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THE PASSIVE VOICE

Look at the following sentence:

He remembers the names of his friends.

This can be rewritten as:

The names of his friends are remembered by him.

This means the same thing, but there is a difference in the construction of the sentence. In the first sentence, 'He' is the subject of the sentence, while in the second sentence, 'The names of his friends' is the subject of the sentence. In the first, the action of 'remembering' is carried out by the subject. In the second sentence, an action is done to the subject of the sentence.

Look at the following sentences:

The thief stole the bag.

The bag was stolen by the thief.

You will see that in the first sentence, the subject, 'thief' does the action represented by 'stole'. Therefore the doer of the action is the thief. In the second sentence, the action is done to the subject, meaning that the bag which is the subject, has an action done to it. The object of the first sentence becomes the subject of the second sentence. The first sentence is said to be in the active, while the second sentence is said to be in the passive. The verb, 'stole' in the first sentence is active, while the verb 'was stolen' in the second sentence is passive.

The following changes are made when the active voice is changed to passive:

- The object of the active voice becomes the subject of the passive voice.
- The passive form of the verb is made by adding be (is, was, has been, etc.) to the past participle.
- The passive verb is followed by *by* + doer.

The 'by + doer' can be left out if we do not know the doer or if it is not necessary to mention the doer.

Here are some examples of conversion from active to passive voice:

Sita reads science fiction. / Science fiction is read by Sita.

The waiter is serving the dish. / The dish is being served by the waiter.

They washed the clothes at the well. / The clothes were washed by them at the well.

The painters had painted the whole house by then. / The whole house had been painted by the painters by then.

She expected you to visit her. / It was expected by her that you would visit her.

EXERCISES

A. *Change the following sentences from the active to the passive voice.*

1. The students have finished the assignment.
2. The terrorists attacked the main trade centre.
3. The children have eaten the chocolates.
4. The boys were flying kites on the terrace of the building.
5. They have been parking the cars in the driveway.

B. *Change the following sentences from the passive to the active.*

1. I hate being criticised.
2. The building was being searched.
3. A cab has been hired to cover the day's visits.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT SPEECH

There are two ways of reporting the words spoken by other people. The first way is to repeat the exact words of the speaker and enclose them within quotation marks, and this way of reporting is called direct speech. (Either single or double quotation marks may be used to enclose the words being reported—the choice is really a matter of style.)

Tara said, 'It is time to leave for the meeting.'

'Come home early,' said Mr Shamim to his son.

The lawyer said to her client, 'Do you have the registration papers?'

The woman said to Swati, 'Where do you stay?'

'What a beautiful bracelet!' Jacob said.

Now look at the following sentences, where you report the words of the speaker in your own words, making some changes in grammatical construction. This form of reporting is known as indirect or reported speech, which we usually use in reporting what others said.

Tara *said that* it was time to leave for the meeting.

Mr Shamim *ordered* his son *to* come home early.

The lawyer *asked* her client *if* he had the registration papers.

The woman *asked* Swati where she stayed.

Jacob *exclaimed that* it was a beautiful bracelet.

The verbs 'said', 'asked' and 'exclaimed', used to report the words of the speaker, are referred to as the **reporting verbs**. The reporting verb used depends on the type of sentence reported. Thus, while 'said' or 'told' are used to report statements, 'asked' is

preferred when the reported sentence happens to be a question, 'requested' or 'ordered' or 'told' when it is a command, and 'exclaimed' in the case of exclamatory sentences. Besides these reporting verbs that are commonly used, the verbs given below are also used to report the four types of sentences.

- *statements (affirmative and negative)*: affirm, state, declare, assert, propose, allege, maintain, assure, announce, protest, swear, agree, promise, remark, remind, explain, etc.
- *questions*: enquire (of someone), question, query, wonder, etc.
- *commands and requests*: command, direct, forbid, warn, ask, beg, plead, pray, advise, etc.
- *exclamations*: cry, scream, etc.

Go back to the sentences given above to note the words used to connect the reporting verbs in different types of sentences with the speech being reported. Thus, the connective 'that' is used in reporting statements and exclamatory sentences, while 'if/whether' is used in the case of yes-no questions. However, note that in the case of Q-word questions (beginning with 'what', 'where', 'when', 'which', 'why' 'who' and 'how'), instead of the connectives 'if' and 'whether', the Q-word in the sentence is followed by the subject and verb. When a request or command in direct speech is changed into indirect speech, the infinitive form of the verb is used, such as, 'to come' in the example given above.

Now let us look at some more sentences to understand the changes that happen to the verb in the sentence within inverted commas when changed into indirect speech. First, note that the form of the verb in the reported sentence does not change if the reporting verb is in present simple, present perfect or future tense.

Damu says, 'Priya is working in Ahmedabad.' (direct speech)

Damu says that Priya is working in Ahmedabad. (indirect speech)

Many people have said, 'Shirin treated us well.' (direct speech)

Many people have said that Shirin treated them well. (indirect speech)

You will say, 'The tea is too sweet.' (direct speech)

You will say that the tea is too sweet. (indirect speech)

However, the form of the verb within inverted commas changes to the corresponding past tense when the reporting verb is in past simple tense. Look at the following pairs of sentences, all of which have the reporting verb in past simple tense, and note how the verb in the reported sentence changes.

- When the verb in the sentence in direct speech is in present simple tense, it changes to the past simple tense.

Gopu said, 'The bell *rings* at 9 a.m.' (direct speech)

Gopu said that the bell *rang* at 9 a.m. (indirect speech)

- When the verb in the sentence in direct speech is in present continuous tense, it changes to the past continuous tense.

Gopu said, 'The bell *is ringing*.' (direct speech)

Gopu said that the bell *was ringing*. (indirect speech)

- When the verb in the sentence in direct speech is in present perfect tense, it changes to the past perfect tense.

Gopu said, 'The bell *has rung*.' (direct speech)

Gopu said that the bell *had rung*. (indirect speech)

- When the verb in the sentence in direct speech is in present perfect continuous tense, it changes to the past perfect continuous tense.

Gopu said, 'The bell *has been ringing*.' (direct speech)

Gopu said that the bell *had been ringing*. (indirect speech)

- When the verb in the sentence in direct speech is also in past simple tense, it changes to the past perfect tense.

Gopu said, 'The bell *rang*.' (direct speech)

Gopu said that the bell *had rung*. (indirect speech)

- When the verb in the sentence in direct speech is in past continuous tense, it changes to the past perfect continuous tense.

Gopu said, 'The bell *was ringing*.' (direct speech)

Gopu said that the bell *had been ringing*. (indirect speech)

- When the verb in the sentence in direct speech comes with the auxiliary verb 'will' (or 'shall') to indicate future action, the auxiliary changes to its past tense form 'would'.

Gopu said, 'The bell *will ring*.' (direct speech)

Gopu said that the bell *would ring*. (indirect speech)

- Similarly, modal auxiliaries 'can' and 'may' change to their corresponding past tense forms 'could' and 'might' in indirect speech.

Gopu said, 'Alex *can ring* the bell.' (direct speech)

Gopu said that Alex *could ring* the bell. (indirect speech)

Gopu said, 'Alex *may ring* the bell.' (direct speech)

Gopu said that Alex *might ring* the bell. (indirect speech)

- Modal auxiliaries 'must' and 'should' either remain unchanged or change to 'had to' or 'would have to'. The modal auxiliary 'ought to' remains unchanged.

Gopu said, 'Alex *must ring* the bell.' (direct speech)

Gopu said that Alex *had to ring* the bell. (indirect speech)

Gopu said, 'Alex *ought to ring* the bell.' (direct speech)

Gopu said that Alex *ought to ring* the bell. (indirect speech)

There are, however, situations when the simple past form of the verb in direct speech remains unchanged in indirect speech even when the reporting verb is in past tense. Look at the following pairs of sentences.

The speaker said, 'The United Nations *adopted* the Human Rights Charter in 1948.'

The speaker said that the United Nations *adopted* the Human Rights Charter in 1948.

They said, 'If it *rained* for three months in the desert, farming would be possible there.'

They *said* that if it *rained* for three months in the desert, farming would be possible there.

Mira *said*, 'When the boy *picked up* the baby, his sister *smiled*.'
Mira *said* that when the boy *picked up* the baby, his sister *smiled*.

In the first pair of sentences, the speaker refers to a historical event, in the second pair of sentences the speaker refers to a hypothetical or imagined condition and in the third pair of sentences, the speaker describes two events/actions occurring at about the same time.

Similarly, the present simple form of the verb does not change into past tense if the reported sentence expresses (a) a habitual action/something that happens to be true at the time of reporting, (b) a universal truth/scientific fact or (c) something that is expected to happen in the future (at the time of reporting). The sentences below will illustrate this.

She *said*, 'Nitin *takes* the 8 o'clock train every day.'

She *said* that Nitin *takes* the 8 o'clock train every day.

I *said*, 'Water *is* essential for life.'

I *said* that water *is* essential for life.

Tina *said* two minutes ago, 'The theatre group *is* visiting Thrissur soon.'

Tina *said* two minutes ago that the theatre group *is* visiting Thrissur soon.

When sentences are changed from direct to indirect speech, personal and possessive pronouns also change their form. The changes depend on who the speaker, the person spoken to and the person reporting the speech are. Look at the following sentences that illustrate the changes pronouns undergo when sentences in direct speech are changed into indirect speech. All changes in pronouns have been italicised so that you may spot them easily.

I said to her, 'Will you teach me knitting?'

I asked her whether she would teach me knitting.

He said to us, 'You can borrow my pen.'

He told us that we could borrow his pen.

They said to me, 'Oh, we are delighted to be in your class!'

They exclaimed that they were delighted to be in my class.

You said, 'Raj, stop taking my things without asking me.'

You ordered Raj to stop taking your things without asking you.

She said, 'My brother has gone out.'

She said that her brother had gone out.

You said to me, 'You must give me your email id.'

You told me that I must give you my email id.

The last set of changes that occur when sentences in direct speech are reported in indirect speech is seen in the form of demonstratives (this, these) and adverbs of time and place (now, ago, today, yesterday, here, etc). These changes are shown in the table below for your easy reference.

Direct speech	Indirect speech
now	then
here	there
ago	before, earlier
today/tonight	that day/that night
tomorrow	the next day/the following day
yesterday	the previous day/ the day before
last month	the previous month
next Thursday	the following Thursday
this/these	that/those

Look at some sentences for examples of changes involving the above words and phrases.

Sudha said to us, 'Let us go to the UP state emporium *today*.'
 Sudha suggested that we go to the UP state emporium *that*
day.

His classmate said to Akash, 'Will you receive my grandmother
 at the station *next week*?'

His classmate asked Akash whether he would receive her (or
 his) grandmother at the station the *following week*.

The man said to me, 'Don't put your things *here*.'
 The man ordered me not to put my things *there*.

You said, 'Sonali gave me *this* handbag.'
 You said that Sonali gave you *that* handbag.

Udit said to his wife, 'When are you going out *tomorrow*?'
 Udit asked his wife when she was going out the *next day*.

Shanti said, 'I live in Shillong *now*.'
 Shanti said that she lived in Shillong *then*.

We said, 'Thank you for helping us *yesterday*.'

We thanked him/her/them for helping us the *previous day*.

Sometimes what you wish to report consists of more than one sentence. In such cases, the sentences could either be of the same type or else they could be of different types, say, a statement and a question. Remember that you will follow the patterns explained above to change each of the separate sentences into indirect speech, and combine them if you wish into one sentence using appropriate connectives, such as, 'and' and 'but'. Look at the examples below.

Kamala said to her husband, 'I cannot find the garden hose.
 Did you take it?' (direct speech)

Kamala *told* her husband that she could not find the garden
 hose *and asked* him if he had taken it. (indirect speech)

2. The fisherman said to his companions, 'What a terrible storm! Let us, however, wait for a while before returning to the shore.'
1. The fisherman *cried* that it was a terrible storm *but suggested* to his companions that they wait for a while before returning to the shore.

EXERCISES

A. Rewrite the following sentences in indirect speech. Try to use reporting verbs such as 'assure' and 'promise', which indicate the function performed by the reported sentence(s).

- Hasan said, 'I am returning to Nagpur next Saturday.'
- 'If I see Jai, I shall certainly bring him here,' said Dr Singh.
- 'The birds are flying away,' Kavita says.
- 'Helen writes very well,' said her friend.
- I said to the men, 'You can keep your boxes in the room.'
- 'Kurien built a house in my village last year,' said Chinnu.
- Everybody will say to them, 'You did a great job.'
- The officer said, 'Some of the animals have been saved.'
- The teacher said, 'Hitler became the chancellor of Germany in 1933.'
- 'Sania has been looking after my child since yesterday,' said the woman.
- 'Let us have a farewell dinner for our chairperson,' the director said.
- Sunita said to me, 'Your letter will not reach me as I am leaving the city today.'

B. Rewrite the following sentences in indirect speech.

- The nurse said to the patient, 'Has the pain become worse?'
- 'Did you know that I am your cousin's colleague?' said Kala to me.
- He said to you, 'What is the price of this tray?'

4. 'Are you walking with me to the beach?' the boy said to his friends.
5. 'Where was Alka when the telephone rang?' they said to him.
6. Anju said to Neil, 'Which shirt did you send to the laundry?'
7. Everybody will say to her, 'How does it feel to be home?'
8. 'Do you practise regularly?' said the coach to the athlete.
9. The guest said, 'Why is the room so stuffy?'
10. 'When can you meet me?' Prem said to his daughter.

C. Rewrite the following sentences in indirect speech.

1. Tony said to his teacher, 'Please give me another day to complete my work.'
2. 'Take the certificates that you left here two days ago,' said the principal to the student.
3. 'Don't eat fruits and vegetables without first washing them,' said Lola to us.
4. The general said to the soldiers, 'Take up positions to defend our camp against the enemy.'
5. 'Let the old people, the women and the children be allowed to go unharmed,' said the pilot.
6. 'How fortunate it is that you are here!' said Basant to his brother.
7. The managing director said, 'Mr Gupta, will you be going to Sri Lanka next month? There is an international conference on herbal medicine in Colombo on the 15th.'
8. 'What a pleasant surprise! I was longing to see you,' said Shruti to her mother.
9. Uncle said, 'Sharan, let us leave the car at the service station. Uma will pick it up tomorrow evening.'
10. Minu said to them, 'Please sit down. Did you want to speak to me about something?'

D. Rewrite the following sentences in direct speech.

1. Tania requested her friend to lend her an umbrella.
2. They told me that I could take the boat that was going to the Andaman islands.
3. Padma congratulated Franson on his promotion.
4. The officer asked the passenger if she had anything to declare.
5. Shah said that his mother would leave the next day.
6. We promised Rashmi that we would meet her there.
7. He asked me whether I played cards.
8. Niti apologised to Shobha for losing her bracelet.
9. The girl told her brother that they were late for the meeting.
10. Aman told the salesperson that he was looking for Dan Brown's latest novel.

NEGATIVE SENTENCES

Statements made by a speaker can be affirmative if they declare what happened, what was said or done, etc. They can, on the other hand, be negative if they state what did not happen, what was not said or done, etc. Look at the sentences below. All of them make affirmative, or positive, statements about a person, object or event.

The show will start in an hour.

Kunal was smiling at me.

The cows have returned to the shed.

A flyover is being constructed at Patel Chowk.

Now look at the following negative sentences corresponding to these affirmative statements.

The show will not start in an hour.

Kunal was not smiling at me.

The cows have not returned to the shed.

A flyover is not being constructed at Patel Chowk.

Note that affirmative sentences are changed into negative ones by adding 'not' between the auxiliary verb and the main verb. For example, in the sentence 'The show will not start in an hour', 'not' is inserted between 'will', which is an auxiliary verb, and 'start', a main verb.

In the case of an affirmative sentence that has only a main verb, the auxiliary verb 'do' is used (in its appropriate tense form and in agreement with the person and number of the subject), and this is followed by 'not' and the base form of the main verb.

The plane took off from this runway. (affirmative)

The plane did not take off from this runway. (negative)

Vijaya drives well. (affirmative)

Vijaya does not drive well. (negative)

They like travelling. (affirmative)

They do not like travelling. (negative)

It is useful to remember that sometimes the contracted form of the negative 'not' is linked to the auxiliary verb in front of it. It is also possible to link the contracted form of the auxiliary to the subject noun or pronoun in front of it. These contracted forms are commonly used in informal and spoken English.

They aren't (are not) eating ice-cream.

You don't (do not) understand this, do you?

We're (we are) not amused.

Mother's (mother is) not leaving tonight.

EXERCISES

A. *Change the following sentences into negative sentences.*

1. The water is cold.
2. The moon can be seen through the clouds.
3. The house looks beautiful.
4. Do water the plants when I am away.
5. I can help you.
6. Hamid cycles to college every day.
7. The trip was exciting.
8. It is too hot to go out.
9. Sanjay will lend us his dictionary.
10. We have had enough rain this year.
11. Kranti repaired the clock.
12. Susmita has to go to office tomorrow.