

Reported Speech

When reporting speech, the tense usually changes. This is because when we use reported speech, we are usually talking about a time in the past (because obviously the person who spoke originally spoke in the past). The verbs, therefore, usually have to be in the past too.

The tenses of the reported clause are usually moved back. This moving back of tenses is called BACKSHIFT

- **Changing verb tenses:**

Direct speech		Reported speech
Present Simple	→	Past Simple
Present Continuous	→	Past Continuous
Present Perfect Simple	→	Past Perfect Simple
Present Perfect Continuous	→	Past Perfect Continuous
Past Simple	→	Past Perfect Simple
Future	→	Conditional
Imperative	→	Infinitive

Note that the Past Perfect Simple and the Past Perfect Continuous do not change since no backshift is possible. .

DIRECT SPEECH

- **Can**
- **May**
- **Must**
- **Shall**
- **Will**

INDIRECT SPEECH

could

might

had to

should

would

Note: Past Modals are unchanged

Examples:

Direct speech	Indirect speech
Present simple She said, "It's cold."	Past simple She said it was cold.
Present continuous She said, "I'm teaching English online."	Past continuous She said she was teaching English online.
Present perfect She said, "I've been on the web since 1999."	Past perfect She said she had been on the web since 1999.

Direct speech	Indirect speech
<p>Past simple She said, "I taught online yesterday."</p>	<p>Past perfect She said she had taught online yesterday.</p>
<p>Past continuous She said, "I was teaching earlier."</p>	<p>Past perfect continuous She said she had been teaching earlier.</p>
<p>Past perfect She said, "The lesson had already started when he arrived."</p>	<p>Past perfect NO CHANGE</p>
<p>Modals "I can/will/might see later", he said</p>	<p>Modals He said he could/would/might see me later.</p>

- **Changing pronouns, personal and possessive.**
- **Pronouns change (or not) depending on the view of the reporter**

Direct speech			Reported speech			
I	me	my	→	he / she	him / her	his / her
We	us	ours	→	they	them	their

Direct Speech

John said, “**I** am coming.”

Indirect Speech

John said that **he** was coming.

TIME AND PLACE CHANGES

It is often necessary to make time and place changes in relation to tense changes:

Time expressions

Direct speech		Reported speech
Now	→	then
Today	→	that day
Tonight	→	that night
Yesterday	→	the day before
Tomorrow	→	the following day / the next day
next day / week / month / year	→	the following day / week / month / year

- **Place expressions:**

Direct speech		Reported speech
Here	→	there
This	→	that
These	→	those

Direct Speech

John said, “I did **this exercise** last night.”

Indirect Speech

John said that he had done **that exercise** the previous night.

CONDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Type 1 conditional statements are reported as follows:

*'If you **pass your test**, I'll buy you a car' he said.*

*He said that if I **passed my test** he would buy me a car.*

Type 2 conditional statements are reported as follows:

*'If you **passed your test** I would buy you a car' he said.*

*He said that if I **passed my test** he would buy me a car.*

Type 3 conditional statements are reported as follows:

*'If you'd **passed your test** I'd have bought you a car' he said*

*He said that if I'd **passed my test** he'd have bought me a car.*

EXCLAMATIONS

Note the word order in reported exclamations:

'What a silly boy you are' she exclaimed

She told him what a silly boy he was.

She told him that he was a silly boy.

Indirect statements with mixed tense sequences

Form of indirect statements with mixed tense sequences

actual spoken statement

I've read Tony's book and I don't understand it'

indirect statements with mixed tense sequences

Jim says he's read Tony's book and didn't understand it.

Jim said he's read Tony's book and doesn't understand it.

Jim said he'd read Tony's book and doesn't understand it.

Jim said he'd read Tony's book and didn't understand it.

Yes/No question

When the question is preceded by auxiliary that needs *yes/No* answer it will be used the conjunction if or whether in *the indirect speech*

The steps how to make *indirect speech*:

The question sentence of the indirect speech is *firstly* *changed to be statement*

It then follows the rules before.

Example

DIRECT SPEECH

Doctor: 'Do you usually take a nap?'

It is firstly changed to be:

You usually take a nap

INDIRECT SPEECH

Doctor asks
if/whether I
usually take a
nap

actual spoken questions

Be: *'Are you ready?'*

Have: *'Have you finished?'*

Do *'Do you play chess?'*

Modals: *'Can I have it?'*

Indirect questions

He asked (me) if/whether I am/was ready

He asked (me) if/whether I (have)/had finished.

He asked (me) if/whether I play/played chess .

He asked (me) if/whether he can/could have it.

Indirect question-word questions

- In the question using Question Word (QW)
 - To form *indirect speech* the question **is firstly changed to be *statement***
 - QW: **what, when, where, which, why, who, whom,** etc. are used as **conjunction**

actual spoken questions

indirect questions

Be: *Where are you going?*

He asked (me) where I was going.

Have: *'Why haven't you finished?'* *He wanted to know why I (haven't)/hadn't finished.*

Do: *What do you think of it?*

He wanted to know what I (think) /thought of it.

Modals: *'When must I be there?'*

He asked (me) when he must be/had to be there

INDIRECT SUBJECT-QUESTIONS

actual spoken questions

indirect questions

Be: *'Who is in charge here?'*

He asked (me) who was in charge here.

Present: *'Which firm makes these parts?'* *He asked (me) which firm (makes) made those parts*

Past: *'What caused the accident?'* *He asked (me) what caused/had caused the accident*

Modals: *'Whose novel will win the prize?'* *He asked (me) whose novel would win the prize.*

TO-INFINITIVE IN INDIRECT SPEECH

actual spoken words

reported version

'Keep a record of your expenses'

I told him to keep a record of his expenses.

'Don't make a mess in the kitchen'

I told him not to make a mess in the kitchen.

'How do I prepare the sauce?'

He wanted to know how to prepare the sauce.

I want to speak to the manager.

She asked to speak to the manager.

reported speech

Look at the girl on the right. We would turn the statement into the reported speech by changing:

- the verb from the present simple to the past simple
- the personal pronoun I to she
- the possessive pronoun my to her

I love my new dress.



The sentence would then be:

The girl said she loved her new dress.

reported speech

There are several reporting verbs we can use:

→ The most commonly used one is to say.

She said she was studying.

→ When the person who we are talking to is referred, we can use to tell.

You told me you liked your new dress.

→ We may report something that was said without keeping to the original words, the reporting verb itself may contain that idea or intention. The verbs here can be: to admit, to advise, to agree, to remind, to suggest, to encourage, to insist, to persuade, to warn, to refuse, to urge, among others.

- *I admit it, I did it!*

She admitted she did it.

reported speech

Time to practise!

Look at the images that will appear and change what the characters say into the reported speech. Take in consideration all the changes that must occur: in the verbs, the pronouns and the expressions of time and place.

reported speech

My mother
gives me new
dolls regularly.



reported speech

The girl said her mother gave her new dolls regularly.

My mother
gives me new
dolls regularly.



reported speech

My book
is being very
interesting!



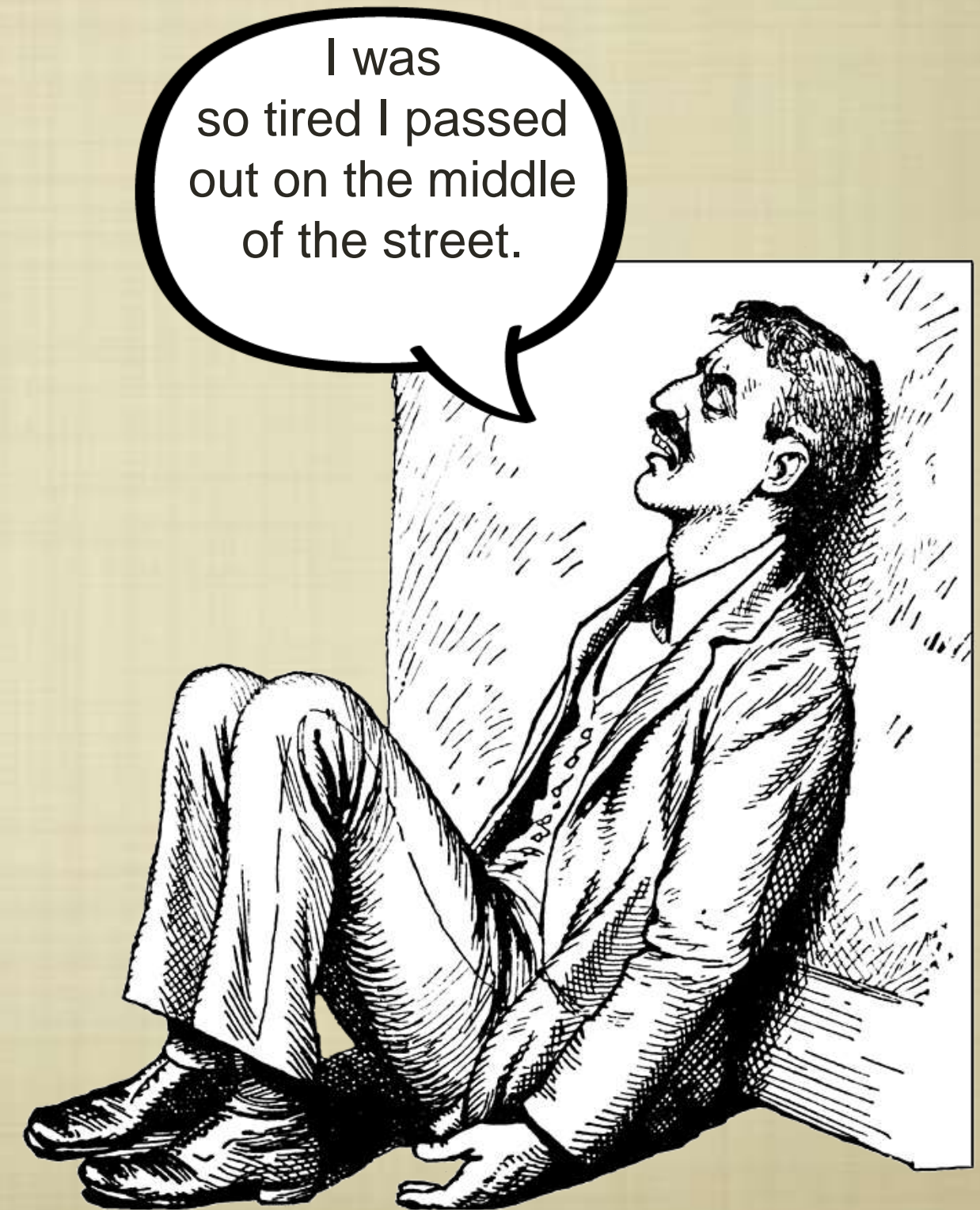
reported speech

The woman said her book was being very interesting.

My book
is being very
interesting!

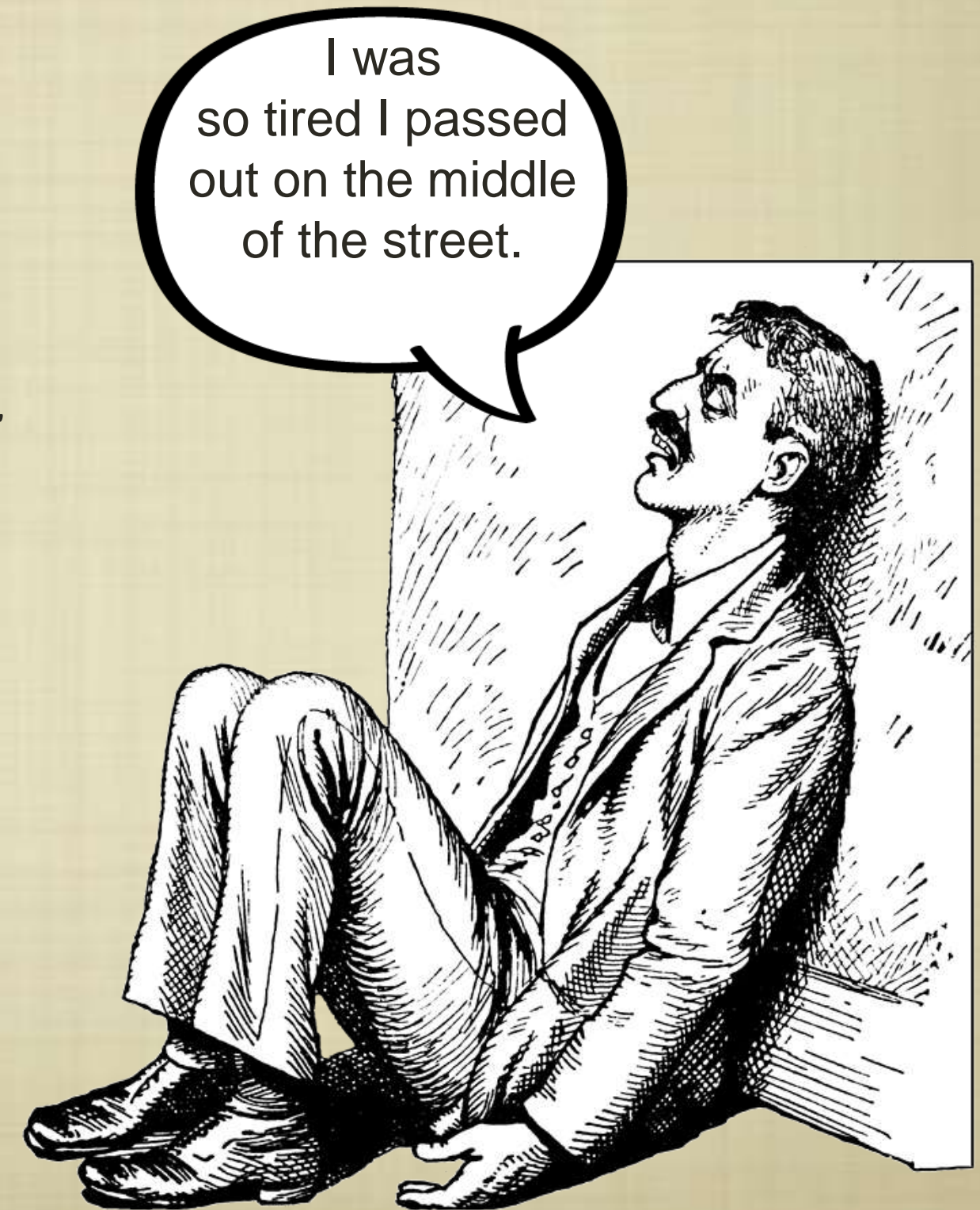


reported speech



reported speech

The man said he had been so tired he passed out on the middle of the street.



reported speech



reported speech

*The woman said it had been years since she
had had that much fun.*



reported speech



I will catch
a fish
today!

reported speech

The girl said she would catch a fish that day.

I will catch
a fish
today!



reported speech

STOP!



reported speech

The man yelled at me to stop.

