

Look at the sentence:

DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH

The customer said, "I'm not satisfied with the way you delivered the goods."

The customer said that he was not satisfied with the way we delivered the goods.

Umesh said to his father, "I need more money."

Umesh told his father that he needed more money.

Punctuation of direct speech

Look at the sentence:

The customer said, "I'm not satisfied with the way you delivered the goods."

Note the punctuation:

- (a) Comma after said
- (b) Quotation marks at the beginning and end of the actual words
- (c) Actual words begin with a capital and are punctuated as required
- (d) The last full stop (or exclamation/question mark) is placed before the closing quotation mark

The changes made from direct into indirect speech:

- (a) A **reporting verb** (said) is introduced (usually in past tense)
- (b) The conjunction **that** is used before the indirect statement
- (c) I is changed into **he**
- (d) The verb is put into the **past tense**
- (e) There are **no quotation** marks

I. Rules for the change of the tenses

(a) If the reporting verb is in present tense or future tense, then tense of the verb in the reported speech remains unchanged.

Ex. 1) Direct : He says, “Children like to play.”

Indirect : He said that Children like to play.

2. Direct : Your father will say, “ Life was very hard during the war.”

Indirect : Your father will say that Life had been very hard during the war.

3. Direct : He has said, “Dogs would be hard to beat in faithfulness.”

Indirect: He has said that Dogs would be hard to beat in faithfulness.

(b) If the reporting verb is in a past tense, the tenses in the reported speech are changed in to the past.

present	past
<i>Do/does</i>	did
Did	Had gone
Had gone	Had gone
<i>Is/am/are doing</i>	Was/were doing
<i>Was were doing</i>	Had been doing
<i>Had been v1 ing</i>	Had been v1 ing
<i>Will/shall do</i>	Would/ should do
Will/shall be v1 ing	Would/should be v1 ing
<i>Will/shall have done</i>	Would/should have done
<i>Will/shall have been doing</i>	Would should have been v1 ing
<i>May</i>	might
<i>Can</i>	could
<i>Has have to</i>	Had to
<i>Must</i>	Had to
<i>Am, is, are</i>	was, were
Has / have	had
Go/goes	went

Has/have gone	had gone
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Direct :

Reporting Statements

For reporting statements, we generally use the verbs said.

He said that he needed the goods urgently.

Reporting verbs say and tell

The verb tell needs an indirect object: We say told me /us/you/her/him/them + that

(*not* told that ...) ,

If you are saying to whom the actual words were spoken, use tell

The customer told me that he was not satisfied with ...

The verb say does not take an indirect object. If you do not say to whom the actual words were spoken, use say

The customer said that he was not satisfied with the way we delivered the goods.

When the reporting verb is in the past tense, the present tense verbs of the direct speech change into the corresponding past tense. The table below shows the changes. .

There is no change in the tenses of the actual words if the direct statement is a permanent truth.

Diana said, 'Computers make office work easy.'

Diana said that computers make office work easy.

Changes in Expressions of Time and Place

There are changes in expressions of time and place.

The clerk said, 'I dispatched the goods yesterday.'

The clerk said that he had dispatched the goods the day before.

This (evening)

today/this day

tonight

now

(a week) ago

last weekend

next (week)

tomorrow

ago

yesterday

here

this

these

Change of person

to that (evening)

that day

that night

then! at that time

(a week) before

the weekend before / the previous weekend

the following (week)

the next/following day

before

the day before

there

that

those

First and second person pronouns and possessive adjectives are usually changed to third person. But the change to be made depends on who is reporting, to whom.

'I am not feeling well.'

may become any of the following depending on who is reporting to whom.

He said that he was not feeling well.

I said that I was not feeling well.

You said that you were not feeling well.

Note the change of person in these sentences, according to the person reporting.

Jatin said to me, 'you are getting better.'

If I am reporting to a third person:

Jatin said to me that I was getting better.

If Jatin is reporting to a third person:

I told him that he was getting better.

If I am reminding Jatin:

You told me that I was getting better.

If Jatin is reminding me:

I told you that you were getting better.

Other reporting verbs

Using some other reporting verbs adds variety.

Statements can be varied by using:

declared, stated, promised, explained (same structure as said), *reminded* (same structure as told) and so on.

'We'll definitely deliver the goods by the 14th.'

He promised that he would deliver the goods by the 14th.

'You will have to complete the report by tomorrow, no matter what happens.'

He insisted that I complete the report by the next day, no matter what happened.

'You have to get the copies of the document! Attest and then attach them to the form.'

He explained that I had to get the papers ...

'You have an appointment this evening with the MD of XYZ Company.'

She reminded me that I had ...

Reporting Commands

A Command is a short sentence and has only one verb in the imperative; it does not have tense. Hence, there is no change of tense. The person who is addressed must be mentioned in reporting the command.

Affirmative command

The Marketing Manager said. 'Listen to the customer carefully.'

The Marketing Manager told his sales staff to listen to the customer carefully.

Negative command

The Marketing Manager said, 'Don't ever contradict a customer.'

The Marketing Manager advised his sales staff never to contradict a customer.

Commands can also be introduced with:

urged, begged, advised, ordered, requested (same structure as told)

'Please do come to the inauguration of my new office.'

The Manager urged his friends to go to the inauguration of his new office.

Don't buy this car.

He advised me not to buy that car.

Reporting Questions

As in statements, changes have to be made in the tense, the person and expression of time when reporting questions. In Indirect speech a question becomes a statement. In a direct question, the order of the words is: verb-subject. When the question is reported, the word order is: subject - verb

Wh- questions

Questions beginning with the words *what, where, who, when, why and how* are called wh- questions.

The customer asked, 'When can you deliver the goods?'

The customer asked when we could deliver the goods.

Note the changes:

- The wh- word comes directly after asked

- The tense changes into the past as in statements
- The person changes according to who reports to whom

Questions of confirmation

Questions that begin with a verb and require yes/no answers are called confirmation questions. For reporting these questions, the word whether or if is added.

The customer asked, 'Can you deliver the goods within eight days?'

The customer asked whether we could deliver the goods within eight days.

Shall I. .. ? questions

Questions beginning with "Shall I ... ?" have two meanings. The meaning can be seen from the context.

The following sentences are an offer to do something:

Shall I open the window?

Shall I send our representative to meet you?

Shall I make a printout of the document?

In these sentences, shall changes to should:

He asked if he should open the window.

The Marketing Manager asked the customer if he should send the representative to meet him.

The secretary asked if she should make a printout of the document.

The following sentences indicate uncertainty and doubt if something will get done.

Shall I ever get this report done on time?

Shall we be able to win this contract?

In these sentences, **shall** becomes **wondered if** and **would**

He wondered if he would get the report done on time.

He wondered if they would be able to win the contract.

Shall we .. ? questions

Shall we .. ? is usually a suggestion of action to one's group.

Shall we meet tomorrow before lunch?

Shall we complete this work before we leave?

Begin with: he/she/i/you suggested that ...

I suggested that we meet the next day before lunch.

He suggested that we should complete that work before leaving.

Questions can also be introduced with:

enquired, wanted to know, (same structure as asked)

'Where should the goods be delivered?'

He enquired where the goods should be delivered.

'Has the closing date been announced?'

She wanted to know whether the closing date had been announced.

Reporting Exclamations

Exclamations are an expression of a sudden feeling. They are expressed in interjections which are sounds rather than words. Exclamations are not used in official writing. Some examples are:

Ouch! Oh! Look out! Oh dear! Goodness me! Goodness gracious! Phew! Wow!

These can be reported only if you understand the meaning behind them. In indirect speech, exclamations become statements. The exclamation mark is dropped.

He said, "How awful!"

He exclaimed that it was awful.

"Phew!" he- exclaimed.

He gave an exclamation of relief

1. Put into indirect speech:

Bina: "When did you come?"

Malathy: "Has John arrived?"

Rohan: "Where does Maria park her car?"

Elisabeth: "Did you watch the latest film?"

Mustafa: "Can I help you?"

Abraham: "Will Mohan have lunch with Samir?"

Sangeetha: "What are you doing?"

Atish: "Shall we have some coffee?"

Jyotsna asked "Did Karim come yesterday?"

Kamal said, "The goods were required last weekend."

Rewas said, "We are closed tomorrow."

Tanmay said, " Some of the spare parts are nor produced here."

The manager said, "Don't forget to put these papers into the file before leaving."

2. Put into indirect speech:

My friend Veena narrated her bad experience to me:

"My father is a gentle, quiet person. I was worried when he did not return at his usual time. I always look out for my father through this window. Do you want to know what happened that evening? I was horrified when I saw him stagger across the road, unable to walk steadily. What can be done to prevent such horrible attacks?"

3. Put into indirect speech, beginning your answer with the phrase given in **bracket.** for .. **eb.**

(i) Who built that enormous bridge? (I wonder ...)

(ii) What's Siberia like? (I want to find out ...)

(iii) Did Benjamin Franklin write 'Poor Richard~s Almanac'? (I can't remember)

(iv) How do you do it? (Can you tell me ...)

(v) Who did you meet at the party? (I'd like to know ...)

(vi) How long has he,been waiting for me? (I wonder ...)

(vii) How important is that meeting to the company? (Can you tell me ...)

(viii) When was the film produced? (Nobody remembers ...)

(ix) Have they brought in the Reserve Police Force too? (I don't know ...)

(x) What is it called in English? (I can't remember)

These are verbs of reporting.

accept confess guarantee pray snap

add confirm hear predict state

admit consider imagine promise suggest

advise continue inform propose suppose

agree cry inquire read swear

answer decide insist reassure tell

apologize declare instruct recommend thank

argue demand invite record think

ask deny know refuse threaten

assure doubt learn remark understand

beg enquire mention remind urge

believe expect murmur repeat want to know

blame explain mutter reply warn

call feel notify report whisper

claim forbid object request wonder

command forecast observe say write

comment groan offer scream

complain growl order shout

conclude grumble point out smile