

Reported Speech

Reported speech (or to be exact *indirect reported speech*) is used to convey what someone else has said without quoting their exact words. It often involves changes in tense, pronouns, and other words to fit the context of the reporting sentence. Indirect reported speech is a useful tool for summarizing conversations and conveying information.

In units 4,5, and 6, you will study and review reported speech, in particular indirect reported speech. The grammar of unit 4 is on reporting statements. The grammar of unit 5 deals with reporting imperatives, and the grammar of unit 6 concerns reporting questions.

Reporting Statements

A statement in grammar is a type of sentence that declares or asserts something. It provides information, expresses an idea, or gives a fact and usually ends with a period.

To report a statement indirectly, we use the reporting verbs “say” or “tell” followed by a that-clause which is the converted version of the statement. When we convert the statement into a that-clause, we have to change the tense of the verb, if necessary, adjust the pronouns, and the possessive adjectives.

Tense Changes

If our reporting verb e.g. “say/tell” is in the past, we are expected to change the tense in indirect speech. The following table shows the pattern for the changes which are applied to verb tenses in reported speech:

Tense in Direct Speech	Tense in Indirect Speech
Simple Present	Simple Past
Present Progressive	Past Progressive
Simple Past	Past Perfect
Past Progressive	Past Perfect Progressive
Present Perfect	Past Perfect
Present Perfect Progressive	Past Perfect Progressive
Past Perfect	Past Perfect

Examples:

The Present Progressive ⇒ The Past Progressive

Direct Speech: Robert said, “I **am assembling** a robot now.”

Indirect Speech: Robert said (that) he **was assembling** a robot then.

The Simple Present ⇒ The Simple Past

Direct Speech: Robert said, “I **assemble** robots carefully.”

Indirect Speech: Robert said (that) he **assembled** robots carefully.

The Simple Past ⇒ The Past Perfect

Direct Speech: Robert said, “I **assembled** a robot yesterday.”

Indirect Speech: Robert said (that) he **had assembled** a robot the day before.

The Past Progressive ⇒ The Past Perfect Progressive

Direct Speech: Robert said, “I **was assembling** a robot.”

Indirect Speech: Robert said (that) he **had been assembling** a robot.

The Present Perfect ⇒ The Past Perfect

Direct Speech: Robert said, “I **have assembled** a new robot.”

Indirect Speech: Robert said (that) he **had assembled** a new robot.

The Present Perfect Progressive ⇒ The Past Perfect Progressive

Direct Speech: Robert said, “I **have been assembling** a new robot.”

Indirect Speech: Robert said (that) he **had been assembling** a new robot.

The Past Perfect ⇒ No Change

Direct Speech: Robert said, “I **had assembled** a robot.”

Indirect Speech: Robert said (that) he **had assembled** a robot.

Changes in Modals

The modal verbs “will,” “can,” “may,” and “must” change into “would,” “could,” “might,” and “had to” respectively, but the modal verbs “mustn’t,” “should,” “might,” and “could” do not change.

Direct Speech			Indirect Speech		
Robert said, “I	will	assemble a robot.”	Robert said (that) he	would	assemble a robot.
	can			could	
	may			might	
	must			had to	
	mustn't			mustn't	
	should			should	
	might			might	
	could			could	

Changes in Demonstrative Adjectives

A demonstrative adjective is a word that points to a specific noun and indicates its position relative to the speaker. The common demonstrative adjectives in English are "this," "that," "these," and "those." **This** and **these** refer to something close to the speaker. **That** and **those** refer to something farther away from the speaker. The following table shows the changes that usually demonstrative adjectives undergo in indirect reported speech.

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
this	that
that	the
these	those
those	the

Examples:

Tom said, "This desk is made of wood."

Tom said (that) that desk was made of wood.

- (that) = \leftarrow \Rightarrow **Conjunction**
- that = أن \Rightarrow **Demonstrative Adjective**

Tom said, "That desk is made of iron."

Tom said (that) the desk was made of iron.

Tom said, "These desks are made in Italy."

Tom said (that) those desks were made in Italy.

Tom said, "Those desks are made in China."

Tom said (that) the desks were made in China.

Changes in Adverbs of Time

The following table shows the changes of adverbs time in reported speech:

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
now	then, at that moment
today	that day
yesterday	the day before, the previous day
tomorrow	the next day, the following day
last	the before, the previous

Examples:

Sally said, "My father is working now."

Sally said (that) her father was working then.

Sally said (that) her father was working at that moment.

George said, "I am free today."

George said (that) he was free that day.

Mary said, "I was busy **yesterday**."
Mary said (that) she had been busy **the previous day**.
Mary said (that) she had been busy **the day before**.

Robert said, "I will go **tomorrow**."
Robert said (that) he would go **the following day**.
Robert said (that) he would go **the next day**.

Sue said, "I went to London **last** month"
Sue said (that) she had gone to London the **previous** month.
Sue said (that) she had gone to London the month **before**.

Changes in Adverbs of Place

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
here	there

Thomas said, "I am **here**."
Thomas said (that) he was **there**.

Changes in Verbs

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
bring	take
come	go

Rebecca said, "I will **bring** my dog with me to the party."
Rebecca said (that) she would **take** her dog with her to the party.

John said, "I will **come** back home in half an hour."
John said (that) he would **go** back home in half an hour.

Reporting Facts

We don't need to change the tense when we are reporting a fact.

Example:

The geography teacher said, "The Caspian Sea **is** the biggest lake in the world."
The geography teacher said (that) the Caspian Sea **is** the biggest lake in the world.

Source:

<https://www.anglophone.ir/high2/>