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For pronouns, tenses and place / time expressions see statements in reported speech. Besides, note that instead of ‚that‘ you use the interrogative. If there is no interrogative, use ‚whether‘ / ‚if‘. It is also important that you use an indirect question in reported speech, i.e. after the interrogative or ‚whether‘ / ‚if‘ you continue the sentence as if it were a statement (subject-verb etc.). The auxiliary verb ‚do‘ is not used in indirect questions. Example: He asked: “Where does she live?” – He asked where she lived. Exercises on reported speech Click here for a list of reported speech exercises. Click here to download this explanation in PDF. Click here for our complete programme to perfect your English grammar.

Reported Statements When do we use reported speech? Sometimes someone says a sentence, for example "I'm going to the cinema tonight". Later, maybe we want to tell someone else what the first person said. Here's how it works: We use a 'reporting verb' like 'say' or 'tell'. (Click here for more about using 'say' and 'tell'.) If this verb is in the present tense, it's easy. We just put 'she says' and then the sentence: Direct speech: I like ice cream. Reported speech: She says (that) she likes ice cream. We don't need to change the tense, though probably we do need to change the 'person' from 'I' to 'she', for example. We also may need to change words like 'my' and 'your'. (As I'm sure you know, often, we can choose if we want to use 'that' or not in English. I've put it in brackets () to show that it's optional. It's exactly the same if you use 'that' or 'if' if you don't use 'that'.) But, if the reporting verb is in the past tense, then usually we change the tenses in the reported speech: Direct speech: I like ice cream. Reported speech: She said (that) she liked ice cream. Tense Direct Speech Reported Speech present simple I like ice cream She said (that) she liked ice cream. present continuous I am living in London She said (that) she was living in London. past simple I bought a car She said (that) she had bought a car. OR She said (that) she bought a car. past continuous I was walking along the street She said (that) she had been walking along the street. present perfect I haven't seen Julie She said (that) she hadn't seen Julie. past perfect* I had taken English lessons before She said (that) she had taken English lessons before. will I'll see you later She said (that) she would see me later. would* I would help, but... She said (that) she would help but... can I can I speak perfect English She said (that) she could speak perfect English. could* I could swim when I was four She said (that) she could swim when she was four. shall I shall come later She said (that) she would come later. should* I should call my mother She said (that) she should call her mother might* I might be late She said (that) she might be late must I must study at the weekend She said (that) she must study at the weekend OR She said she had to study at the weekend * doesn't change. Occasionally, we don't need to change the present tense into the past if the information in direct speech is still true (but this is only for things which are general facts, and even then usually we like to change the tense): Direct speech: The sky is blue. Reported speech: She said (that) the sky is/was blue. Click here for a mixed tense exercise about practise reported statements. Click here for a list of all the reported speech exercises. Reported Questions So now you have no problem with making reported speech from positive and negative sentences. But how about questions? Direct speech: Where do you live? How can we make the reported speech here? In fact, it's not so different from reported statements. The tense changes are the same, and we keep the question word. The very important thing though is that, once we tell the question to someone else, it isn't a question any more. So we need to change the grammar to a normal positive sentence. A bit confusing? Maybe this example will help: Direct speech: Where do you live? Reported speech: She asked me where I lived. Do you see how I made it? The direct question is in the present simple tense. We make a present simple question with 'do' or 'does' so I need to take that away. Then I need to change the verb to the past simple. Another example: Direct speech: Where is Julie? Reported speech: She asked me where Julie was. The direct question is the present simple of 'be'. We make the question form of the present simple of 'be' by inverting (changing the position of) the subject and verb. So, we need to change them back before putting the verb into the past simple. Here are some more examples: Direct Question Reported Question Where is the Post Office. please? She asked me where the Post Office was. What are you doing? She asked me what I was doing. Who was that fantastic man? She asked me who that fantastic man had been. So much for 'wh' questions. But, what if you need to report a 'yes / no' question? We don't have any question words to help us. Instead, we use 'if'. Direct speech: Do you like chocolate? Reported speech: She asked me if I liked chocolate. No problem? Here are a few more examples: Direct Question Reported Question Do you love me? He asked me if I loved him. Have you ever been to Mexico? She asked me if I had ever been to Mexico. Are you living here? She asked me if I was living here. Click here to practise reported 'wh' questions. Click here to practise reported 'yes / no' questions. Reported Requests There's more! What if someone asks you to do something (in a polite way)? For example: Direct speech: Close the window, please. Or: Could you close the window please? Or: Would you mind closing the window please? All of these requests mean the same thing, so we don't need to report every word when we tell another person about it. We simply use 'ask me + to + infinitive': Reported speech: She asked me to close the window. Here are a few more examples: Direct Request Reported Request Please help me. She asked me to help her. Please don't smoke. She asked me not to smoke. Could you bring my book tonight? She asked me to bring her book that night. Could you pass the milk, please? She asked me to pass the milk. Would you mind coming early tomorrow? She asked me to come early the next day. To report a negative request, use 'not': Direct speech: Please don't be late. Reported speech: She asked us not to be late. Reported Orders And finally, how about if someone doesn't ask so politely? We can call this an 'order' in English, when someone tells you very directly to do something. For example: In fact, we make this into reported speech in the same way as a request. We just use 'tell' instead of 'ask'. Reported speech: She told me to sit down. Direct Order Reported Order Go to bed! He told the child to go to bed. Don't worry! He told me to be on time. Don't smoke! He told us not to smoke. Click here for an exercise to practise reported requests and orders. Time Expressions with Reported Speech Sometimes when we change direct speech into reported speech we have to change time expressions too. We don't always have to do this, however. It depends on when we heard the direct speech and when we say the reported speech. For example: It's Monday. Julie says "I'm leaving today". If I tell someone on Monday, I say "Julie said she was leaving today". If I tell someone on Tuesday, I say "Julie said she was leaving yesterday". If I tell someone on Wednesday, I say "Julie said she was leaving on Monday". If I tell someone a month later, I say "Julie said she was leaving that day". So, there's no easy conversion. You really have to think about when the direct speech was said. Here's a table of some possible conversions: nowthen / at that time todayyesterday / that day / Tuesday / the 27th of June yesterdaythe day before yesterday / the day before / Wednesday / the 5th of December last nightthe night before, Thursday night last weekthe week before / the previous week tomorrowtoday / the next day / the following day / Friday Click here for an exercise about using 'say' and 'tell'. Click here for a list of all the reported speech exercises. Click here for our complete programme to perfect your English grammar. Finish the sentences using Reported speech. Always change the tense, although it is sometimes not necessary. Show example

Peter, "Did John clean the black shoes?" Peter asked me. Answer: Peter asked me if John had cleaned the black shoes. Reported questions in English Reported speech is when we tell someone what another person said. To do this, we can use direct speech or indirect speech. A reported question is when we tell someone what another person asked. For example, direct speech: "Do you like working in sales?" he asked. And indirect speech: he asked if I liked working in sales. Normal word order is used in reported questions in which subject comes before the verb, and it is not mandatory to use 'do' or 'did'. Whenever we report Wh-questions, we usually use a reporting verb like asked or enquired. In Yes/No type of question is reported by using 'ask' + 'if/ whether' + clause. If we use Question word then question is reported by using 'verb like 'said' + question word + clause. The clause should contain the question, in proper word order and with the necessary tense changes that are required. If you want to know, understand and learn more about reported speech questions, then you must see the following examples list. As a result, you get a much better idea about reported speech questions. So, let's see. Direct Speech Indirect Speech Sheila's mother asked her, "Who did you meet last night?" Sheila's mother asked her who she met the previous night. Jack's teacher asked him, "What have you done with your homework?" Jack's teacher asked him what he had done with his homework. A tourist asked me, "Where is the Sagrada Familia?" A tourist asked me where the Sagrada Familia was. John's boss asked him, "When do you want to take your holiday?" John's boss asked him when he wanted to take his holiday. The flight attendant asked us, "Do you want to buy any duty-free goods?" The flight attendant asked us if we wanted to buy any duty-free goods. The waiter asked them, "Do you want to try the chef's special?" The waiter asked them if we wanted to try the chef's special. The psychologist asked her, "Why do you hate your parents?" The psychologist asked her why she hated her parents. The customs officer asked us, "How much money do you have?" The customs officer asked us how much money we had. The immigration officer asked him, "How long are you staying in India?" The immigration officer asked him how long he was staying in India. His mother asked him, "Will you be home later?" His mother asked him if he would be home later. He asked me, "Do you live with your family?" He asked me if I lived with my family. I asked my friend, "Can I borrow your lawn mower?" I asked my friend if I could borrow his lawn mower. My boss asked me, "Do you speak English?" My boss asked me if I spoken English. Veer asked his friend, "Will you come to my house warming party tomorrow?" Veer asked his friend if he came to his house warming party the next day. A man asked me, "Have you seen my car?" A man asked me if I had seen his car. My new neighbour asked me, "How are you?" My new neighbour asked me how I was. I asked my friend, "Where do you park your car?" I asked my friend where he parked his car. I asked a foreigner, "Where are you from?" I asked a foreigner where he was from. My father's friend asked me, "How old are you?" My father's friend asked me how old I was. Rahul asked his friend, "How often do you take out the trash?" Rahul asked his friend how often he took out the trash. A stranger asked him, "Where is the nearest bank?" A stranger asked him where the nearest bank was. Rohan's new neighbour asked him, "How long have you been living there?" Rohan's new neighbour asked him how long he had been living there. I asked my friend, "Where do you work?" I asked my friend where he worked. I asked my friend, "Is this your cat?" I asked my friend if that was his cat. A man asked me, "Are you a foreigner?" A man asked me if I was a foreigner. Keep exploring EnglishBix to learn about direct and indirect questions, and how they are used for asking questions in English. In this reference, you'll learn how to form reported questions in English, covering essential grammar rules and offering useful example sentences. The main sections include how to report Wh and yes/no questions, notes for reported questions, and useful rules and examples. You'll explore the details of both yes/no questions and question words (Wh- questions) in reported speech. This reference will provide you with notes and examples to better grasp the rules of reported speech questions. Reported Questions PinReported Questions: Direct and Indirect Questions – Created by TESL When changing a question from direct speech to indirect speech, use verbs like inquire, wonder, want to know, and ask. Only ask can take an indirect object. Examples: Direct speech: "Have you got a computer?" Reported speech: He wanted to know whether I had a computer. You introduce the reported question with a different word and change the word order to that of a statement. End the sentence with a full stop. How to Report Wh and Yes/No Questions Reported Speech Questions: Yes/No Questions To report yes/no questions, use if or whether. Direct Speech Reported Speech "Did you receive my e-mail?" The teacher asked me if I had received his e-mail. The teacher asked me whether I had received his e-mail. Use whether for choices. Direct Speech Reported Speech "Is it John's phone or Richard's?" I asked whether it was John's phone or Richard's. Reported Speech Questions: Questions Words (Wh- Questions) Report Wh- questions by using the question word. Direct Speech Reported Speech "Where did he stay?" She asked me where he had stayed. "When will you go back to London?" She asked when he would go back to London. Mention the person being asked. I asked him if he ate meat. She asked Michael when he would go back to Japan. Notes for Reported Questions When reporting questions, the tense of the verb changes. The word order follows an affirmative sentence, and there is no auxiliary verb. Do not use question marks except in cases like: Could you tell me...? Do you know...? May I ask...? If you use a question in Reported Speech, follow the steps described on our page Reported Speech - Summary (changing of the person, backshift of tenses, shifting of expressions of time/place). In Reported speech the question becomes a statement. Mind the word order: subject – verb 1. The introductory sentence in Reported Questions 1.1. The introductory sentence is in the Simple Present If the introductory sentence is in the Simple Present, there is no backshift of tenses. Direct Speech – Susan, "es Mary work in an office?" Reported Speech – Susan asks if/whether Mary works in an office. The introductory sentence: Susan asks ... – is in the Simple Present. There is no backshift of tenses. The auxiliary is dropped in the Reported speech. 1.2. The introductory sentence in the Simple Past If the introductory sentence is in the Simple Past, there is usually backshift of tenses. Direct Speech – Susan, "es Mary work in an office?" Reported Speech – Susan asked if/whether Mary worked in an office. The introductory sentence: Susan asked... – is in the Simple Past. There is backshift of tenses. 1.3. Types of introductory sentences The word ask in introductory sentences in Reported Questions can be substituted with other words, e.g. 2. Questions with and without question words Questions can be formed with or without question words. If there is a question without a question word in Direct Speech, use whether or if in Reported Speech. Peter, "Do you play football?" → Peter asked me whether (if) I played football. If there is a question with a question word in Direct Speech, use this question word in Reported Speech. Peter, "When do you play football?" → Peter asked me when I played football. Learning how to use reported speech (also called indirect speech) is essential for effective communication in English. It allows us to convey what someone else has said without quoting their exact words. This article will explain the rules, provide examples, and include exercises to help you master reported speech. To master reported speech with a lot of examples, visit 100+ Reported Speech Examples. What Is Reported Speech? Reported speech is when you report or relay what someone else said, but you do not use their exact words. For example: Direct speech: She said, "I am tired." Reported speech: She said that she was tired. Rules for Reported Speech When changing from direct to reported speech, there are some important rules to follow: 1. Change in Pronouns Adjust the pronouns based on the speaker and listener. Direct: He said, "I love my car." Reported: He said that he loved his car. 2. Change in Tense The verb tense usually shifts back one step into the past, called backshifting. Direct Speech Reported Speech Present Simple: "I go to school." Past Simple: He said that he went to school. Present Continuous: "She is working." Past Continuous: He said she was working. Present Perfect: "I have seen it." Past Perfect: He said he had seen it. Past Simple: "They played football." Past Perfect: He said they had played football. Future Simple: "I will help you." Conditional: He said he would help me. Note: If the reporting verb is in the present tense (e.g., He says), backshifting is not necessary. 3. Changes in Time and Place References Words related to time and place need to be adjusted to fit the context. Direct Speech Reported Speech today that day tomorrow the next day yesterday the previous day now then here there 4. Reporting Verbs Common reporting verbs include said, told, asked, explained, mentioned, etc. Said is followed by that (optional): He said (that) he was coming. Told requires an object: He told me that he was coming. 5. Reporting Questions For yes/no questions, use if or whether. For wh- questions, maintain the question word but remove the question structure. Yes/No Question: Direct: She asked, "Are you coming?" Reported: She asked if I was coming. Wh- Question: Direct: He asked, "Where do you live?" Reported: He asked where I lived. 6. Reporting Commands and Requests For commands and requests, use tell or ask with an infinitive (to + verb). Command: Direct: She said, "Close the door." Reported: She told me to close the door. Request: Direct: He said, "Please help me." Reported: He asked me to help him. Examples of Reported Speech Here are examples to illustrate various contexts: Statements Direct: "I am learning English," she said. Reported: She said that she was learning English. Questions Direct: "What are you doing?" he asked. Reported: He asked what I was doing. Commands Direct: "Don't touch that!" he said. Reported: He told me not to touch that. Mixed Tenses Direct: "I finished my homework yesterday," she said. Reported: She said that she had finished her homework the previous day. Exercises on Reported Speech Test your understanding with the following exercises. A. Change the sentences from direct to reported speech. She said, "I enjoy reading." He asked, "Where do you live?" They said, "We will help you tomorrow." She told me, "Close the window." He asked, "Can you speak French?" B. Identify the errors in these sentences. She said that she will come tomorrow. He asked if I am okay. They told me that they had finish their work. He asked where was I going. She said that she loves ice cream.