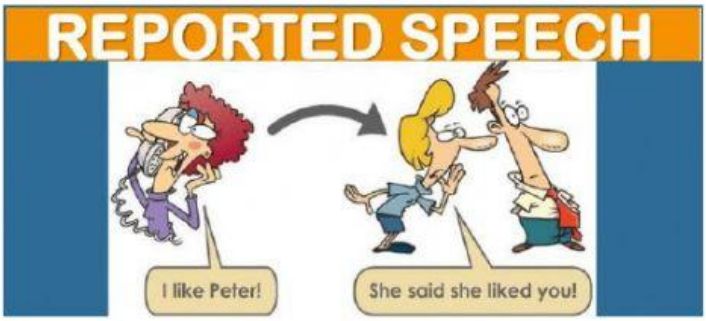
THEME 1: Reading and Writing 9th Level, GTA-3



Reported speech (or indirect speech) is when we tell someone what another person said. To do this, we can use direct speech or indirect speech.

For more info on Reported Speech
Click HERE

Direct speech: **'I work in a bank,' said Daniel.**
Indirect speech: **Daniel said that he worked in a bank.**

In indirect speech, we often use a tense which is 'further back' in the past (e.g. worked) than the tense originally used in the direct speech (e.g. work). This is called '**backshift**'. We also may need to change other words that were used, for example pronouns or time and place adverbs.

Present simple, present continuous and present perfect

When we backshift, present simple changes to past simple, present continuous changes to past continuous and present perfect changes to past perfect. See these examples:

Direct speech	*Indirect speech (reported speech)*
'I **travel** a lot in my job.'	Jamila said (that) she **travelled** a lot in her job.
'The baby**'s sleeping**!'	He told me (that) the baby **was sleeping**.
'**I've painted** my house.'	She said she **had painted** her house.

Past simple and past continuous

When we backshift, past simple usually changes to past perfect simple, and past continuous usually changes to past perfect continuous. For example:

Direct speech	*Indirect speech (reported speech)*
'We **lived** in China for five years.'	She told me they**'d lived** in China for five years.
'It **was raining** all day.'	He told me it **had been raining** all day.

Past perfect

The past perfect doesn't change.

Direct speech	*Indirect speech (reported speech)*
'I **had tried** everything without success, but this new medicine is great.'	He said he**'d tried** everything without success, but the new medicine was great.

No backshift

If what the speaker has said is still true or relevant, it's not always necessary to change the tense. This might happen when the speaker has used a present tense.

Direct speech	*Indirect speech (reported speech)*
'I **go** to the gym next to your house.'	Jenny told me that she **goes** to the gym next to my house. I'm thinking about going with her.
'**I'm working** in Italy for the next six months.'	He told me he**'s working** in Italy for the next six months. Maybe I should visit him!
'**I've broken** my arm!'	She said she**'s broken** her arm, so she won't be at work this week.

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Pronouns, demonstratives and adverbs of time and place

Pronouns also usually change in indirect speech.

'I enjoy working in my garden,' said Bob.	Bob said that he enjoyed working in his garden.
'We played tennis for our school,' said Alina.	Alina told me they'd played tennis for their school.

We also change **demonstratives** and **adverbs of time and place** if they are no longer accurate.

'This is my house.'	He said this was his house. *[You are currently in front of the house.]* He said that was his house. *[You are not currently in front of the house.]*
'We like it here.'	She told me they like it here. *[You are currently in the place they like.]* She told me they like it there. *[You are not in the place they like.]*
'I'm planning to do it today.'	She told me she's planning to do it today. *[It is currently still the same day.]* She told me she was planning to do it that day. *[It is not the same day anymore.]*

In the same way, these changes to those, now changes to then, yesterday changes to the day before, tomorrow changes to the next/following day and ago changes to before.

Information taken from: https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org

Exercise 1: Choose the correct option to complete each sentence in the indirect speech.

1. 'My best friend at school became a nurse first, then a paramedic.' ⇒ He told me that his best friend at school _____ a nurse first, then a paramedic.

__ a) was becoming __ b) had become
__ c) has become __ d) became

2. 'I had lived in four countries by the age of ten.' ⇒ She said that she _____ in four countries by the age of ten.

__ a) lived __ b) was living
__ c) had lived __ a) have lived

3. 'I commute 45 minutes to work.' ⇒ She told me that she _____ 45 minutes to work, but I bet it takes longer now with the roadworks.

__ a) has commuted __ b) commute
__ c) had commuted __ d) commuted

4. 'We were hoping to have our wedding in June.' ⇒ She told me that they _____ to have their wedding in June. In the end, though, they got married in September.

__ a) had been hoping __ b) are hoping
__ c) have been hoping __ d) hopes

5. 'Oh, hi, Ethan! I'm just leaving, unfortunately.' ⇒ When I got there, I saw him, but he said he _____.

__ a) is just leaving __ b) was just leaving
__ c) had just left __ d) left

6. 'We've seen four elephants already and it's only our first day.' ⇒ He said that they _____ four elephants on their first day. Imagine what animals they've seen by now!

__ a) were seeing __ b) have seen
__ c) saw __ a) had seen

7. 'I love this restaurant!' ⇒ We could go back to Bella Roma! Chloe said she loved _____ restaurant!

__ a) that __ b) this
__ c) there __ d) those

8. 'I told Dom to email you three days ago.' ⇒ She said that she had told Dom to email me three days _____, but it's been a week now and I still haven't heard.

__ a) then __ b) ago
__ c) before __ d) the day before

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