

DIRECT & INDIRECT SPEECH

DIRECT & INDIRECT

SSC CGL English Preparation

Introduction to Direct & Indirect Speech

Direct and Indirect Speech (also called Reported Speech) involves converting someone's spoken words into written form. Direct speech quotes the exact words, while indirect speech reports the meaning without exact quotation.

Key Differences:



Direct Speech: Exact words spoken

Example: Ram said, "I am going to the market."



Indirect Speech: Reported meaning

Example: Ram said that he was going to the market.

Basic Structure:

Direct: Reporting verb + , + "Exact words"

Indirect: Reporting verb + that + Reported speech

Conversion Process:

- 1 Remove quotation marks
- 2 Change pronouns according to the subject
- 3 Change tenses according to reporting verb
- 4 Change time and place expressions
- 5 Use appropriate reporting verb and conjunction



Conversion Rules

1. Pronoun Changes

Pronouns change according to the subject and object of the reporting verb.

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech	Rule
I, we	he/she, they	First person changes according to subject
you	he/she/I/they	Second person changes according to object
he, she, it, they	No change	Third person remains unchanged

2. Tense Changes

When reporting verb is in past tense, the reported speech tense changes.

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
Simple Present	Simple Past
Present Continuous	Past Continuous
Present Perfect	Past Perfect
Simple Past	Past Perfect
Will/Shall	Would/Should

3. Time and Place Changes

Time and place expressions change when the reporting time changes.

Direct Speech	Indirect Speech
now	then

today	that day
tomorrow	the next day
yesterday	the previous day
here	there
this	that
these	those

Examples of Complete Conversion:

Direct: She said, "I am reading a book now."

Indirect: She said that she was reading a book then.

Direct: They said, "We will visit you tomorrow."

Indirect: They said that they would visit me the next day.

🕒 Tense Changes in Detail

When Reporting Verb is in Past Tense:

Direct Speech Tense	Indirect Speech Tense	Example
Simple Present	Simple Past	"I like coffee" → He said that he liked coffee
Present Continuous	Past Continuous	"I am reading" → He said that he was reading
Present Perfect	Past Perfect	"I have finished" → He said that he had finished
Simple Past	Past Perfect	"I saw him" → He said that he had seen him
Past Continuous	Past Perfect Continuous	"I was waiting" → He said that he had been waiting
Will/Shall	Would/Should	"I will come" → He said that he would come
Can	Could	"I can swim" → He said that he could swim
May	Might	"I may go" → He said that he might go

Exceptions - No Tense Change:

Tense doesn't change in these cases:

Universal Truth

"The sun rises in the east"
→ He said that the sun rises in the east

Historical Fact

"India became independent in 1947"
→ He said that India became independent in 1947

Habitual Action

"I exercise daily"

→ He said that he exercises daily

Reporting Verb Present

If reporting verb is in present/future tense

→ No tense change occurs

Special Cases:

- **Yes/No Questions:** Use if/whether + subject-verb order
"Are you coming?" → He asked if I was coming.
- **Wh-Questions:** Keep question word + subject-verb order
"Where do you live?" → He asked where I lived.
- **Commands:** Use to + infinitive
"Close the door" → He told me to close the door.
- **Exclamations:** Use exclaimed + that
"What a beautiful sight!" → He exclaimed that it was a beautiful sight.



Practice Exercises

Exercise 1: Convert to Indirect Speech

1. He said, "I am working hard."

(A) He said that I am working hard.

(B) He said that he was working hard.

(C) He said that he is working hard.

(D) He said that I was working hard.

2. She said to me, "Can you help me?"

(A) She said to me if I can help her.

(B) She asked me if I could help her.

(C) She told me if I could help her.

(D) She asked me can I help her.

3. They said, "We will complete the project tomorrow."

(A) They said that we will complete the project tomorrow.

(B) They said that they would complete the project the next day.

(C) They said that they will complete the project the next day.

(D) They said that we would complete the project tomorrow.

Exercise 2: SSC CGL Pattern Questions

Direction: In the following question, a sentence has been given in Direct Speech. Out of the four alternatives suggested, select the one which best expresses the same sentence in Indirect Speech.

1. He said, "I have been waiting for you since morning."

(A) He said that he has been waiting for me since morning.

(B) He said that he had been waiting for me since morning.

(C) He said that he had been waiting for you since morning.

(D) He said that he has been waiting for you since morning.

2. The teacher said to the students, "Don't make a noise."

(A) The teacher said to the students to not make a noise.

(B) The teacher told the students not to make a noise.

(C) The teacher asked the students don't make a noise.

(D) The teacher said to the students that don't make a noise.

3. She said, "What a beautiful painting!"

(A) She said what a beautiful painting it was.

(B) She exclaimed that it was a very beautiful painting.

(C) She exclaimed what a beautiful painting it was.

(D) She told that it was a beautiful painting.

Exercise 3: Mixed Types

1. "Where did you go yesterday?" he asked her.

(A) He asked her where did she go yesterday.

(B) He asked her where she had gone the previous day.

(C) He asked her where she went yesterday.

(D) He asked her where had she gone the previous day.

2. The doctor said to the patient, "Take this medicine twice daily."

(A) The doctor said to the patient to take this medicine twice daily.

(B) The doctor advised the patient to take that medicine twice daily.

(C) The doctor told the patient take that medicine twice daily.

(D) The doctor said the patient to take that medicine twice daily.

3. "I'm sorry I forgot to call you," she said to me.

(A) She told me she is sorry she forgot to call me.

(B) She apologized to me for forgetting to call me.

(C) She said sorry to me that she forgot to call me.

(D) She told me she was sorry she had forgot to call me.

💡 Exam Tips for Direct & Indirect Speech

🕒 Time Management

Spend 30-45 seconds per conversion question. Focus on key changes.

🔍 Identify Type

First identify if it's statement, question, command, or exclamation.

🔄 Systematic Approach

Follow pronoun → tense → time/place → reporting verb sequence.

✅ Verify Options

Check all options for common errors before final selection.

Common Mistakes to Avoid:

- Forgetting to change tenses when reporting verb is in past
- Incorrect pronoun changes (I → he/she, you → I/he/she)
- Not changing time and place expressions
- Using wrong reporting verbs (said vs told vs asked)
- Incorrect word order in reported questions
- Missing conjunctions (that, if, whether, to)

Quick Revision - Reporting Verbs:

Statements

said, told

Use "told" with object

Questions

asked, inquired

Use if/whether for yes-no questions

Commands

ordered, commanded, told

Use "to + verb" structure

Requests

requested, begged

Use "to + verb" structure

Final Conversion Checklist:

1. Remove quotation marks

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- 2 Change pronouns correctly
 - 3 Change tenses (if required)
 - 4 Change time/place expressions
 - 5 Use appropriate reporting verb
 - 6 Add correct conjunction
 - 7 Ensure proper word order

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