

Indirect Speech

Saying exactly what someone has said is called direct speech (sometimes called quoted speech). Here what a person says appears within quotation marks ("...") and should be word for word.

Indirect Speech / Reported Speech

Indirect speech (sometimes called reported speech), doesn't use quotation marks to enclose what the person said and it doesn't have to be word for word. When transforming sentences from direct into indirect speech, you have to change:

- pronouns;
- place and time expressions;
- tenses (backshift).

Indirect Speech

Indirect speech is introduced by verbs of communication:

to agree, to announce, to answer, to approve, to argue, to ask, to breathe out, to call, to claim, to confess, to confute, to contradict, to counter, to cry out, to declare, to demand, to disagree, to disapprove, to exclaim, to explain, to groan, to grumble, to hint, to implore, to inquire, to interrogate, to mention, to murmur, to mutter, to notice, to order, to plead, to proclaim, to propose, to refuse, to rejoin, to remark, to repeat, to reply, to report, to respond, to retort, to say, to scream, to shout, to state, to suggest, to try to find out, to want to know, to utter, to whisper, to wonder, to yell.

Indirect Speech.

Affirmative sentences

- You are pretty.
- You are so intelligent.
- You dance so well.
- You've got [have got] lovely hair.
- I'll never forget this day.

- *He said I was pretty.*
- *He said I was so intelligent.*
- *He said I danced so well.*
- *He said I had got lovely hair.*
- *He said he would never forget that day.*

Indirect Speech. General Questions

- Do you like ballet?
- Have you ever been to Boston?

- *He asked me if/whether I liked ballet.*
- *He asked me if/whether I had ever been to Boston.*

Indirect Speech. Special Questions

- Where do you study?
- What are you reading?
- When will we meet again?
- Why don't you stay longer?

- He asked me where I studied.
- He asked me what I was reading.
- He asked me when I should meet him again.
- He asked me why I didn't stay longer.

Indirect Speech.

Imperative Sentences

- Give me your telephone number, please.
- Ring me up tomorrow.
- Help me to translate an article from English!

- He asked me to give him my telephone number.
- He asked me to ring him up the next morning.
- He asked me to help him to translate an article from English.

Sequence of Tenses

simple present <i>He said, "I go to school every day."</i>	⇒	simple past <i>He said (that) he went to school every day.</i>
simple past <i>He said, "I went to school every day."</i>	⇒	past perfect <i>He said (that) he had gone to school every day.</i>
present perfect <i>He said, "I have gone to school every day."</i>	⇒	past perfect <i>He said (that) he had gone to school every day.</i>
present progressive <i>He said, "I am going to school every day."</i>	⇒	past progressive <i>He said (that) he was going to school every day.</i>
past progressive <i>He said, "I was going to school every day."</i>	⇒	perfect progressive <i>He said (that) he had been going to school every day,</i>
future (will) <i>He said, "I will go to school every day."</i>	⇒	would + verb name <i>He said (that) he would go to school every day.</i>
future (going to) <i>He said, "I am going to school every day."</i>	⇒	present progressive <i>He said (that) he is going to school every day.</i>
		past progressive <i>He said (that) he was going to school every day</i>
Direct Speech	⇒	Indirect Speech
auxiliary + verb name <i>He said, "Do you go to school every day?"</i> <i>He said, "Where do you go to school?"</i>	⇒	simple past <i>He asked me if I went to school every day.*</i> <i>He asked me where I went to school.</i>
imperative <i>He said, "Go to school every day."</i>	⇒	infinitive <i>He said to go to school every day.</i>

*When a Yes/No question is asked in direct speech, then use a construction with if or whether. If a WH question is asked, then use the WH to introduce the clause.

The situation changes if instead of the common **said** another part of the very **to say** is used. In that case the verb tenses usually remain the same.

simple present + simple present
He says, "I go to school every day."

⇒

simple present + simple present
He says (that) he goes to school every day.

present perfect + simple present
He has said, "I go to school every day."

⇒

present perfect + simple present
He has said (that) he goes to school every day.

past progressive + simple past
He was saying, "I went to school every day."

⇒

past progressive + simple past
He was saying (that) he went to school every day.

past progressive + past perfect
He was saying (that) he had gone to school every day.

future + simple present
He will say, "I go to school every day."

⇒

future + simple present
He will say (that) he goes to school every day.

Another situation is the one in which modal constructions are used. If the verb said is used, then the form of the modal, or another modal that has a past meaning is used.

can <i>He said, "I can go to school every day."</i>	⇒	could <i>He said (that) he could go to school every day.</i>
may <i>He said, "I may go to school every day."</i>	⇒	might <i>He said (that) he might go to school every day.</i>
might <i>He said, "I might go to school every day."</i>		
must <i>He said, "I must go to school every day."</i>	⇒	had to <i>He said (that) he had to go to school every day.</i>
have to <i>He said, "I have to go to school every day."</i>		
should <i>He said, "I should go to school every day."</i>	⇒	should <i>He said (that) he should go to school every day.</i>
ought to <i>He said, "I ought to go to school every day."</i>	⇒	ought to <i>He said (that) he ought to go to school every day.</i>

Also transformations of adverbs of place, time and demonstrative pronouns take place.

- now
- here
- this, these
- today
- tomorrow
- yesterday
- next week
- next year
- last week
- last year

- then
- there
- that, those
- that day
- the following day
- the previous day
- the following week
- the following year
- the previous week
- the year before