

Changing the narration means moving somebody's words into your own. Three things move together every time: the tense steps back one row, the pronouns swap to match who is telling the story now, and the time and place words move away from the speaker. This sheet is the whole of that in four tables.

1. The tense steps back one row

Direct speech tense	Becomes	Example
Present simple	Past simple	She said, 'I walk to school.' > She said that she walked to school.
Present continuous	Past continuous	He said, 'I am reading.' > He said that he was reading.
Present perfect	Past perfect	She said, 'I have finished.' > She said that she had finished.
Present perfect continuous	Past perfect continuous	He said, 'I have been waiting.' > He said that he had been waiting.
Past simple	Past perfect	She said, 'I met him.' > She said that she had met him.
Past continuous	Past perfect continuous	He said, 'I was working.' > He said that he had been working.
Past perfect	Does not change	She said, 'I had eaten.' > She said that she had eaten.
Future, will	would	He said, 'I will come.' > He said that he would come.
can	could	She said, 'I can drive.' > She said that she could drive.
may	might	He said, 'I may be late.' > He said that he might be late.
shall	should	She said, 'Shall I wait?' > She asked whether she should wait.
must	had to	He said, 'I must go.' > He said that he had to go.

FOUR TIMES THE TENSE DOES NOT MOVE AT ALL

The reporting verb is in the present or the future. He says, 'I am busy' becomes he says that he is busy. Nothing steps back, because nothing has moved into the past.

The reported words are a universal truth or a fact that is still true. The teacher said, 'Water boils at 100 degrees' becomes the teacher said that water boils at 100 degrees.

The reported words are already in the past perfect. There is no row below it to step down to.

The sentence carries a fixed past time. He said, 'I was born in 2009' becomes he said that he was born in 2009, because had been born in 2009 would be wrong about the world, not just about the grammar.

2. The pronouns follow the people

Person in direct speech	Changes to	Example
First person: I, we, my, our, me, us	the person doing the reporting	Ali said, 'I lost my pen.' > Ali said that he had lost his pen.
Second person: you, your	the person being spoken to	He said to me, 'You are late.' > He told me that I was late.
Third person: he, she, they, his, her, their	does not change	She said, 'They have gone.' > She said that they had gone.

3. Time and place move away from the speaker

Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
now	then	here	there
today	that day	this	that
tonight	that night	these	those
tomorrow	the next day	ago	before
yesterday	the day before	thus	so
last night	the previous night	hence	thence
next week	the following week	come	go

THREE THINGS THAT MUST NOT CHANGE

The meaning. If both sentences could not be true of the same moment, the answer is wrong however neat the grammar looks.

Who said it and who they said it to. Changing a pronoun is not the same as changing a person.

Everything the instruction did not ask for. If the question says change the narration, the voice stays exactly where it is.

4. The reporting verb follows the kind of sentence

Kind of sentence	Reporting verb	What links it	Example
Statement	said, told	that	He said, 'I am tired.' > He said that he was tired.
Wh question	asked, enquired	the same wh word	She said, 'Where is Ali?' > She asked where Ali was.
Yes or no question	asked, enquired	if, whether	He said, 'Do you know her?' > He asked whether I knew her.
Command	ordered, told	to	She said, 'Shut the door.' > She ordered me to shut the door.
Negative command	forbade, told	not to	He said, 'Do not shout.' > He told me not to shout.
Request	requested	to	She said, 'Please help me.' > She requested me to help her.
Advice	advised	to	He said, 'You should rest.' > He advised me to rest.
Exclamation	exclaimed	that	She said, 'What a match!' > She exclaimed with joy that it was a wonderful match.
Optative	prayed, wished	that	He said, 'May you live long!' > He prayed that I might live long.

Read the instruction before you read the sentence. It names one change and one only, and the pronouns and the time words travel with it.

WHERE THIS IS EXAMINED

In the FBISE assessment framework for the National Curriculum of Pakistan 2022-23, changing between direct and indirect speech is a summative learning outcome at both Grade 9 and Grade 10, which means it can appear in the annual examination.

At Grade 10 it is set across a short narrative paragraph rather than as separate sentences, so the pronouns have to stay consistent from the first line to the last. Practise it as a paragraph, not as a list. Check the current framework and model paper yourself before you revise. Patterns change, and this sheet is a study aid, not an official document.

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