

ArivArk General English Video Series

Direct and Indirect Speech: Practice Questions

Group 2/2A Prelims: General English, Unit I Grammar

Real questions: TNPSC previous year questions (Group 4 2025 and Group 2/2A 2025), official answers. Practice questions: ArivArk Academy.

Direct and indirect speech: the basics

Direct speech: the speaker's exact words, inside quotation marks. Ravi said, "I am tired."

Indirect (reported) speech: the same idea in our words, without quotation marks. Ravi said that he was tired.

Reporting verb: said, told, asked, requested, ordered. **Reported speech:** the words inside the quotation marks.

Rule 1: tense goes one step back

Direct	Indirect (reporting verb in the past)
am / is	was
are	were
simple present (like)	simple past (liked)
present continuous (am writing)	past continuous (was writing)
present perfect (has done)	past perfect (had done)
simple past (went)	past perfect (had gone)
will / shall	would / should
can	could
may	might

Two exceptions: no tense change

No tense change 1: the reporting verb is in the present or future. He says, "I am busy." = He says that he is busy.

No tense change 2: a universal truth or habitual fact. The teacher said, "The sun rises in the east." = The teacher said that the sun rises in the east.

Rule 2: pronouns

Pronouns change with the speaker and the listener. Priya said to me, "I will help you." = Priya told me that she would help me.

I becomes she (Priya); you becomes me (the listener).

Rule 3: time and place words

Direct	Indirect
now	then
today	that day
tomorrow	the next day / the following day
yesterday	the previous day / the day before
here	there
this / these	that / those
ago	before
next week	the following week
last night	the previous night

Rule 4: reporting verb for each sentence type

Sentence type	Reporting verb	Joining word	Example
Statement	said / told (said to = told)	that	He said to me, "You are right." = He told me that I was right.
Yes/No question	asked	if / whether	He said to me, "Are you ready?" = He asked me if I was ready.
Wh- question	asked	the same wh- word (statement order, no question mark)	She said to him, "Where do you live?" = She asked him where he lived.
Command	told / ordered	to + verb	The teacher said to us, "Sit down." = The teacher told us to sit down.
Request	requested	to + verb	He said to me, "Please help me." = He requested me to help him.
Negative command	told / advised	not to + verb	Mother said, "Don't touch the fire." = Mother told me not to touch the fire.
Exclamation	exclaimed with joy / sorrow	that	He said, "What a lovely day!" = He exclaimed with joy that it was a lovely day.

Common mistakes

- 1. Question order in an indirect question.** Wrong: He asked me where was I going. Right: He asked me where I was going.
- 2. "said me".** Wrong: He said me that ... Right: He told me that ... / He said to me, "..."
- 3. Changing a universal truth.** Wrong: She said that water boiled at 100 degrees. Right: She said that water boils at 100 degrees.

TNPSC PYQs (official answers)

1. Direct to Indirect Speech: He said to Mr. Y, "Mr. Z will leave for his native place tomorrow".

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|---|--|
| (A) He told Mr. Y that Mr. Z will leave for his native place tomorrow | (B) He told Mr. Y that Mr. Z left for his native place the next day |
| (C) He told Mr. Y that Mr. Z would be leaving for his native place tomorrow | (D) He told Mr. Y that Mr. Z would leave for his native place the next day |

Answer: (D) He told Mr. Y that Mr. Z would leave for his native place the next day. Three changes: said to = told, will = would, tomorrow = the next day. (A) keeps will and tomorrow; (B) changes will leave to left; (C) keeps tomorrow.

2. "Will you tell me who is there?" is an example for _____

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|---------------------|-----------------------|
| (A) Direct question | (B) Indirect question |
| (C) Exclamation | (D) Basic formation |

Answer: (B) Indirect question. The inner part "who is there" is not asked directly; it sits inside the sentence in statement form: an indirect question.

Practice MCQs

1. Change into indirect speech: He said, "I am busy."

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|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (A) He said that he is busy. | (B) He said that I was busy. |
| (C) He said that he was busy. | (D) He told that he was busy. |

2. Change into indirect speech: She said, "I like coffee."

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|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (A) She said that she likes coffee. | (B) She said she has liked coffee. |
| (C) She said that she liked coffee. | (D) She said that I liked coffee. |

3. Change into indirect speech: He said to me, "You are late."

- (A) He said me that I was late. (B) He told me that I am late.
(C) He told me that I was late. (D) He told me that you were late.

4. Change into indirect speech: Ravi says, "I am hungry."

- (A) Ravi said that he was hungry. (B) Ravi says that he is hungry.
(C) Ravi says that he was hungry. (D) Ravi says that I am hungry.

5. Change into indirect speech: The teacher said, "The earth goes round the sun."

- (A) The teacher said that the earth went round the sun. (B) The teacher said that the earth goes round the sun.
(C) The teacher told that the earth goes round the sun. (D) The teacher said that the earth had gone round the sun.

6. Change into indirect speech: She said, "I will come tomorrow."

- (A) She said that she would come tomorrow. (B) She said that she would come the next day.
(C) She said that she will come tomorrow. (D) She said that she came the next day.

7. Change into indirect speech: He said, "I met her yesterday."

- (A) He said that he has met her the previous day. (B) He said that he met her yesterday.
(C) He said that he had met her the previous day. (D) He said that he had met her yesterday.

8. Change into indirect speech: He said, "I have finished my work."

- (A) He said that he had finished his work. (B) He said that I had finished my work.
(C) He said that he finished my work. (D) He said that he has finished his work.

9. Change into indirect speech: She said, "I am writing a letter now."

- (A) She said that she wrote a letter then. (B) She said that she was writing a letter then.
(C) She said that she was writing a letter now. (D) She said that she is writing a letter now.

10. Change into indirect speech: He said to me, "Are you ready?"

- (A) He asked me if you were ready. (B) He asked me if I was ready.
(C) He told me if I was ready. (D) He asked me was I ready.

11. Change into indirect speech: She said to him, "Where do you live?"

- (A) She asked him where do you live. (B) She asked him where he lived.
(C) She told him where he lived. (D) She asked him where did he live.

12. Change into indirect speech: He said to me, "What is your name?"

- (A) He asked me what is your name. (B) He asked me what was my name.
(C) He told me what my name was. (D) He asked me what my name was.

13. Change into indirect speech: The teacher said to us, "Sit down."

- (A) The teacher asked us that we sat down. (B) The teacher said us to sit down.
(C) The teacher told us that sit down. (D) The teacher told us to sit down.

14. Change into indirect speech: He said to me, "Please help me."

- (A) He requested me to help me. (B) He requested me that I helped him.
(C) He told me please help him. (D) He requested me to help him.

15. Change into indirect speech: Mother said to me, "Don't play in the rain."

- (A) Mother told me that not to play in the rain. (B) Mother told me not to play in the rain.
(C) Mother told me to not play in the rain. (D) Mother told me don't play in the rain.

16. Change into indirect speech: He said, "I can swim."

- (A) He said that he can swim. (B) He said that I could swim.
(C) He said that he could swim. (D) He said that he swam.

17. Change into indirect speech: She said, "I may go to Chennai."

- (A) She said that she may go to Chennai. (B) She said that she would go to Chennai.
(C) She said that she went to Chennai. (D) She said that she might go to Chennai.

18. Change into indirect speech: He said, "This book is mine."

- (A) He said that that book is mine. (B) He said that this book was his.
(C) He said that this book is mine. (D) He said that that book was his.

19. Change into indirect speech: He said, "I came here two days ago."

- (A) He said that he had come here two days ago. (B) He said that he has come there two days before.
(C) He said that he came here two days ago. (D) He said that he had come there two days before.

20. Which is the correct indirect speech of: She said, "What a beautiful flower!"

- (A) She asked what a beautiful flower it was. (B) She exclaimed with joy that it was a very beautiful flower.
(C) She exclaimed that what a beautiful flower. (D) She said what a beautiful flower it is.

Answer key: 1 C, 2 C, 3 C, 4 B, 5 B, 6 B, 7 C, 8 A, 9 B, 10 B, 11 B, 12 D, 13 D, 14 D, 15 B, 16 C, 17 D, 18 D, 19 D, 20 B

Why? Short explanations

- 1 (C)** said (past): am = was; I = he.
2 (C) Simple present = simple past.
3 (C) said to = told; you = I; are = was.
4 (B) Present reporting verb (says): no tense change.
5 (B) Universal truth: tense does not change.
6 (B) will = would; tomorrow = the next day.
7 (C) Simple past = past perfect; yesterday = the previous day.
8 (A) Present perfect = past perfect; my = his.
9 (B) Present continuous = past continuous; now = then.
10 (B) Yes/no question: asked + if; statement order.

11 (B) Wh- question: asked + where; no "did"; statement order.

12 (D) Statement order: my name was.

13 (D) Command: told + to + verb.

14 (D) Request: requested + to; me = him.

15 (B) Negative command: not to + verb.

16 (C) can = could.

17 (D) may = might.

18 (D) this = that; is = was; mine = his.

19 (D) came = had come; here = there; ago = before.

20 (B) Exclamation: exclaimed with joy + that + statement.

