :

A. The boy says, "I read in B. High School".

B. The boy says that he reads in B. High School.

In the sentence A the speech of the boy is quoted in the exact words of the speaker.

The speech quoted in the exact words of the speaker is a Direct Speech or Direct Narration. It is always written within inverted commas.

Note: The direct speech -contains :

- a. Reporting speech : The boy says, \_
- b. Reporting verb : says
- c. Reported speech 1 "I read in B. High School."
- d. Verb of the reported speech : read

In the sentence B the speech is reported in a narrative form without quoting the exact words of the speaker.

The speech reported in narrative form without quoting the exact words of the speaker is an Indirect Speech or Indirect Narration.

Note : The reporting speech and the reported speech are joined by a linking word and the commas are omitted. -Remember: Narration is of two kinds. They are:

- (a) Direct Narration or Direct speech
- (h) Indirect Narration or Indirect Speech

## Genera] Rules

[i]

### Assertive Sentence or Statement

1. If the reporting verb is in the present or future tense, the tense in the reported speech is not changed.

Direct : Nabil says, "I am fine."

Indirect : Nabil says that he is fine.

Direct : The man says, "I shall do it."

Indirect : The man says that he will do it.

Direct : He says, "I went there yesterday."

Indirect I : He says that he went there yesterday.

Direct : He will say, "I am ready to go."

Indirect : He says that he is ready to go.

2. If the reporting verb is in the past tense, the verb in the reported speech is changed into the corresponding past form.

Nadin said, "I am fine."

Nadin said that he was fine.

He said, "I want to go."

He said that he wanted to go.

He said, "I am reading a book."

He said that he was reading a book.

He said, "I have learnt my lesson."

He said that he had learnt his lesson.

He said, "I have been learning English."

He said that he had been learning English.

He said, "I had reached the school before the bell rang"

He said that he had reached the school before the bell rang.

He said, "I can do the work."

He said that he could do the work.

He said, "I shall do it."

He said that he would do it.

He said, "I shall have done it."

He said that he would have done it.

3. If the reporting verb is in the past tense, and the verb of the reported speech is in the past indefinite tense, it (the verb in the reported speech) is changed into the past perfect tense.

Direct : Urmi said, "I went to school."

Indirect : Urmi said that she had gone to school.

Direct : He said, "I wrote the book."

Indirect : He said that he had written the book.

Direct : 'Kabir said to me, "I was sick."

Indirect : Kabir told me (said to me) that he had been sick.

4. If the reporting verb is in the past tense, and the verb in the reported speech is in the past continuous, it (the verb in the reported speech) is 'changed into the past perfect continuous tense.

Direct : He said, "I was reading a book."

Indirect : He said that he had been reading a book.

Direct : Shimu said to me, "I was making a research to solve the problem."

Indirect : Shimu told me (said to-me) that she had been making a research to solve the problem.

-Note: The use of the conjunction that between the reporting speech and the reported speech is not a must in the indirect speech.

5. If the Direct Speech describes a universal truth, constant fact, habitual fact, geographical fact and quotations, the verb in the reported speech remains unchanged:

Direct : The teacher said, "The earth moves round the sun."

Indirect : The teacher said that the earth moves round the sun.

Direct : He said, "My father reads the Holy Quran every morning."

Indirect : He said that his father reads the Holy Quran every morning.

Direct : Keats said, "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever."

Indirect : Keats I said that a thing of beauty is a joy for ever.

6. The First Person of the direct speech is changed into the person the man spoken to and the third person does not have any change: '

Direct : Rahman said to Mamun, "Your father will go to my office"

Indirect : Rahman told Mamun that his father would go to his office.

Direct : Salam says to you, "You did not help me."

Indirect : Salam tells you that you did not help him.

Direct : They said to us, "He will meet you."

Indirect : They told us that he would meet us.

Note: If the Reporting Verb has an object, it is not good English to write, said to him before that, It is better to write told us/him etc.

7. If the Reported speech has two or more verbs occurring at the same time, the past tense of the verbs is not changed :

Direct : The teacher said, "Mr. Ant worked hard while Mr. Grasshopper slept."

The teacher said that Mr. Ant worked hard while Mr. Grasshopper slept

Indirect : He said, "The children sang, danced and played."

Direct : He said that the children sang, danced and played.

8. Words that express nearness are often changed into the words expressing remoteness:

Words in direct speech    Words in indirect speech

Here    there

This    that

Ago    before

These    those

Hence    thence

Come    go

Hither    thither

Thus    so, in that way

Today    that day, the same day

Tomorrow    the next day, the following day

Yesterday    the previous day, the day before

Last night    the previous night, the night before

Exercise :-

Change the following sentences into indirect speech :

1. The boy says, "My father is working abroad."
2. Karim says, "I was right".
3. He said to me, "I shall help you".
4. Anwar said to them, "You were absent from the class yesterday".
5. The man said to Kalam, "You have not sent me the letter".
6. Ahmed said to his father, "I am preparing my lesson".
7. He said to me, "I did not see the boy going".
8. They said to me, "You have done well".
9. The man said to the children, "Allah is kind".
10. They said, "We came, worked and returned".

Ans: 1. The boy says that his father is working abroad . 2. Karim says that he was right.  
3. He said to me that he would help me. 4. Anwar said to them that they had been absent from the class the previous day. 5. The man said to Kalam that he had not sent him the letter. 6. Ahmed said to his father that he was preparing his lesson. 7. He said to me that he had not seen that boy going. 8. They said to me that I had done well.  
9. The man said to the children that Allah is kind. 10. They said that they had come, worked and returned.

### Interrogative Sentence:

Structure of indirect speech

- (a) Reporting verb is changed into ask or enquire of.
- (b) If or whether is used as a linking word.
- (c) The auxiliary verb in the reported speech is used after the subject.
- (d) If the sentence begins with who, which, what, how, when, where, why etc., these are not changed and if or whether is not used.

Note : The indirect speech becomes a statement and no question mark is used.

Nadim said to Nadia, "Are you reading now?"

Nadim asked Nadia (or enquired of) if she was reading then.

The man said to Shaila, "What is your name?"

The man asked Shaila what her name was.

[iii]

### Imperative Sentence

Structure of indirect speech

- a. Reporting verb is changed into tell, command or order, request - or beg or entreat or ask, forbid, according to the sense of the speech
- b. Reporting verb and Reported speech are joined by Infinitive 'to

He said to me, "Do it now"?

He told me to do it then.

The captain said, "Soldiers, march on".

The captain commanded the soldiers to march on.

[iv]

### Optative Sentence

The structure of indirect speech of Optative sentences.

- a. The Reporting verb is changed into wish or pray.
- b. The Optative form is changed into a statement.
- c. 'That' is used as a linking word.

He said to me, "May you be happy".

He wished that I might be happy.

Mr. Khan said, "May Allah save me".

Mr. Khan prayed that Allah might save him.

[v]

### Exclamatory Sentence:

- a. The reporting verb is changed into exclaim, cry, shout etc. according to the sense.
- b. New words and phrases like. with joy/in joy, with sorrow/ in sorrow,

in wonder etc. are used to express the meaning of exclamation. If the sense of exclamation is not clear, such phrases are not used.

c. That is used as a linking word.

d. The changed form becomes a statement.

Direct : The man said, "Alas! I am undone".

Indirect : The man cried out in sorrow that he was undone.

Direct : He said, "Hurrah! We have won the game".

Indirect : He exclaimed in joy that they had won the game.

Direct : He said to me, "What a funny boy you are"! .

Indirect : He exclaimed in joy that I was a very funny boy.

Direct : He said, "What a fool I am"! .

Indirect : He cried out with sorrow that he was a great fool.

[Note: 'great' is used before a noun]

Direct : He said, "What a long journey"!

Indirect : He exclaimed that it was a very long journey.

Exception ---

Direct : He said, "Who knew that it would happen"!

Indirect : He said that nobody knew -that it would happen

Direct : He said, "By God! I have never done it".

Indirect : He swore by God that he had never done it.

Direct : He said, "Had I the wings of a bird!"

Indirect : He wished he had the wings of a bird.