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## Indirect Speech



## TEST YOURSELF

Read the pairs of sentences below and circle the sentence which is correct.

EXAMPLE: A She said me, "I'll feel ill today."  
 B She said to me, "I feel ill today."

1 A He asked to me, "Can I borrow your CD?"  
 B He asked me, "Can I borrow your CD?"

2 A I will tell them that you will give them your answer as soon as possible.  
 B I will tell to them that you will give them your answer as soon as possible.

3 A The boys told they had broken the window.  
 B The boys told us they had broken the window.

4 A They promised that they will phone me the following day.  
 B They promised that they would phone me the following day.

5 A I informed them that I would visit them the following week.  
 B I informed them that I would visit them the week before.

6 A Alison says that she doesn't enjoy reading horror stories anymore.  
 B Alison says that she didn't enjoy reading horror stories anymore.

7 A Could you tell me what time the next train leaves?  
 B Could you tell me what time does the next train leave?

8 A She asked were we staying at home.  
 B She asked if we were staying at home.

9 A They said me to look after my brother.  
 B They told me to look after my brother.

10 A They ordered him not to tell anyone.  
 B They ordered him to not tell anyone.

11 A Jan said she has found the dog yesterday.  
 B Jan said she had found the dog the previous day.

12 A He asked what books she liked reading.  
 B He asked what books does she like reading.

13 A He asked where did she buy those shoes.  
 B He asked where she had bought those shoes.

14 A The teacher wanted to know which exercises the pupils had done.  
 B The teacher wanted to know which exercises had done the pupils.

15 A She suggested me to find a good job in advertising.  
 B She suggested I find a good job in advertising.

16 A Dave told me don't phone him after six o'clock.  
 B Dave told me not to phone him after six o'clock.

17 A I replied that I was waiting for a phone call.  
 B I replied that I am waiting for a phone call.

18 A We said that we would leave later this day.  
 B We said that we would leave later that day.

19 A The doctor advised the patient to taking a holiday.  
 B The doctor advised the patient to take a holiday.

20 A They said they had arrived the month before.  
 B They said they had arrived the month ago.

Check your answers with your teacher. How many of them are correct?

0-6: Start studying! 7-9: Try harder! 10-12: Quite good! 13-15: Good! 16-20: Excellent!



## Indirect Speech

## DIRECT SPEECH

## PRESENT SIMPLE

*They said, "We **like** this neighbourhood."*

## PRESENT CONTINUOUS

*I said, "I **am writing** a composition."*

## PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE

*She said, "I **have finished** my homework."*

## PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

*He said, "I **have been tidying** my room."*

## PAST SIMPLE

*We said, "We **saw** a good film last night."*

## PAST CONTINUOUS

*Judy said, "I **was preparing** dinner for you."*

## FUTURE

*The boys said, "We **will leave** at 8.00 a.m."*

*He said, "I **will be watching** the game on TV."*

*Tony said, "I **am going to sell** my bike."*

## IMPERATIVE

*I said, "Tell me the truth, Alice!"*

*She said, "Don't phone me too early!"*

## MODAL / SEMI-MODAL

*He said, "I **can't go out** tonight."*

*She asked, "Shall I **close** the door?"*

*They said, "We **may go** to Spain this summer."*

*We said, "We **have to buy / must buy** some milk."*

## FIRST CONDITIONAL

*"If we **see** him, we **will tell** him," they said.*

## TIME EXPRESSIONS

now

today

yesterday

tomorrow

next week / month

last week / month

a week ago

here

this

these

## NO CHANGE

## Past Perfect Simple / Continuous

*They said, "We **had been planning** the move for months."*

## could / should / would / might / ought to

*Dad said, "You **should** study harder."*

## Second and Third Conditional

*Mary said, "If I **had** time, I'd **meet** you for lunch."*

## INDIRECT SPEECH

## PAST SIMPLE

*They said (that) they **liked** that neighbourhood.*

## PAST CONTINUOUS

*I said (that) I **was writing** a composition.*

## PAST PERFECT SIMPLE

*She said (that) she **had finished** her homework.*

## PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS

*He said (that) he **had been tidying** his room.*

## PAST PERFECT SIMPLE

*We said (that) we **had seen** a good film the night before.*

## PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS

*Judy said (that) she **had been preparing** dinner for me.*

## FUTURE IN THE PAST

*The boys said (that) they **would leave** at 8.00 a.m.*

*He said (that) he **would be watching** the game on TV.*

*Tony said (that) he **was going to sell** his bike.*

## TELL + OBJECT + INFINITIVE

*I told Alice to **tell** me the truth.*

*She told us **not to phone** her too early.*

## PAST FORM OF MODAL

*He said (that) he **couldn't go out** that night.*

*She asked **If** she **should close** the door.*

*They said (that) they **might go** to Spain that summer.*

*We said (that) we **had to buy** some milk.*

## SECOND CONDITIONAL

*They said (that) if they **saw** him they **would tell** him.*

then

that day

the day before, the previous day

the next / following day, the day after

the next / following week / month

the previous week / month, the week / month before

the week before

there

that

those

*They said (that) they **had been planning** the move for months.*

*Dad said (that) I **should** study harder.*

*Mary said (that) if she **had** time, she'd **meet** me for lunch.*

WIFES

1 The most common verbs used to report what others say are *say*, *tell* and *ask*. Be careful not to confuse them.  
*She said (that) she was hungry.*      *She told me she was hungry.*      *She asked me if / whether I was hungry.*

2 When we report questions, we change the word order to that of a regular sentence.  
**Wh- Questions:** "Where do you live?" → *She asked me where I lived.*  
**Yes / No Questions:** "Will you please phone me?" "Yes, I will."  
→ *He asked whether / if I would phone him and I replied that I would.*

3 Indirect questions are not only used to report what others say. We use phrases like *Could you tell me ...* and *I would like to know ...* to introduce questions in a more polite way. Regular sentence word order is used after these phrases.  
*I would like to know if there are any tickets available for the show. (not: I would like to know are there ... X)*  
*Could you tell me how much a double room costs? (not: Could you tell me how much does a double room cost? X)*

4 If the reporting verb is in Present Simple or Present Perfect, the tense of the verb in the main clause does not change.  
*Dad says, "I smoke too much."* → *Dad says (that) he smokes too much.*

5 When we want to report the general meaning of a sentence and not the exact words someone said, we use certain verbs that have a similar meaning to the action or function in the sentence. (see list below)  
"Why don't we go out for lunch?" she asked. → *She suggested going out for lunch.* (verb + gerund)  
"We will definitely come and help," she said. → *She promised to come and help.* (verb + infinitive)  
"First you have to enter a password," he said. → *He explained that I had to enter a password.* (verb + that + clause)  
"It's dangerous to swim after eating!" my mum said. → *My mum warned me not to swim after eating.* (verb + object + infinitive)

**verb + gerund:** accuse someone of, admit, advise someone against, blame someone for, deny, insist on, suggest  
**verb + infinitive:** agree, decide, demand, offer, prefer, prepare, promise, refuse  
**verb + that + clause:** agree, complain, explain, suggest  
**object + infinitive:** beg, instruct, invite, persuade, warn

6 When there is a change of subject following the verbs *suggest*, *recommend*, *insist*, *demand* and *request*, word order is as follows: verb + (that) + subject + bare infinitive.  
"Give me the keys!" he demanded. → *He demanded (that) she give him the keys.*



## COMMON MISTAKES

*The following sentences contain mistakes commonly made by students. Rewrite them correctly.*

1. I told that I would meet them outside.  
.....
2. Danny said that he will meet me later that evening, but he never came.  
.....
3. I suggest you to go to the new museum.  
.....
4. She asked me where did I put her coat and bag.  
.....
5. He asked whether to take an umbrella.



## Grammar Practice

### A. INDIRECT STATEMENTS

Change the following sentences from direct to indirect speech.

1. Helen said, "I intend to have my hair cut tomorrow."  
Helen said .....
2. "Your new bike will be delivered on your birthday," his parents promised.  
His parents promised .....
3. "I am going to the bank because I must cash a cheque," she explained.  
She explained .....
4. Our teacher often says, "You must all read a lot if you want to improve your vocabulary."  
Our teacher often says .....
5. My parents said to me, "You can go out with your friends if you don't come home too late."  
My parents said .....
6. "I was watching TV between 9.00 and 10.00 last night," the boy told his friend.  
The boy told his friend .....

### B. DIRECT STATEMENTS

Change the following sentences from indirect to direct speech.

1. She reminded him that he had promised to help her move house the following week.  
".....," she reminded him.
2. He informed us that he had been working there for 10 years.  
".....," he informed us.
3. I said that I might phone those people who wanted to buy my house.  
".....," I said.
4. We announced that in two days' time we would be flying to London.  
".....," we announced.
5. They told me that they had gone to visit their grandparents the week before.  
They said to me, "......"
6. The lady claimed that her car had been stolen two days before.  
".....," the lady claimed.

### C. INDIRECT QUESTIONS

Form indirect questions from the following direct questions.

1. *Where do you live?* Would you mind telling me .....
2. *How do I apply for a loan?* I'd like to know .....
3. *Does this bus stop outside the library?* Could you tell me .....
4. *Have you ever done this kind of work before?* Can you tell me .....
5. *How much does a return ticket cost?* Please let me know .....

### D. INDIRECT QUESTIONS

Change the following questions into indirect speech.

1. "Are you meeting your friends?" she asked us.  
She asked .....
2. "Where did you put the book I was reading?" my son wanted to know.  
My son wanted to know .....
3. "Can we send them an e-mail tonight?" he inquired.  
He inquired .....

4. "Were these houses built last year?" I wanted to know.  
I wanted to know .....

5. "Does your sister want to borrow this book?" I asked him.  
I asked him .....

6. "Have you ever thought of studying medicine?" we asked her.  
We asked her .....

7. "Where will the concert be held?" I wondered.  
I wondered .....

8. "Were you working while I was out?" she asked.  
She asked .....

**E. INDIRECT COMMANDS** Change the following commands into indirect speech using the word given.

1. "Take the dog out for a walk," her father said strictly. **ordered**  
Her father .....

2. "Don't make so much noise!" their parents said. **told**  
Their parents .....

3. "Please concentrate on your work," our teacher kept saying. **insisted**  
Our teacher .....

4. "Don't forget to turn off the TV before you go to bed," his mother said. **told**  
His mother .....

5. "Be careful crossing the road, children," the woman said. **warned**  
The woman .....

6. "Don't leave the dishes on the table, Paul," she said. **asked**  
She .....



## Exam Practice

**A.** Use the words in Table A to complete the sentences in Table B so that they have the meaning indicated in Table C.  
(Use each item in Table A only once. There are two words that you won't need.)

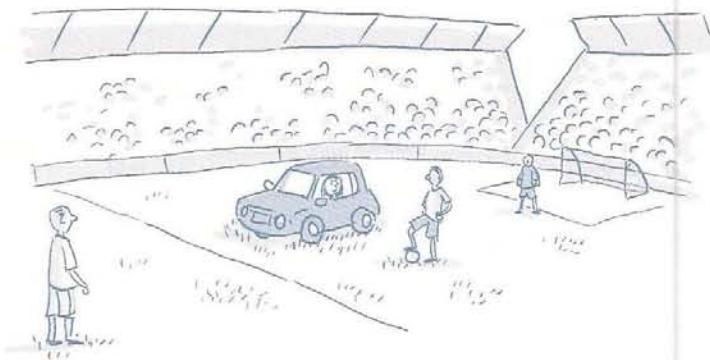
TABLE A			
A suggested	B wanted	C ordered	D tell
E inquired	F said	G advised	H let

TABLE B		TABLE C
1. He ..... to know where I lived.		reporting a question
2. Could you ..... me know what I should do?		asking a question politely
3. She ..... me to contact a lawyer.		reporting a recommendation
4. She ..... me to tidy the room.		reporting a command
5. He ..... whether we had received the package.		reporting a question
6. Could you ..... me if I have passed the test?		asking a question politely

B. **OPEN CLOZE** Read the text below and think of the word which best fits each space. Use only one word in each space.

## AN AMUSING INCIDENT

I read a very amusing article in the newspaper a few days (1) ..... about an incident at a football match in England. The article said that a woman (2) ..... became very angry when she arrived home and (3) ..... that a football supporter had blocked the driveway to her house by parking his car right in (4) ..... of it. The woman was (5) ..... angry that she decided to drive her car onto the football pitch in the middle of the game and park it there! She actually thought that the problem could (6) ..... solved in this way. She (7) ..... the crowd that if people parked on her ground, then she would park on (8) ..... . She also refused to move her car (9) ..... the guilty fan had been found and moved his car. The astonished crowd looked around and wondered (10) ..... the guilty supporter might be. The referee begged the woman (11) ..... to hold the game up any more but she would not listen. The referee then (12) ..... the crowd who the car belonged to, and someone finally admitted that it was his. He left the stadium, moved his car and the game continued.

C. **KEY WORD TRANSFORMATIONS** Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given.

1. "They were very impolite and unhelpful," said Sam. **complained**  
Sam ..... very impolite and unhelpful.
2. "Do I have to pay to join the club?" **if**  
"I would like to ..... pay to join the club."
3. "Don't play the piano when I'm trying to sleep," his mother said. **not**  
His mother ..... the piano when she was trying to sleep.
4. His dentist thinks that it's a good idea to have his teeth checked twice a year. **recommends**  
His dentist ..... his teeth checked twice a year.
5. "I will need your credit card number," the hotel receptionist said to me. **that**  
The hotel receptionist said ..... credit card number.
6. "Why don't we invite Sue for dinner?" Paula asked. **suggested**  
Paula ..... Sue for dinner.
7. "What time does the bus leave tomorrow?" I asked. **when**  
Could you tell me ..... tomorrow?
8. "Yes, I can run faster than anyone else in the class," Mary said. **agreed**  
Mary ..... faster than anyone else in the class.