1. **Reported Speech**

We use a 'reporting verb' like 'say.’ If this verb is in the present tense, it's easy. We just put 'she says' and then the sentence:

* Direct speech: I like ice cream.
* Reported speech: She **says** (that) she **likes** ice cream.

We don't need to change the tense, though probably we do need to change the 'person' from 'I' to 'she', for example. We also may need to change words like 'my' and 'your'.

**But**, if the reporting verb is in the past tense, then usually we change the tenses in the reported speech:

* Direct speech: I like ice cream.
* Reported speech: She **said** (that) she **liked** ice cream.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tense** | **Direct Speech** | **Reported Speech** |
| present simple | I like ice cream | She said (that) she liked ice cream. |
| present continuous | I am living in London | She said (that) she was living in London. |
| past simple | I bought a car | She said (that) she had bought a car OR She said (that) she bought a car. |
| past continuous | I was walking along the street | She said (that) she had been walking along the street. |
| present perfect | I haven't seen Julie | She said (that) she hadn't seen Julie. |
| past perfect\* | I had taken English lessons before | She said (that) she had taken English lessons before. |
| will | I'll see you later | She said (that) she would see me later. |
| would\* | I would help, but..” | She said (that) she would help but... |
| can | I can speak perfect English | She said (that) she could speak perfect English. |
| could\* | I could swim when I was four | She said (that) she could swim when she was four. |
| shall | I shall come later | She said (that) she would come later. |
| should\* | I should call my mother | She said (that) she should call her mother |
| might\* | I might be late | She said (that) she might be late |
| must | I must study at the weekend | She said (that) she must study at the weekend OR She said she had to study at the weekend |

\* doesn't change.

Occasionally, we don't need to change the present tense into the past if the information in direct speech is still true (but this is only for things which are general facts, and even then usually we like to change the tense):

* Direct speech: The sky is blue.
* Reported speech: She said (that) the sky **is/was** blue.

1. **Reported Questions**

* Direct speech: Where do you live?

How can we make the reported speech here?  
  
In fact, it's not so different from reported statements. The tense changes are the same, and we keep the question word. The very important thing though is that, once we tell the question to someone else, it isn't a question any more. So we need to change the grammar to a normal positive sentence. A bit confusing? Maybe this example will help:

* Direct speech: Where do you live?
* Reported speech: She asked me where I lived.

Do you see how I made it? The direct question is in the present simple tense. We make a present simple question with 'do' or 'does' so I need to take that away. Then I need to change the verb to the past simple.  
  
Another example:

* Direct speech: Where is Julie?
* Reported speech: She asked me where Julie was.

The direct question is the present simple of 'be'. We make the question form of the present simple of be by inverting (changing the position of) the subject and verb. So, we need to change them back before putting the verb into the past simple.

Here are some more examples:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct Question** | **Reported Question** |
| Where is the Post Office, please? | She asked me where the Post Office was. |
| What are you doing? | She asked me what I was doing. |
| Who was that fantastic man? | She asked me who that fantastic man had been. |

So much for 'wh' questions. But, what if you need to report a 'yes / no' question? We don't have any question words to help us. Instead, we use **'if'**:

* Direct speech: Do you like chocolate?
* Reported speech: She asked me **if** I liked chocolate.

No problem? Here are a few more examples:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct Question** | **Reported Question** |
| Do you love me? | He asked me if I loved him. |
| Have you ever been to Mexico? | She asked me if I had ever been to Mexico. |
| Are you living here? | She asked me if I was living here. |

**Let’s practice:**

Change this direct speech into reported speech:

1. “He works in a bank”

She said (that) he worked / works in a bank.

2. “We went out last night”

She told me (that) they had gone out the previous night.

3. “I’m coming!”

She said (that) she was coming.

4. “I was waiting for the bus when he arrived”

She told me (that) she had been waiting for the bus when he had arrived.

5. “ I’d never been there before”

She said (that) she had never been there before.

6. “I didn’t go to the party”

She told me (that) she hadn’t gone to the party.

7. “Lucy’ll come later”

She said (that) Lucy would come later.

8. “He hasn’t eaten breakfast”

She told me (that) he hadn’t eaten breakfast.

Change the direct questions into reported questions:

1. Where is the post office?

She asked me where the post office was.

2. Why is Julie sad?

She asked me why Julie was sad.

3. What's for dinner?

She asked me what was for dinner.

4. Who is the woman in the red dress?

She asked me who the woman in the red dress was.

5. How is your grandmother?

She asked me my grandma was.

Change the direct yes/no questions into reported questions:

1. Is John at home?

She asked me if John was at home.

2. Am I late?

She asked me if she was late.

3. Is it cold outside?

She asked me if it was cold outside.

4. Are they in Paris?

She asked me if they were in Paris.

5. Is the bus stop near the shopping center?

She asked me if the bus was near the shopping center.

**Time and Place in Reported Speech:**

**Here is a list of common time words, showing how you change them for reported speech:**

| **direct speech** | **reported speech** |
| --- | --- |
| now | then, at that time |
| today | that day, on Sunday, yesterday |
| tonight | that night, last night, on Sunday night |
| tomorrow | the next day/ the following day, on Sunday, today |
| yesterday | the day before/ the previous day, on Sunday |
| last night | the night before/ the previous night, on Sunday night |
| this week | that week, last week |
| last month | the month before/ the previous month, in May |
| next year | the following year, in 2014 |
| two minutes ago | two minutes before |
| in one hour | one hour later |

| **direct speech** | **indirect speech** |
| --- | --- |
| here | there, in Starbucks |
| this | that |
| this book | the book, that book, *War and Peace* |
| in this room | in the room, in that room, in the kitchen |

Examples:

* He said: "It is cold in **here**." → He said that it was cold in **there**.
* He said: "How much is **this book**?" → He asked how much **the book** was.
* He said: "It was hot **yesterday**." → He said that it had been hot **the day before**.