

Direct and Indirect Speech

Direct speech is a report of the exact words used by a speaker or writer. The words spoken appear within inverted commas “.....” and should be exactly word to word as spoken or written.

Example:- The teacher said to the students, “You can go.”

INDIRECT SPEECH DEFINITION

When we report what someone said in our own words, it is called Indirect speech. We do not use inverted commas, do not write the exact words as spoken or written by someone.

Generally, the tense changes when we convert direct speech into indirect speech.

The teacher said to the students that they could go.

PARTS OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH

Both direct and indirect speech has two parts which are complete sentences in themselves. They are –

1. Reporting verb – Who said to whom.
”

The teacher said to the students, “You can go.”

2. Reported speech –The exact words spoken, put within inverted commas “_____”.

Example:- The teacher said to the students, “You can go.”

Direct Speech into Indirect Speech

In Indirect speech, Conjunction ‘that’, ‘if’, ‘whether’, ‘to’ is used to join the two sentences.

Also, the tense of speech changes to past tense. The rules for change of tense have been discussed in detail under the heading of ‘Rules for changing tense’.

The teacher said, "You can go."

The teacher said that we could go.

Rules To Convert Direct Speech Into Indirect Speech With Examples

1. Rules for changing the pronoun

Rule 1: When the pronoun in Reporting speech is in first person, it changes according to the subject of the Reporting verb.

Let us see an example-

Ram said to me, "I am going."
Ram said to me that he was going.

'I' (first person singular) in direct speech becomes 'he' (third-person singular) in indirect speech as the subject of the reported verb 'Ram' is also a third person singular noun.

Let us see another example-

You said to Radha, "I am studying."
You said to Radha that you were studying.

'I' (first person singular) in direct speech becomes 'you' (second person) in indirect speech as the subject of reported verb 'you' is also a second person pronoun.

Let us see another example-

They said to me, "We are playing."
They said to me that they were playing.

'we' (first person plural) in direct speech becomes 'they' (third person plural) in indirect speech as the subject of reported verb 'they' is also a third person plural pronoun.

Rule 2: When the pronoun in Reporting speech is in second person, it changes according to the object of the Reporting verb.

Let us see an example-

I said to Ram, "You are unworthy."

I said to Ram that he was unworthy.

'you' (second person) in direct speech becomes 'he' (third person singular) in indirect speech as the object of reported verb 'Ram' is also a third person singular noun.

Let us see another example-

Teacher said to me, "You are a good student.

Teacher said to me that I was a good student.

Teacher told me that I was a good student.

'you' (second person) in direct speech becomes 'I' (first person singular) in indirect speech as the object of the reported verb 'me' is also a first person singular pronoun.

Let us see another example-

I said to you, "You keep quiet."

I said to you that you keep quiet.

'you' (second person) in direct speech remains 'you' (second person) in indirect speech as the object of the reported verb 'you' is also a second person pronoun.

Rule 3: When the pronoun in Reporting speech is in third person, it will remain unchanged in the Reporting verb.

Let us see an example-

I said to him, "Ram is a fool."

I said to him that Ram was a fool.

'Ram' (third person) in direct speech remains 'Ram' (third person) in indirect speech.

Let us see another example-

Mom said to dad, "They will come in the evening."

Mom said to dad that they would be coming in the evening.

'they' (third person) in direct speech remains 'they' (third person) in indirect speech.

2. Rules for changing the tense

Rule 1: If there is Present or Future tense in the direct speech, then the tense of indirect speech will not change.

Example of present tense

He says to me, "You are wise."
He says to me that I am wise.

Example of future tense

Ram will say to me, "I am true."
Ram will say to me that he is true.

Rule 2: If there is Past tense in the direct speech, then tense of indirect speech change as mentioned below.
speech

Past indefinite will change into **Past perfect**

Past continuous will change into **Past perfect continuous**

Past perfect remains **Past perfect**

Past perfect continuous remains **Past perfect continuous**

3. Rules for changing the Auxiliary verbs

Will -----> Would

Shall -----> Should / would

May -----> Might

Can -----> Could

Do / does -----> Did

Is/am/are -----> Was / were

Has / have -----> had

He had said to me, "We will be playing."

He had said to me that they would be playing.

He had said to me, "You shall be playing."

He had said to me that I should be playing.

He had said to me, "You may play."

He had said to me that I might play.

4. Rules for changing some more words

Here will become **There**

This will become **That**

These will become **Those**

Now will become **Then**

Hence will become **Thence**

Ago will become **Before**

Today will become **That day**

Tomorrow will become **The next day**

Yesterday will become **The previous day**

Last night will become **The previous night**

Last week will become **The previous week**

Tonight will become **That night**

The next day will become **The following day**

5. Rule for changing historical truths, universal truths, habitual facts

Irrespective of the tense of the direct speech, the tense of indirect speech will not change.

Let us see the following examples-

Teacher said to me, "We won the freedom struggle in 1947."

Teacher said to me that we won the freedom struggle in 1947.

He said to me, "Mercury is the nearest planet to the Sun."

He said to me that Mercury is the nearest planet to the Sun.

Radha told us, "I study everyday."
Radha told us that she studies everyday.

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