

## LESSON NOTE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE WEEK 6

**SUBJECT:** English Language  
**TOPIC:** Grammar: Direct and Indirect Speeches  
**CLASS:** JS3  
**WEEK:** 6

Direct speech is when you report what someone has said, using the exact words of the original speaker; those exact words have to be enclosed in quotation marks (inverted commas). While indirect speech is when you report what someone has said, you do not use the exact words of the original speaker.

Note that in reported statements, conjunctions are usually used to join the reported speech to the rest of the sentence but in reported questions, *if, whether, what, where, how* are used.

Example: He said that he was hungry.

Direct speech: 'Did you finish your homework?' she asked him.

Indirect speech: she asked if he had finished his homework.

### **Reporting verbs and rules**

1. **Reporting verb + that:** admit, deny, request, suggest, etc.

Example: The man explained that he was under the weather.

2. **Reporting verb + someone + that:** assure, persuade, inform, etc.

Example: The Engineer assured us that the workers would work hard.

3. **Reporting verb + to – infinitive:** agree, ask, offer, propose, etc.

Example: They offered to buy the tickets.

4. **Reporting verb + someone + to – infinitive:** advise, encourage, urge, remind, etc.

Example: He urged the children to do their homework.

5. **Reporting verb + preposition \_ -ing/noun:** complain about, argue about, insist on, etc.

Example: The workers apologized for coming late.

6. **Reporting verb + -ing/noun:** admit, suggest, accept, deny, etc.

Example: The woman suggested visiting the museum.

7. **Reporting verb + someone + noun:** refuse, promise, refuse, etc.

Example: The man offered her a ride.

To change direct speech to indirect speech, remember the following rules.

1. If the verb in the direct speech is in the present tense, change it to past tense in the indirect speech.

Examples:

- Direct speech: 'I am thirsty,' he said.

Indirect speech: He said he was thirsty.

- Direct speech: 'Are you sick?' she asked

Indirect speech: She asked him if he was sick.

2. If the verb in the direct speech is in the past tense, change it to past perfect tense in the indirect speech.

#### Examples:

- Direct: 'I travelled to Lagos,' he told her.

Indirect: He told her that he had travelled to Lagos.

- Direct: 'The food has finished, he complained.

Indirect: He complained that the food had finished.

3. Change first and second person pronouns into third person pronoun.

#### Examples:

- Direct: 'I am going home,' the woman said.

Indirect: The woman said that she was going home.

- Direct: 'Do you have some honey?' she asked.

Indirect: She asked whether he had some honey.

4. If you are reporting what is said about you to someone, change the second person to the first person.

#### Examples:

- Direct: 'I will pay your school fees tomorrow,' Dad promised.

Indirect: My dad promised that he would pay my school fees the next day.

5. In indirect speech, the following words should be changed as indicated

- Yesterday becomes the day before
- Tomorrow becomes next day
- Here becomes there
- Now becomes then
- This becomes that

- These becomes those
- Will becomes would
- May becomes might
- Shall becomes should
- Can becomes could

**NOTE:**

- If the direct speech has a past perfect tense, do not change it in the indirect speech.
- Do not change modal auxiliaries such as must, ought to, and should in indirect speech.
- Do not change the tense when the idea expressed in the reported speech is a statement of general truth which still holds at the time of reporting.

**HOMEWORK**

Change the following direct statements to reported speech. Use the reporting verb in brackets after each statement. You can use any noun/pronoun you find suitable.

1. 'We will not fail you.' Workers to managers (assure)
2. 'I will pay you tomorrow.' Employer to staff (promise)
3. 'You should sleep early.' Mother to children (advise)
4. 'We should buy more tomatoes.' Wife to husband (suggest)
5. 'The attendant is rude.' Customer to manager (complain)