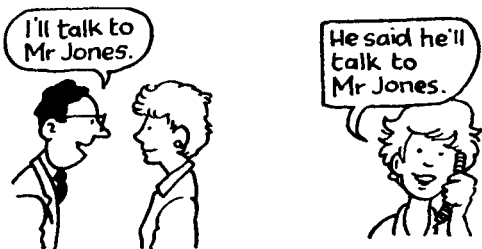


Reported speech

62 Reported statements: tense changes

- When the main verb of the sentence is in the past tense, the tense in the reported statement is changed.



'I'll talk to Mr Jones.' → He said he'd talk to Mr Jones.
'I haven't seen anybody.' → She said she hadn't seen anybody.
'I must go.' → He said he had to go.

- Tense changes when the main verb is past tense:

Speaker's words	Reported statement
will	→ would
shall	→ should
is going to	→ was going to
present simple	→ past simple
present continuous	→ past continuous
past continuous	→ past perfect continuous
present perfect past simple	} → past perfect
must	
can	→ could

- that** is optional after the main verb:
He said **that** he wasn't going.
He said he wasn't going.

Practice

Write these sentences in indirect speech.

- 'I'm very tired,' she said.
She said she was very tired.
- 'I'll see them soon,' he said.
He said he would see them soon.
- 'I'm going to the cinema,' she said.
.....

4 'I see the children quite often,' he said.

.....

5 'I'm having a bath,' she said.

.....

6 'I've already met their parents,' he said.

.....

7 'I stayed in a hotel for a few weeks,' she said.

.....

8 'I must go home to make the dinner,' he said.

.....

9 'I haven't been waiting long,' she said.

.....

10 'I'm listening to the radio,' he said.

.....

11 'I'll tell them the news on Saturday,' she said.

.....

12 'I like swimming, dancing and playing tennis,' he said.

.....

13 'I can drive,' she said.

.....

14 'I walked home after the party,' he said.

.....

15 'I'm going to be sick,' she said.

.....

16 'I must go out to post a letter,' he said.

.....

17 'I spoke to Jane last week,' she said.

.....

18 'I'm trying to listen to the music,' he said.

.....

19 'I'll phone the office from the airport,' she said.

.....

20 'I can't speak any foreign languages,' he said.

.....

63 Reported statements: other changes

- As well as tense changes (► Exercise 62), other words in direct speech need to be changed when they are reported. Here are some examples:

Speaker's words	Reported statement
tomorrow	→ the next day/the following day
yesterday	→ the day before
here	→ there
this/that	→ the
this morning	→ that morning
today	→ that day
tonight	→ that night
next/on Tuesday	→ the following Tuesday
last Tuesday	→ the previous Tuesday
the day after tomorrow	→ in two days' time
ago	→ before/previously

- Note that these changes generally occur, but they are not automatic. They depend on when and where the statement is reported.
- Some verbs do not change:
would → *would*, *could* → *could*, *might* → *might*
should → *should*, *ought to* → *ought to*

Practice

Write these sentences in indirect speech, changing words where necessary.

- 1 'I'll see you tomorrow,' she said.

She said she'd see me the next day.

- 2 'I saw her today,' he said.

He said he'd seen her that day.

- 3 'I don't like this film,' she said.

.....

- 4 She said, 'We went swimming today.'

.....

- 5 'I'll see Mary on Sunday,' she said.

.....

- 6 'I met her about three months ago,' he said.

.....

- 7 'Pete and Sue are getting married tomorrow,' she said.

.....

.....

8 'Stephen's bringing some records to the party tonight,' he said.

.....

9 'I really like this furniture,' she said.

.....

10 'My parents are arriving tomorrow,' she said.

.....

11 'We visited her this morning,' they said.

.....

12 'We'll see her next week,' they said.

.....

13 'They were here three months ago,' he said.

.....

14 'I'm meeting them at four o'clock today,' he said.

.....

.....

15 'I can see you tomorrow,' she said.

.....

64 Reported questions: *wh* questions

- Most reported questions have a main verb in the past tense. They use the same tense changes and word changes as in reported statements (► Exercises 62 and 63).
- Reported questions change the word order of the original question:
'What's the time?'
She asked what time it was.
 (NOT ~~She asked what was the time.~~)
'How's your mother?'
He asked me how my mother was.
 (NOT ~~He asked me how was my mother.~~)

Note: *ask* can be used in reported speech with or without a personal direct object:
She asked me how I was.
She asked how I was.

Practice

Write these sentences as reported questions, using the words given. Change **you** to **I**, etc. where necessary.

- 1 'What's your name?' he asked. (wanted to know)

He wanted to know what my name was.

- 2 'How old are you?' she said. (asked)

She asked how old I was.

- 3 'When does the train leave?' I asked. (asked)

.....

- 4 'How are you?' he said. (asked)

.....

- 5 'Who did you see at the meeting?' my mother said. (wanted to know)

.....

.....

- 6 'Why did you take my wallet?' he asked. (wanted to know)

.....

.....

- 7 'How did you get to school?' she said. (asked)

.....

- 8 'Where do you live?' the boy asked. (wanted to know)

.....

.....

- 9 'Why wasn't Judy at the party?' she asked. (asked)

.....

.....

- 10 'Why didn't you telephone?' my father asked. (wanted to know)

.....

.....

- 11 'Why are you so late?' the teacher asked. (demanded to know)

.....

.....

- 12 'Why didn't the police report the crime?' the judge asked. (inquired)

.....

.....

13 'Why won't you let me in?' he shouted. (demanded to know)

.....

14 'What time does the plane arrive?' we asked. (inquired)

.....

15 'Who do you want to talk to?' she said. (asked)

.....

65 Reported questions: *if* / *whether*

- *if* or *whether* (the choice is optional) is used for reported questions that do not start with *wh* words (► Exercise 64).

He asked if I was hungry.

Note the word order change:

'Are you angry?' → *He asked if I was angry.*

'Did you see the film?' → *She asked whether I had seen the film.*

- Tense changes and other word changes are as shown in Exercises 62 and 63.

Practice

Write these sentences as reported questions. Change *you* to *I*, etc. where necessary.

1 'Do you like Marlon Brando?' she asked.

She asked if I liked Marlon Brando.

2 'Are you enjoying yourself?' he asked.

He asked whether I was enjoying myself.

3 'Does your father work here?' she asked.

.....

4 'Do you live near your family?' he asked.

.....

5 'Are you a foreigner?' she asked.

.....

6 'Have you met Danny before?' he asked.

.....

7 'Are you hungry?' she asked.

.....

8 'Did you borrow my dictionary?' he asked.

.....

9 'Have you finished your exams?' she asked.

.....

10 'Did you invite Judy and Pat?' he asked.

.....

11 'Does your brother live in London?' she asked.

.....

12 'Do you know who broke the window?' he asked.

.....

.....

13 'Did they tell you when they were leaving?' she asked.

.....

14 'Did you lend them your camera?' he asked.

.....

15 'Have you hurt yourself?' she asked.

.....

66 Reported questions

Check

Write these sentences in indirect speech, using **wanted to know** and the words given. Change **you** to **I**, etc. where necessary, as in the examples.

1 'Which book did you take?' (he)

He wanted to know which book I had taken.

2 'Are you wearing your overcoat?' (she)

She wanted to know if/whether I was wearing my overcoat.

3 'Did you telephone your mother?' (he)

.....

.....

4 'Is the box made of cardboard?' (she)

.....

.....

5 'How much did it cost?' (he)

.....

6 'Are you seeing the director tomorrow?' (she)

.....
.....

7 'What are you doing?' (he)

.....

8 'How far do I have to walk?' (she)

.....

9 'Have you had anything to eat?' (he)

.....
.....

10 'Are you in a hurry?' (she)

.....

11 'When does the performance start?' (he)

.....
.....

12 'How long does the journey take?' (she)

.....
.....

13 'Where did you stay in Paris?' (he)

.....
.....

14 'Have you had any letters?' (she)

.....

15 'Do you like having holidays abroad?' (he)

.....
.....

16 'Did you see the accident?' (she)

.....

17 'Which school did you go to?' (he)

.....

18 'When did you start learning Spanish?' (she)

.....
.....

19 'Are you French?' (he)

.....

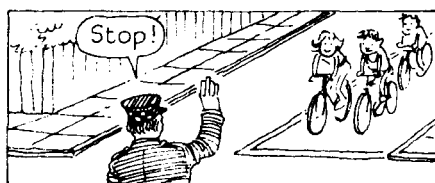
20 'Have you ever been to Japan?' (she)

.....

.....

67 Reported commands

- Reported commands use a personal direct object and the infinitive:



He told the children to stop.

He told them to stop.

- The negative uses **not** before **to** + infinitive:
'Don't stop!' → *He told them not to stop.*
'Don't go!' → *He told me not to go.*
 - A number of verbs can be used for reported commands; e.g. **tell**, **order**, **command**, **warn**, **instruct**, etc.
- Exercise 68 for reported requests.

Practice

Write these sentences in indirect speech, using the words given. Note that some words may have to be changed.

1 'Sit down Mary.' (he told)

He told Mary to sit down.

2 'Don't go near the sea, children.' (the children's mother warned)

The children's mother warned them not to go near the sea.

3 'Don't be late, Tim.' (Tim's father told)

.....

4 'Be quiet, children.' (the librarian told)

.....

5 'Don't shoot, men!' (the officer ordered)

.....

6 'Have your tickets ready, please.' (the inspector told us)

.....

.....

- 7 'Don't use the telephone after eleven o'clock.' (the landlady told us)
.....
.....
- 8 'Leave your keys on the desk, please.' (the receptionist told us)
.....
.....
- 9 'Have your passports ready, please.' (the customs officer told us)
.....
.....
- 10 'Finish the job tonight, please.' (my boss told me)
.....
.....
- 11 'Run!' (the general ordered the soldiers)
.....
- 12 'Open the door, please.' (my mother told me)
.....
- 13 'Don't spend too much money on your holiday.' (my father told me)
.....
.....
- 14 'Hurry up.' (he told me)
.....
- 15 'Don't be frightened.' (she told me)
.....

68 Reported requests

- Reported requests (when you are asking someone to do something for you) have the same grammatical form as reported commands (► Exercise 67):
'Would you open the door, please?'
 → *She asked me to open the door.*
'Could you lend me some money, please?'
 → *He asked me to lend him some money.*
- Reported requests usually use **ask** as the main verb. There is an important difference in meaning between:
*He **told** me to give him some money.* and
*He **asked** me to give him some money.*

Note the difference between a reported offer and a reported request.

- offer:
'Would you like a cigarette?'
 → *He asked if I would like a cigarette.*
- request:
'Would you pass me a cigarette?'
 → *He asked me to pass him a cigarette.*

Practice

Write these sentences in indirect speech.

- 'Would you pass my suitcase, please?' he asked.
He asked me to pass his suitcase.
- 'Would you like some coffee?' she asked.
She asked if I would like some coffee.
- 'Would you take the children to school for me?' he asked.

- 'Would you sit down, please?' she asked.

- 'Would you talk more quietly, please?' he asked.

- 'Would you like a lift into town?' she asked.

7 'Would you like to go out at the weekend?' he asked.

.....

.....

8 'Would you turn on the radio, please?' she asked.

.....

.....

9 'Would you move your car, please?' he asked.

.....

.....

10 'Would you like to eat in the hotel or in a restaurant?' she asked.

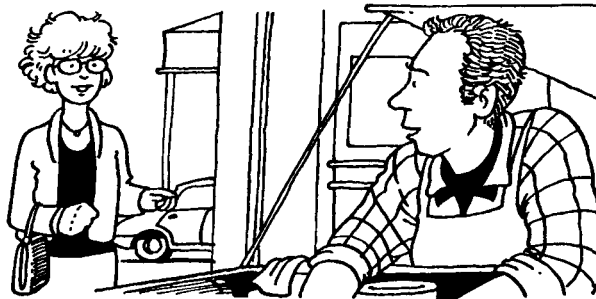
.....

.....

11 'Would you pass my cup, please?' he asked.

.....

.....



12 'Would you check the oil for me, please?' she asked.

.....

.....

13 'Would you turn the car engine off, please?' he asked.

.....

.....

14 'Would you like to stay with us?' she asked.

.....

.....

15 'Would you check the bill for me, please?' he asked.

.....

.....