**REPORTING**

In direct speech we report what someone says by repeating the exact/original words used by the speaker, (He said, ‘I’m sorry.’). When we don’t want to repeat the exact/actual speech of the speaker, we can use the indirect speech. In this way we give the exact meaning of the speech without necessarily using the speaker’s exact words (He said that he was sorry.) or we can use a summary report (He apologized.)

1. **Direct Speech**

Direct speech is usually put in quotation marks (inverted commas) after reporting verbs such as answer, reply, ask or tell.

* *John said: ‘I appreciate your work.’* ( ‘John said’ is the main or reporting clause, and ‘*I appreciate your work.*’ is the reported clause)

We can put either a colon or a comma between the main and the reported clauses but when the main clause follows the reported clause, only the comma is used.

Quotation marks are doubled in American English (He said, “I need your help.”)

The reporting verb can be put with its subject after the direct speech or in the middle of two parts.

* *‘This is a good work’, she said*
* *‘Hello,’ she began, ‘I would like to know,’ she continued, ‘if you can lend me your house this summer.’*

After direct speech, the reporting verb is sometimes put before its subject in the reporting clause, but not when the subject is a pronoun.

* *‘We won’t give up,’ shouted the riots / the riots shouted.*
* *‘Where is Tom?’ he asks. ( not ~~asks he~~)*

We can use quotation marks when we want to report exactly a specific word, phrase or title.

* *There was a sign with ‘No entry’ printed in big letters.*
* *Have you read ‘Hard Times’?*

1. **Indirect Speech**

In indirect / reported speech, we report the meaning of what was said by the speaker rather than repeat the exact words.

We put the indirect speech in a noun clause beginning with *that* or a *wh-word* or *if/ whether*.

That is omitted in informal uses.

* *‘He is a strange person.’ – He said that he was a strange person.’*
* *‘Where do you go?’ – He asks where she goes.*
* *‘Did you finish your work?’ – The teacher asked us if / whether we finished our work.*

**2.1. Necessary Changes**:

Changes from the direct to the indirect speech depend on the situation, i.e., who speaks and to whom, who reports and to whom. Here are some typical changes.

Person (pronouns /adjectives)

I → he / she

my → his /her

Adverbs of place

here → there, at the theatre, at the corner, etc.

adverbs and adverbial phrases of time

today → that day

yesterday → the day before

the day before yesterday→ two days before

tomorrow → the next / following day

this week / year, etc → that week / year, etc

last week / year → the previous week / year, the week /year before

next week / year, etc → the following week /year, etc

a year / an hour ago → a year / an hour before/ earlier, the previous year /hour

**2.2. Tense Changes in Indirect Speech**

1. **Introductory Verb in Present Tenses**

Indirect speech can be introduced by a verb in a present tense when we are:

* Reporting a conversation which is still going on.
* Reading a letter/ an e-mail and reporting what it says.
* Reading instructions and reporting them.
* Reporting a statement that someone makes very often.

Therefore, when the introductory verb is in the present simple, present perfect or future, we do not change the tense of the verb(s) in the statement (reported clause).

* ‘*I’m going to sleep’ He says that he is going to sleep.*

1. **Introductory Verb in the Past Simple**

The introductory verb is mostly used in the past simple tense. In this case, we change the tense of the in the statement (reported clause) shifting from a present to a past tense and from a past tense to a past perfect. It should be noted that the form of the tense doesn’t change; i.e., simple, continuous and perfect remain the same, except from the past simple to the past perfect. There are examples in the following table:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Direct speech*** | ***Indirect speech*** |
| Present | Past |
| *‘Ali works in a bank.’*  *‘Ali is working.’*  *‘Ali has finished his work.’*  *‘Ali has been working.’* | *She said that Ali worked in a bank.*  *She said that Ali was working.*  *She said that Ali had finished his work.*  *She said that Ali had been working.* |
| past | Past perfect |
| *‘Ali worked in a bank.’*  *‘Ali was working in a bank.’* | *She said that Ali had worked in a bank.*  *She said that Ali had been working in a bank.* |

1. If the statement in the reported clause is still up to date or exists when we report, then we can either change the tense or keep it unchanged.

* ‘The jacket suits you.’ She told me that the jacket suits / suited me.
* ‘I don’t like this type of music.’ He said that he doesn’t / didn’t like that kind of music.
* ‘My parents are going for pilgrimage in August.’ She said that her parents are /were going for pilgrimage in August. (We are still in April).
* ‘Inflation is rising more and more.’ They noted that inflation is / was rising more and more.

2. If the statement in the reported clause is no longer up to date, then we change the tense.

- ‘I don’t like music.’ I remember a month ago he told he didn’t like music. (Now he is listening to music).

- ‘My parents are going for pilgrimage in August.’ She said that her parents were going for pilgrimage. (We are in October, now they have returned).

- ‘We were thinking of buying the house but we decided not to.’ He said that they had been thinking of buying the house but had decided not to.

3. If we doubt whether the statement is true or untrue, then we change the tense.

- ‘We have a yacht’. She once said that they had a yacht. (So why do they want to lend yours.)

-‘The prime minister claimed that the government had made the right decision.

4. When the past continuous refers to an action that was completed before another in the past simple or present perfect, then the past continuous becomes past perfect continuous.

*-‘We were planning to buy a new house but we have decided not to.’*

*He said that they had been planning to buy a new house but had*

*decided not to.*

5. In written English past tenses usually do change to past perfect. But there are the following exceptions:

a. Past / past continuous tenses used in time clauses normally do not change.

*He said, ‘When I was watering/ watered the garden…’*

*He said that when he was watering / watered the garden…*

The main verb in time clauses can either remain unchanged or change to the past perfect.

*He said, ‘When I was watering the garden, I found a coin.’*

*He said that when he was watering the garden, he found / had*

*found a coin*.

b. Unreal past tenses (subjunctives) after wish, would rather/ sooner and it is (high) time don’t change.

*‘We wish we didn’t have to take exams’, said the students.*

*The students said they wished they didn’t have to take exams.*

*She said, ‘It’s (high) time we started changing our bad habits’.*

*She said that it was (high) time they started changing their bad habits.*

c. Conditional sentences type 2, 3 remain unchanged.

*-‘If I knew, I would tell her,’ said Tom. Tom said that if he knew, he would tell her.*

***c. Modals:***

When reporting with a verb in the past simple, some modals change but others remain unchanged as it is shown in the table:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct** | **Indirect** |
| *Will*  *Can*  *May*  *shall* | *Would*  *Could*  *Might*  *Would* (prediction)  *Should* (offers, requests  and suggestions) |
| *Would, could, might, should, ought to,*  *needn’t, used to* | *would, could, might, should, ought to,*  *needn’t, used to* |
| *Must* (obligation)  *Must* (deduction) | *Must/had to*  *must* |

*-‘People will love it.’ He said that people would love it.*

*-‘When shall I leave?’ She asked where she should leave. (request)*

*-‘We shall visit you soon?’ He said that they would visit us soon. (future/prediction)*

*-‘You must stop smoking.’ The doctor told me that I had to/ must stop smoking. (obligation/necessity)*

**2.3. Reporting Verbs:**

**a.** Reporting Verbs with that-clauses.

Some reporting verbs are followed by that- clauses in indirect speech and the introduction of an object (hearer) after the reporting verb depends on which verb is used.

1. Reporting verbs such as tell, assure, convince, inform, notify, persuade, remind and warn, necessitate the inclusion of an object.

* + *‘They will leave early.’ He told me that they would leave early.(He told that they...)*
  + *‘You should not play with wire.’ He wanted her that she shouldn’t play with wire.*
  + *‘I changed my address’ I notified the bank that I had changed my address.*
  + *‘I’ll come back early’ I assured my mother that I would come back early*

*(I assured that I……)*

\* We use tell without an object only with the expressions tell the truth, tell a lie, tell a story, tell the time, tell you so.

2. Reporting verbs such as say, admit, confess, mention, propose, report, announce, complain, explained, indicate, suggest and recommend can be followed by an object but proceeded by to (to + object).

- ‘*I’ve done my job.’ He said (to us) that he had done his job.*

*- ‘I’m guilty.’ He confessed (to me) that he was guilty.*

3. Reporting verbs such as agree, disagree, argue, check and confirm can be followed by an object but proceeded by *with* (with + object).

*- He disagreed (with me) that you were wrong.*

*- She checked (with me) that the machine was not defective.*

4. With some reporting verbs such as expect, believe, feel, intend, plan, think, suppose, want, to report a negative sentence, the reporting verb is made negative.

- ‘*I expect she won’t tell the truth.’/ ‘I don’t expect she will tell the truth.’*

*The judge didn’t expect her to tell the truth.*

*-‘He won’t come on time.’ She didn’t think he will come on time.*

(Rather than *She thought he wouldn’t come on time)*

**b.** Reporting Verbs with Infinitives and Gerunds.

1. Reporting verbs such as ask, invite, encourage, urge, order, expect, remind and warn are used with objects followed by infinitives. (object + to infinitive) .

*- ‘You can go with me?’ He invited me to go with him.*

*- ‘Don’t touch that wire.’ He warned us not to touch that wire.*

2. Reporting verbs such as offer, apply, decide, decline, demand, refuse and volunteer do not require an object before the infinitive.

- *‘I’ll help you.’ He volunteered to help us.*

*- ‘I don’t want to quit.’ He refused to quit.*

*- ‘I won’t go.’ He decided not to go.*

3. Reporting verbs such as promise, agree, claim, hope, propose, threaten, vow, think, acknowledge, expect, assume, declare and report can be followed by an infinitive or a that-clause.

- ‘*We’ll call you.’ They promised to call me.*

*They promised that they would call me.*

*-‘Shall we rewrite it?’ He proposed to rewrite it.*

*He proposed that we should rewrite it.*

4. Reporting verbs such as deny, suggest, admit, mention, report, propose and recommend can be followed by a gerund or a that-clause.

*- ‘You should leave early.’ He recommended leaving early.*

*He recommended that we should leave*

*early.*

*-‘I didn’t take it.’ He denied taking it.*

*He denied that he had taken it.*

*-‘Shall we do the work again.’ She proposed doing the work again.*

*She proposed that we should do the*

*Work again.*

*-‘No, I’ll pay for the meal.’ He insisted on paying for the meal.*

**c.** Reporting Verbs in Summary Reports.

1. In summary reports we summarize what was said using some reporting verbs such as confess, apologize, and threaten. The verbs speak, talk and thank are used only in summary reports (not in direct and indirect speech).

*- ‘Don’t think to escape or I call the police.’ He threatened us.*

*- ‘Excuse me for what I did.’ He apologised.*

*- ‘What I said was true.’ He confessed.*

*- He said, ‘I’ve a problem.’ He talked to me about the problem.*

*- She said, ‘Thank you.’ She thanked me.*

*- She spoke briefly to reporters.*

2. In summary report we use some verbs with *about* such as boast, lie, complain, inquire, joke, protest, speak and write.

*- He complained about his living conditions.*

*- She inquired about the time of leaving.*

*- He joked about my new clothes.*

*- He boasted about his win.*

**2.4. Reporting questions.**

1. We often report questions with verbs such as ask, wonder, and want to know. Wh-questions are reported with the *wh-word* and the statement and yes- no questions are reported with *if* or *whether* and the statement. When reporting questions, the subject and the verb follow their order as in the statement. The question mark is omitted.

*-‘Where are you going?’ She asked me where I was going.*

*-‘Is your father a doctor?’ She wanted to know if / whether my father was a doctor.*

2. We can report some wh-questions with should (about the right thing to do) by using an infinitive.

- ‘*What should I bring with me?’ She asked me what to bring with her.*

3. Only *whether* is used after the verb *question*, after a preposition and before an infinitive.

*- ‘Are you terrified?’ The man questioned whether they were terrified.*

*- ‘Are history books available?’ He inquired about whether history books were available.*

*- ‘Should I wait for you?’ She wondered whether to wait for me.*

*-‘Did you switch off the computer or not?’ He wondered whether or not you switched off the computer or if /whether you switched off the computer or not.*

**2.5. Reporting Orders, Requests, Advice and Opinions.**

**\* Orders:**

1. To report orders we usually use *tell* with an object and an infinitive.

*- ‘Don’t touch this object.’ He told us not to touch that object.*

*( Or: He told us that we must not /didn’t have*

*to touch that object.)*

*- ‘Start with the first list.’ She ordered everyone to start with the first list.*

2. Orders can be reported with *have to, must* or subjunctive in more formal situations with demand and insist.

*- ‘Stop talking.’ The teacher told us that we must / had to stop talking*.

Or *The teacher told us to stop talking.*

*- ‘Do it yourself.’ He insisted that we had to/must do it ourselves*.

Or *He insisted that we do it ourselves*.

**\*Requests:**

We report requests mainly using ask with an object and the infinitive. Other verbs are: beg, plead to and request.

*- ‘Could you stop smoking, please?’ He asked me to stop smoking.*

Or *She asked (me) if I could stop smoking.*

*- ‘Please help me.’ The old man asked me if I could / would help him.*

*- ‘May I lend your book?’ He asked to lend him my book.* (The object is not mentioned because we report request by the speaker about his own action)

**\*Advice:**

1. The verb advise can be used to report advice with an object and an infinitive or with a that-clause or a gerund.

*-‘Take care of your mother.’ He advised her to take care of her mother.*

*He advised (her) that she should take care of*

*her mother.*

*He advised taking care of her mother.*

2. We can use *recommend* or *suggest* to report advice with a that-clause with should or a subjunctive. We can also use a gerund when we don’t want to mention who will perform the action.

-‘*You should go by train.’ He suggested that we should go by train.*

*He suggested that we go by train.*

*He suggested going by train.*

**\*Opinions:**

1. Opinions are reported using verbs such as: think, believe, expect, feel, imagine, reckon, suppose and suspect with a that-clause.

*- It’s a nice room.’ He thought that it was a nice room.*

*- ‘My daughter will succeed the exam.’ She believed that her daughter would succeed the exam.*

2. We can use *tell* and *say* in continuous tenses to report opinions in informal situations.

*- The students are saying that the exam was too difficult.*

\*The use of the different reporting verbs either with a that-clause, an infinitive or a gerund is summarised in the following table.

**Examples of Reporting Verbs**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **+ that-clause** | **+ Verb infinitive** | **+ Gerund** |
| tell, assure, convince, inform, notify, persuade, remind, warm (+ obj) | ask, invite, urge, encourage, order, expect, remind, warm  (+obj+inf) | deny, suggest, admit, mention, report, propose, recommend, apologize (for).  (+ gerund/that-clause) |
| say, admit, confess, propose, report, mention, announce, complain, explain, suggest, recommend  (+ to obj) | offer, apply, decide, refuse, demand, volunteer  (+ obj) |  |
| agree, disagree, argue, check, confirm (+with obj) | promise, agree, hope, claim, propose, threaten, vow.  (inf / that- clause) |  |

N.B.: Complain, inquire, joke and boast (+ about + NP)