

Reported Speech

Reported speech, also known as indirect speech, reports what someone has said without quoting them directly. It often involves changes in pronouns, tense, time expressions, and modal verbs.

Rules for Changing Direct Speech to Reported Speech

Change of Pronouns: Adjust pronouns to match the speaker's perspective.

Direct: She said, "I am happy."

Reported: She said **she** was happy.

Change of Tense: If the reporting verb is in the past, the verb tense in reported speech usually shifts back one step (backshifting).

- Present Simple → Past Simple
- Present Continuous → Past Continuous
- Present Perfect → Past Perfect
- Future Simple → Conditional ("will" → "would")

Change of Time Expressions: Time references are often adjusted.

- Now → Then
- Today → That day
- Tomorrow → The next day
- Yesterday → The previous day

No Change in Tense: Certain cases do not require backshifting:

- If the reporting verb is in the present tense.
- If the reported speech states a universal truth or fact.

Examples of Tense Changes

Direct Speech

She said, "I am tired."

He said, "I am reading a book."

They said, "We have finished the work."

She said, "I will help you tomorrow."

He said, "The Earth is round."

Reported Speech

She said **she was tired**.

He said **he was reading a book**.

They said **they had finished the work**.

She said **she would help me the next day**.

He said **the Earth is round**. (*Universal truth*)

Activity:

Read the following MCQs carefully and choose the best option to change the Direct Speech into Indirect Speech.

1. She said, "I live in London." → She said _____.

- a) she lived in London
- b) she lives in London
- c) she will live in London
- d) she had lived in London

2. He said, "I am working now." → He said _____.

- a) he works now
- b) he was working then
- c) he had worked then
- d) he is working now

3. They said, "We have seen that movie." → They said _____.

- a) they see that movie
- b) they saw that movie
- c) they had seen that movie
- d) they will see that movie

4. She said, "I will call you tomorrow." → She said _____.

- a) she would call me tomorrow
- b) she will call me tomorrow
- c) she would call me the next day
- d) she called me the next day

5. He said, "I can help you." → He said _____.

- a) he can help me
- b) he could help me
- c) he helps me
- d) he will help me

6. She asked, "Do you like coffee?" → She asked _____.

- a) if I liked coffee
- b) if I like coffee
- c) if I had liked coffee
- d) if I was liking coffee

7. He said, "I was watching TV." → He said _____.

- a) he was watching TV
- b) he had been watching TV
- c) he is watching TV
- d) he watches TV

8. They said, "We will be travelling next week." → They said _____.

- a) they are travelling next week
- b) they were travelling next week
- c) they would be travelling the following week
- d) they travelled the next week

9. She said, "I have been studying hard." → She said _____.

- a) she had been studying hard
- b) she has been studying hard
- c) she is studying hard
- d) she studied hard

10. He said, "I may come late." → He said _____.

- a) he might come late
- b) he will come late
- c) he comes late
- d) he came late

11. She said, "We are going shopping." → She said _____.

- a) they were going shopping
- b) we are going shopping
- c) they are going shopping
- d) we were going shopping

12. He said, "I didn't like the movie." → He said _____.

- a) he doesn't like the movie
- b) he didn't like the movie
- c) he hadn't liked the movie
- d) he wouldn't like the movie

13. She said, "I must finish this task." → She said _____.

- a) she has to finish the task
- b) she must finish the task
- c) she had to finish the task
- d) she finished the task

14. They said, "We can play the guitar." → They said _____.

- a) they could play the guitar
- b) they play the guitar
- c) they can play the guitar
- d) they would play the guitar

15. He asked, "Are you coming with me?" → He asked _____.

- a) if I was coming with him
- b) if I am coming with him
- c) if I had been coming with him
- d) if I would come with him

16. She said, "I will have completed it by tomorrow." → She said _____.

- a) she would have completed it by tomorrow
- b) she would have completed it by the next day
- c) she will complete it by the next day
- d) she had completed it by tomorrow

17. He said, "The Earth revolves around the sun." → He said _____.

- a) the Earth revolved around the sun
- b) the Earth revolves around the sun
- c) the Earth is revolving around the sun
- d) the Earth would revolve around the sun

18. They said, "We were playing football." → They said _____.

- a) they had been playing football
- b) they were playing football
- c) they played football
- d) they play football

19. She said, "You should study more." → She said _____.

- a) you would study more
- b) you should study more
- c) you studied more
- d) you had to study more

20. He said, "I need some help." → He said _____.

- a) he needed some help
- b) he needs some help
- c) he had needed some help
- d) he would need some help

Summary:

Direct Speech (Original Tense)	Reported Speech (Changed Tense)	Example
Simple Present	Simple Past	Direct: "I eat pizza." Reported: He said he ate pizza.
Present Continuous	Past Continuous	Direct: "I am eating pizza." Reported: He said he was eating pizza.
Present Perfect	Past Perfect	Direct: "I have eaten pizza." Reported: He said he had eaten pizza.
Present Perfect Continuous	Past Perfect Continuous	Direct: "I have been eating pizza." Reported: He said he had been eating pizza.
Simple Past	Past Perfect	Direct: "I ate pizza." Reported: He said he had eaten pizza.
Past Continuous	Past Perfect Continuous	Direct: "I was eating pizza." Reported: He said he had been eating pizza.
Past Perfect	No Change	Direct: "I had eaten pizza." Reported: He said he had eaten pizza.
Past Perfect Continuous	No Change	Direct: "I had been eating pizza." Reported: He said he had been eating pizza.
Future (Will)	Future in the Past (Would)	Direct: "I will eat pizza." Reported: He said he would eat pizza.
Future Continuous (Will be)	Future Continuous in the Past (Would be)	Direct: "I will be eating pizza." Reported: He said he would be eating pizza.
Future Perfect (Will have)	Future Perfect in the Past (Would have)	Direct: "I will have eaten pizza." Reported: He said he would have eaten pizza.
Future Perfect Continuous (Will have been)	Future Perfect Continuous in the Past (Would have been)	Direct: "I will have been eating pizza." Reported: He said he would have been eating pizza.

Activity: Write ten sentences in reported (Indirect Speech).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

