

## Indirect Speech: Overview

**USE:** **Indirect speech** or **reported speech** is a description of what people said. We use **indirect speech** to talk about conversations we had with people at some point in the past. We use **direct speech**, on the other hand, when we want to use the exact words people said. Those exact words are usually put in quotation marks.

**FORM:** **Direct Speech** **Indirect Speech**  
*He said, "I don't like broccoli."* *He said that he didn't like broccoli.*

To make **indirect speech** from **direct speech** do the following:

- Take out the comma and quotation marks.
- Put the word "that" after "said".
- Change the verb tense if necessary.
- Change the time marker if necessary.

Some common changes in verb tenses that we usually make when using **indirect speech** are as follows:

- Present tense changes to past tense.

**Direct speech:** *"I eat at McDonald's every Friday," she said.*

**Indirect speech:** *She said that she ate at McDonald's every Friday.*

- Auxiliary verbs in the present change to the past.

**Direct speech:** *"I will go to Paris next month," he said.*

**Indirect speech:** *He said that he would go to Paris next month.*

Some common changes in time markers that we can make when using **indirect speech** are as follows:

Now----then                      today----that day      yesterday----the day before  
This week----that week                      this month----that month

**USE:** **HOWEVER:** We have a choice about whether we make the verb tense and time marker changes. We DON'T make the changes if the situation in the direct speech has NOT changed. For example: *He said, "I am happy."*  
If, when you are reporting on him, he is not happy (the situation HAS changed), you would say: *He said that he was happy.*  
If, when you are reporting on him, he is still happy (the situation HAS NOT changed) you would say: *He said that he is happy.*

*Complete the following sentences from DIRECT to INDIRECT speech. More than one answer may be possible.*

**DIRECT SPEECH**

**INDIRECT SPEECH**

1. "I want this book," he said.
2. "He is coming to visit today," she said.
3. "These apples are too green," she said.
4. "I will visit Las Vegas next month," he said.
5. "My son will be twelve years old next week,"  
he said.
6. "I want to go home now," she said.
7. "This afternoon I will play golf," he said.
8. "This actor is very handsome," they said.
9. "I'll be here again tomorrow," she said.
10. "He wants to leave early," she said.

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