Overview:	
• Reported Speech is an Upper-intermediate Grammar topic. • At the end of this lesson, you will be able to report what someone else has written or said.	Date: 04/05/2023

What is Reported Speech?

Reported Speech is a Grammar topic which reports what someone else has said or written. It has two main types:

- Direct Speech
- Indirect Speech

When do we use Reported Speech?

We use Reported Speech: Direct Speech in writings such as novels, articles, essays and books in general. But on the other hand, we use Reported Speech: Indirect Speech in spoken English and our daily conversations.

Reported Speech: Direct Speech

When we directly quote what someone else has said or written. We use proper punctuation in Direct Speech.

Examples:

- Alice said, "I can help you".
- Jack told me, "We are going to Italy now".

Reported Speech: Indirect Speech

In Indirect Speech, we reinterpret the quotation and state it in our words.

Examples:

- Alice said: "I can help you". => Alice said that he could help me.
- Jack told me: "We are going to Italy now". => Jack told me that they were going to Italy then.

The three-step structure

Structures	Examples
Change the pronouns to reflect the new speaker.	Sarah said, "I'm going to the store". => Sarah said that she was going to the store.
Change the verb tense to reflect the new speaker's point of view. (AKA **Backshifting**)	She said "I will go to the party" => She said that she would go to the party.
Change any time or place references to reflect the new context.	He said "I am here at the moment" => He said that he was there at the moment.

Basic Examples

- She said that she loved pizza.
- He told me that he couldn't come to the party that night.
- He mentioned that he didn't like horror movies.
- David said that he was studying English.

Structure

Let's compare the differences in structure between direct speech and indirect speech by looking into the table below.

Alice said, "I can help you now".							
Alice	said	that	he	could	help	me	Then

We omit the comma and the apostrophes

As you can see, we do not use commas and quotation marks when turning direct speech into indirect speech.

Pronouns

We change the pronouns to reflect the speaker: If the speaker is a man, we use "he" or his name. If the speaker is a woman, we use "she" or her name. If there is a group of speakers, we use "they" or their names etc.

Example:

- "We are leaving". => They said that they were leaving.
- Sarah said, "I don't like soccer". => Sarah said that she didn't like soccer.
- Jack said, "Grace is always late". => Jack said that she/Grace was always late.

Note: Sometimes, a person has said something about another person, and we as the third person, want to report it to another person. Therefore, the speaker in the reported clauses and that in reporting clauses are not always the same.

Backshift

Generally, we go one tense back when we want to report in indirect speech.

- Can => Could => Could
- Shall => Should => Should
- May => Might => Might
- Will => Would => Would
- Have to/Has to => Had to => Had to
- Must => Must
- Ought to => Ought to

- Present Simple (Continuous) => Past Simple (Continuous) => Past Perfect (Continuous)
- Present Perfect (Continuous) => Past Perfect (Continuous)
- Future tenses => Replace "Will" with "Would"
- Am, Is => Was => Had been => Had been
- Are => Were => Had been => Had been
- Have been => Had been => Had been

Time or Place (Adverbs)

We change the adverbs so as to reflect the appropriate report.

- Here => There
- Today => That day
- Now => Then
- Tonight => That night
- Yesterday => The day before
- Tomorrow => The next day

Note: if the time/place has happened in the same time/place that you are reporting, you can ignore this part and exactly copy-paste the adverb in your direct speech.

Let's give an instance by supposing that the current time is Monday 5 PM.

- Alice: Sorry, I cannot come to the party tonight.
  Jack: Hey David! Alice (has just) said that she couldn't/(cannot) come to the party tonight.

What About Questions?

There are two ways to ask someone a question. We either use WH questions or just ask with auxiliary verbs. (e.g. "Do you play soccer?" "Are you a doctor?")

WH Questions

We simply make the question a statement and use it in indirect speech sentences.

For example:

- Where are you from? => He asked me where I was from.
- What is your job? => He asked me what my job was.
- How are you? => He asked me how I was.
- Why didn't you join us? => He asked me why I hadn't joined them.
- When are you going to leave? => He asked me when I was going to leave.

Auxiliary Verbs

We use "if" or "whether" in these types of questions

Examples:

- Are you a doctor? => He asked me if/whether I was a doctor.
- Do you play basketball? => He asked me if/whether I played basketball.
- Is she okay? => He asked if/whether she was okay.
- Have you ever been to Italy? => He asked me if/whether I had (ever) been to Italy.
- Had you closed the door before you got in the car? => He asked me if/whether I had closed the door before getting in the car.
- Can you help me? => He asked me if/whether I could help him.

Imperatives

- Do your homework. => He told me to do my homework.
- Get out now! => He told me to get out then.
- Do not smoke! => He told me not to smoke.

Note: It's better to use "[Pronoun] told me" instead of "[Pronoun] said" in imperative sentences.

Suggestions

We use "[Pronoun] suggested that" in suggestion sentences.

- Let's go to the park. => He suggested that we go to the park.
- Let's no play outside. => He suggested that we not play outside.
- Let's go now. => He suggested that we go then.

Advanced Tip

- "Never do I play soccer." She said => She said that she never played soccer.

Note: When we turn inverted sentences into indirect speech, be aware that you need to change those into normal sentences first."

Examples

1. "I have never seen such a beautiful sunset." => She said she had never seen such a beautiful sunset.
2. "I will not tolerate any rude behavior." => He warned that he would not tolerate any rude behavior.
3. "I had been studying for weeks before the exam." => She said she had been studying for weeks before the exam.
4. "I can't believe I lost my passport." => He lamented that he couldn't believe he had lost his passport.
5. "I would like to visit Japan one day." => She mentioned that she would like to visit Japan one day.
6. "I regret not spending more time with my family." => He said he regretted not having spent more time with his family.
7. "I cannot imagine life without music." => She said she could not imagine life without music.
8. "I have been trying to quit smoking for years." => He said he had been trying to quit smoking for years.
9. "I think I left my keys at the office." => She suggested that she might have left her keys at the office.
10. "I have always been fascinated by ancient history." => He revealed that he had always been fascinated by ancient history.
11. "Do you have any suggestions for improving our team's productivity?" => She asked if I had any suggestions for improving the team's productivity.
12. "What are your thoughts on the current economic climate?" => He asked for my thoughts on the current economic climate.

13. "Have you ever encountered a difficult ethical dilemma in your work?" => She asked if I had ever encountered a difficult ethical dilemma in my work.
14. "What strategies do you use for effective project management?" => He asked what strategies I used for effective project management.
15. "Do you think remote work will become more common in the future?" => She asked if I thought remote work would become more common in the future.
16. "What challenges have you faced in your career, and how did you overcome them?" => He asked what challenges I had faced in my career and how I had overcome them.
17. "Are there any trends or innovations you're following in your industry?" => She asked if there were any trends or innovations I was following in my industry.
18. "How do you balance your work and personal life?" => He asked how I balanced my work and personal life.
19. "What is your experience with leading a team through a crisis?" => She asked for my experience with leading a team through a crisis.
20. "What qualities do you think are important for a successful team leader?" => He asked what qualities I thought were important for a successful team leader.
21. "Be sure to provide clear feedback to the team members." => She instructed me to be sure to provide clear feedback to the team members.
22. "Make sure to test the product thoroughly before launching it." => He instructed me to make sure to test the product thoroughly before launching it.
23. "Don't forget to update the project plan with the latest changes." => She reminded me not to forget to update the project plan with the latest changes.
24. "Be sure to allocate enough resources for the project to be successful." => He instructed me to be sure to allocate enough resources for the project to be successful.
25. "Don't hesitate to ask for help if you're feeling overwhelmed." => She reminded me not to hesitate to ask for help if I was feeling overwhelmed.
26. "Let's try using a different project management tool for improved communication." => She suggested that we try using a different project management tool for improved communication.
27. "Perhaps we could create a detailed timeline to ensure the timely completion of the project." => He suggested that we could create a detailed timeline to ensure the timely completion of the project.
28. "Let's brainstorm some creative solutions to overcome the challenges we're facing." => She suggested that we brainstorm some creative solutions to overcome the challenges we were facing.
29. "Maybe we could bring in a subject matter expert to advise us on the project." => He suggested that we could bring in a subject matter expert to advise us on the project.
30. "Let's look into incorporating customer feedback into the product development process." => She suggested that we look into incorporating customer feedback into the product development process.

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