

Reported Speech (Direct and Indirect Discourse)

The topic of *discourse* in language deals with examining the flow of content in a narration or conversation. Discourse is the vehicle through which information is communicated back and forth from one person to another. In a conversation, the discourse is simply the exchange of words directly from one person to another and vice versa. The discourse in a conversation can also contain information that is reported by a speaker concerning what someone outside of the conversation said (a third party). Reported speech is a form of discourse that relays information derived primarily from an outside source, from a third person, not in the immediate conversation. Stylistically, there are two methods for conveying information originating from someone's mouth. These two methods are called *direct discourse* (quoted speech) and *indirect discourse* (reported speech).

DIRECT DISCOURSE

is a word-for-word quotation, verbatim, of a person's statements. English and German indicate direct discourse by placing quotation marks around the direct quotation. The direct quotation can follow or precede the words indicating a quotation.

1. "The committee approved my suggestions last week," as stated by the chairman.
2. The task force is reporting, "the crime rate fell by a full percent last year."
3. Frau Klein's exact words were clearly: "I know the perpetrator."
4. "We will not cooperate with the committee," emphasized the president.
5. It was noted, "Some workers have already received their bonus paychecks."
6. They believe, "the trade unions will readily accept our offer."

INDIRECT DISCOURSE

is also known as *reported speech*. This is information that comes from a source other than the author. Indirect discourse is a paraphrase (not a direct quotation) of another person's statements. Because reported speech is a paraphrase, words such as pronouns and verbs in the indirect speech differ in form from the original that actually came out of the person's mouth. Indirect discourse never carries quotation marks.

To recognize indirect discourse, it is important to find two parts to the whole discourse. There must be a frame (usually indicated by a verb), and there must be paraphrased information originating from someone other than the reporter.

part one: The frame verb (e.g. *say, claim, believe*, etc.) indicates an utterance or thought on the part of the reporter. The frame verb alerts the listener that the source of the information come from someone other than the reporter. The frame verb sets up a context in which the reporter can then couch the information from the outside source. Here are a few examples of frame verbs:

he said (that) ...

the newspaper reports (that) ...

she claims (that) ...

the president emphasized (that) ...

It was noted (that) ...

They believe (that) ...

part two: The paraphrase is the pertinent information delivered by the reporter obtained from an outside source. Because the reported information is paraphrased by the reporter (*marked in italics*) the paraphrase varies slightly from the original words that came out of the mouth of the source. The frame verbs are marked with an underline.

7. He said *that the committee approved his suggestions last week.*
8. *The crime rate fell by a full percent last year* as reported by the task force.
9. *She knows the perpetrator*, so she claims.
10. The president emphasized *he would not cooperate with the committee.*
11. *That the workers had already received their bonus paychecks* was noted in the monthly report.
12. They believe *the trade unions will readily accept their offer.*