

5

GRAMMAR

Indirect speech

With tense changes

- **Summary of tense changes**

Tenses move back in time after a past tense reporting verb.

'I agree.' Peter said **he agreed**.

'I'm leaving.' Jane said **she was leaving**.

But the past perfect remains the same.

'No, I hadn't forgotten.' Greg said that **he hadn't forgotten**.

For Modals (*can, may, must, should* see Grammar 14.)

- **Main verb changes**

In complex sentences, only the first verb is changed.

'I was walking home when I saw the accident.'

James said **he had been walking home when he saw the accident**.

- **Reference words**

Some words referring to people, places and time change in indirect speech, because the point of reference changes.

'I'll see you here tomorrow, Jack,' said Mary.

Mary told Jack she would see **him there the next day**.

'I gave you this yesterday.'

John said he had given it to **her the day before**.

Other words of this kind appear in the practice section.

Without tense changes

- **Present tense reports**

If the reporting verb is in the present tense, there is no change.

Brenda **says she's arriving at about 6.00**.

- **Past tense reports**

If the reported words are 'always true', there is no change.

Harry told me that **he still likes you**.

If a message is being repeated immediately, there is no change.

Mary said **she's too busy to come**.

Questions

- **Reporting questions**

Yes / No questions are reported using *if*. The verb does not have a question form, but has the form of a normal statement. There is no question mark.

'Do you like hamburgers?'

Charles asked me **if I liked hamburgers**.

FIRST CERTIFICATE LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Wh- questions are reported with the question word followed by the verb in the form of a normal statement. There is no question mark.

'Where are we going?' I asked Sue where we were going.

● Reporting polite questions

We can use a question phrase like *Could you tell me ...* or *Do you know ...* to ask for information in a polite way. Note the word order.

'Where is the station?' 'Could you tell me where the station is?'

We can also use *I'd like to know ...*

'I'd like to know where the station is.'

When we report this kind of question we use *ask* and the usual tense change rules.

I asked him where the station was.

Commands and requests

● Commands are reported with *tell* and the infinitive.

'Go away!' He told me to go away.

● Requests are reported with *ask* and the infinitive.

'Please help me.' He asked her to help him

Reporting verbs

● Say or tell?

We *say* something and we *tell* somebody.

I said I could meet you this evening, but I'm really busy.

I told you I could meet you this evening, but I'm really busy.

We can use *to* after *say*, but we never use *to* between *tell* and the object.

I said to him that I'd meet him this evening.

● Other reporting verbs

Exercises 8 and 10 in the practice section use some other common reporting verbs.

The meaning and grammar of each verb can be found in a good dictionary and should be learned. For example:

She suggested going to the beach. (suggest + -ing form)

She offered to give me a lift. (offer + infinitive)

She reminded me to call my mother. (remind + object + infinitive)

Paraphrase

It is often impossible or unnecessary to report every word spoken.

'Excuse me, do you think you could tell me the time?'

He asked me what the time was.

1 Underline the most suitable verb form in each sentence.

- 1 Helen asked me if I liked visiting old buildings.
Do you like / Did you like visiting old buildings?' asked Helen.
- 2 Bill asked Mary if she had done anything the previous weekend.
Have you done / Did you do anything last weekend?'
- 3 The policeman asked me if the car belonged to me.
Does / Did this car belong to you?' asked the policeman.
- 4 Fiona asked me if I had seen her umbrella anywhere.
Did you see / Have you seen my umbrella anywhere?' asked Fiona.
- 5 Joe asked Tina when she would get back.
When will you get / have you got back?' asked Joe.
- 6 Eddie asked Steve who he had been to the cinema with.
Who did you go / had you been to the cinema with?' asked Eddie.
- 7 My parents asked me what time I had got home the night before.
What time did you get / have you got home last night?' my parents asked.
- 8 David asked a passer-by if it was the right road for Hastings.
Is / Was this the right road for Hastings?' asked David.

2 Rewrite each sentence as direct speech.

- 1 Graham told Ian he would see him the following day.
.....'I'll see you tomorrow, Ian,' said Graham.....
- 2 Pauline told the children their swimming things were not there.
.....
- 3 David told me my letter had arrived the day before.
.....
- 4 Shirley told Larry she would see him that evening.
.....
- 5 Bill told Stephen he hadn't been at home that morning.
.....
- 6 Margaret told John to phone her on the following day.
.....
- 7 Tim told Ron he was leaving that afternoon.
.....
- 8 Christine told Michael she had lost her keys the night before.
.....

FIRST CERTIFICATE LANGUAGE PRACTICE

3 Rewrite each sentence as indirect speech, beginning as shown.

- 1 'You can't park here.'
The police officer told Jack *that he couldn't park there.*
- 2 'I'll see you in the morning, Helen.'
Peter told Helen
- 3 'I'm catching the 5.30 plane tomorrow evening.'
Janet said
- 4 'The trousers have to be ready this afternoon.'
Paul told the dry-cleaners
- 5 'I left my umbrella here two days ago.'
Susan told them
- 6 'The parcel ought to be here by the end of next week.'
Brian said
- 7 'I like this hotel very much.'
Diana told me
- 8 'I think it's going to rain tonight.'
William said

4 Rewrite each question in indirect speech, beginning as shown.

- 1 'What time does the film start, Peter?'
I asked ... *Peter what time the film started.*
- 2 'Do you watch television every evening, Chris?'
The interviewer asked
- 3 'Why did you apply for this job?' asked the sales manager.
The sales manager asked me
- 4 'Are you taking much money with you to France?'
My bank manager wanted to know
- 5 'When will I know the results of the examination?'
Maria asked the examiner
- 6 'Are you enjoying your flight?'
The flight attendant asked me
- 7 'How does the photocopier work?'
I asked the salesman
- 8 'Have you ever been to Japan, Paul?'
Sue asked Paul

5 Complete the sentences. Use the number of words given in brackets.

- 1 'Do you think you could possibly tell me what the time is?'
David asked me ... *to tell him the time.* (five words)
- 2 'Excuse me, but I wonder if you'd mind opening the window.'
The man asked me (four words)
- 3 'You go down this street and turn left. The cinema is just on the left.'
A passer-by told me how (five words)
- 4 'I want to know how much this bike costs. Can you tell me?'
John asked how (four words)
- 5 'Look, don't worry, I'll help you if you like.'
Sue said she (three words)

- 6 'All right, I tell you what, the bike's yours for €150.'
The salesman said I could (five words)
- 7 'I hope you don't mind my saying this, but you're being a bit silly, aren't you?'
Peter told me I (five words)
- 8 'It doesn't look as if I'll be arriving until after eight, I'm afraid.'
Jane said she probably (five words)

6 Rewrite each sentence, beginning as shown. Do not change the meaning.

- 1 What time does the next boat leave?
Do you think you could tell me *what time the next boat leaves* ?
- 2 Where can I change some money?
Can you tell me ?
- 3 Where is the toilet?
Could you possibly tell me ?
- 4 How much does this pullover cost?
I'd like to know ?
- 5 How do I get to Victoria Station?
Can you explain ?
- 6 Does this train go to Gatwick Airport?
Could you tell me ?
- 7 Where do you come from?
Would you mind telling me ?
- 8 What do you think of London?
Do you think you could tell me ?

7 Put the correct form of one of the verbs in the box into each space.

accuse admit apologize ~~deny~~ offer remind advise confess suggest

- 1 'No, it's not true, I didn't steal the money!'
Jean ... *denied* stealing the money / that she had stolen the money.
- 2 'Why don't we go to the cinema this evening?'
Peter going to the cinema / that they went to the cinema.
- 3 'I've broken your pen. I'm awfully sorry, Jack.'
David for breaking Jack's pen.
- 4 'Don't forget to post my letter, will you, Sue?'
Diana Sue to post her letter.
- 5 'Let me carry your bag, John.'
Harry to carry John's bag.
- 6 'All right, it's true, I was nervous.'
The leading actor to being nervous / that he had been nervous.
- 7 'If I were you, Bill, I'd buy a mountain bike.'
Stephen Bill to buy a mountain bike.
- 8 'You murdered Lord Grand, didn't you, Mr Burns?'
The inspector Mr Burns of murdering Lord Grand.
- 9 'It was me who stole the money,' said Jim.
Jim to stealing the money.

8 Choose the best answer. Use a dictionary to check the meaning of reporting verbs if necessary.

Television

.....
 When some friends of mine decided to get a new flat-screen digital television with a satellite system, I (1) **C** them whether they thought this was really necessary. 'After all, I (2), 'you're both very busy people and I (3) whether you're going to have much time to watch it.' I (4) that I thought they could manage just as well with their old set, and I (5) them that they used to say that it wasn't worth getting a new television. They (6) that this was how they once felt, but (7) me that they had now changed their minds, and (8) that they had thought about the matter very carefully. It's true that we usually only watch the news' the (9), 'but some friends (10) us to get a new set with a better picture and more choice of channels. They said we (11) to enjoy it and they (12) watching more films and wildlife programmes.' However, my friends then (13) that they were not at home very much, because during the week they got home late from work and went straight to sleep, and at the weekend they usually went to the cinema. I (14) to buy their television since they weren't using it very much, but they (15) 'Oh no', they said, 'every home needs a television.'

- | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1 A said | B told | C asked | D requested |
| 2 A said to them | B told to them | C told | D said them |
| 3 A don't think | B insist | C suppose | D doubt |
| 4 A agreed | B said | C doubted | D suggested |
| 5 A advised | B persuaded | C reminded | D said |
| 6 A agreed | B offered | C told | D apologized |
| 7 A suggested | B insisted | C refused | D informed |
| 8 A doubted | B insisted | C accused | D offered |
| 9 A suggested | B said | C reminded | D advised |
| 10 A advised | B suggested | C recommended | D offered |
| 11 A started | B start | C have started | D would start |
| 12 A advised | B offered | C suggested | D told |
| 13 A admitted | B refused | C denied | D apologized |
| 14 A promised | B offered | C persuaded | D suggested |
| 15 A doubted | B insisted | C refused | D agreed |

FIRST CERTIFICATE LANGUAGE PRACTICE

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9 Put the correct form of either *say*, *tell* or *ask* in each space.

- 1 I *told* you that you had to be on time. Why are you late?
- 2 When you her if she'd work late, what did she ?
- 3 I think that Alan us a lie about his qualifications.
- 4 When I him what he was doing there, he me it was none of my business.
- 5 I I would help you, so here I am.
- 6 Did you hear what Sheila about her new job?
- 7 What did Carol you about her holiday?
- 8 There, you see! I you the bus would be on time.

10 Rewrite each sentence, beginning as shown. Do not change the meaning.

- 1 'Sue, can you remember to buy some bread?'
Paul reminded *Sue to buy some bread*
- 2 'I don't really think it'll snow tomorrow.'
I doubt
- 3 'I'm sorry I didn't phone you earlier.'
Jill apologized
- 4 'Yes, all right, I'll share the bill with you, Dave.'
Brenda agreed
- 5 'No, I'm sorry, I won't work on Saturday. Definitely not!'
Catherine refused
- 6 'Let's go out to the café for lunch, shall we?'
Wendy suggested
- 7 'It's not true! I have never been arrested.'
Larry denied
- 8 'If you like, I'll help you do the decorating, Bob.'
Ann offered
- 9 'I'll definitely take you to the park on Sunday, children.'
Tom promised the

Key points

- 1 Tense changes are usually necessary after a past tense reporting verb.
- 2 Words referring to time and place also change in indirect speech.
- 3 Indirect questions are of two types. *Yes / No* questions are reported with *if* and *Wh-* questions are reported with the question word. The verb is not put into a question form in an indirect question.
- 4 Indirect speech is often introduced by a reporting verb. These verbs are followed by a variety of grammatical constructions. A good dictionary will include this information.
- 5 Indirect speech may also involve paraphrasing the main points of what was said.

→ SEE ALSO

Consolidation 2: Units 5–8

Grammar 13: Modal verbs: present and future

Grammar 14: Modal verbs: past