**Direct/Indirect (Reported Speech)**

Look at these examples to see how we can tell someone what another person said.

**direct speech**: 'I love the Toy Story films,' she said.  
**indirect speech**: She said she loved the Toy Story films.  
  
**direct speech**: 'I worked as a waiter before becoming a chef,' he said.  
**indirect speech**: He said he'd worked as a waiter before becoming a chef.  
  
**direct speech**: 'I'll phone you tomorrow,' he said.  
**indirect speech**: He said he'd phone me the next day.

**Grammar explanation**

Reported speech is when we tell someone what another person said. To do this, we can use direct speech or indirect speech.

direct speech: **'I wor**k in a bank,' said Daniel.  
indirect speech: Daniel said that **he worked** in a bank.

In indirect speech, we often use a tense which is 'further back' in the past (e.g. worked) than the tense originally used (e.g. work). This is called 'backshift'. We also may need to change other words that were used, for example pronouns.

### Present simple, present continuous and present perfect

When we backshift, **present simple** changes to **past simple, present** **continuous** changes to **past continuous** and **present perfect** changes to **past perfect**.

*'I travel a lot in my job.'*

* *Jamila said that she travelled a lot in her job.*

*'The baby's sleeping!'*

* *He told me the baby was sleeping.*

*'I've hurt my leg.'*

* *She said she'd hurt her leg.*

### Past simple and past continuous

When we backshift**, past simple** usually changes to **past perfect simple,** and **past continuous** usually changes to **past perfect continuous**.

'We lived in China for five years.'

* She told me they'd lived in China for five years.

'It was raining all day.'

* He told me it had been raining all day.

### Past perfect

The past perfect doesn't change.

'I'd tried everything without success, but this new medicine is great.'

* *He said he'd tried everything without success, but the new medicine was great.*

**Pronouns, demonstratives and adverbs of time and place**

Pronouns also usually change in indirect speech.

'I enjoy working in my garden,' said Bob.

* Bob said that he enjoyed working in his garden.

'We played tennis for our school,' said Alina.

* Alina told me they'd played tennis for their school.

However, if you are the person or one of the people who spoke, then the pronouns don't change.

'I'm working on my thesis,' I said.

* I told her that I was working on my thesis.

'We want our jobs back!' we said.

* We said that we wanted our jobs back.

We also change demonstratives and adverbs of time and place if they are no longer accurate.

*'****This*** *is my house.'*

* *He said this was his house.* [You are currently in front of the house.]
* *He said* ***that*** *was his house.* [**You are not currently in front of the house.]**

*'We like it* ***here.****'*

* *She told me they like it here.* [You are currently in the place they like.]
* *She told me they like it* ***there.*** [**You are not in the place they like.]**

*'I'm planning to do it* ***today.'***

* *She told me she's planning to do it today.* [It is currently still the same day.]
* *She told me she was planning to do it* ***that day.*** [**It is not the same day** **any more.]**

In the same way, ***these*** changes to ***those*,** ***now***changes to ***then*,** ***yesterday***changes to ***the day before***, ***tomorrow***changes to ***the next/following day*** and ***ago***changes to ***before*.**

(https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar/intermediate-to-upper-intermediate/reported-speech-1-statements)

### Questions

A **direct question** is:

Where are you from?

A **reported question** is:

He asked where I was from.

To form a reported question, you need to follow these steps:

1) Use a reporting verb:

He **asked** where I was from.

2) Repeat the question word:

He asked **where** I was from.

3) Change the pronouns:

He asked where **I** was from.

4) Move the tense back:

He asked where I **was** from.

5) Use statement word order:

He asked where **I was from**.

**Modal verbs**: some change in reported speech:

“I ***can/can't*** speak Turkish” -> She said she ***could/couldn't*** speak Turkish.

“I ***must/mustn't*** wash my hair” -> She said she ***had to/didn't have to*** wash her hair.

4) Some modal verbs don't change:

“I ***could*** take the bus” -> He said he ***could*** take the bus.

“I ***should*** go to bed” -> She said she ***should*** go to bed.

“I ***might*** watch TV”   -> He said he ***might*** watch TV.

(https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/course/upper-intermediate/unit-2/tab/grammar)