

# Reported Questions (indirekte Fagen)

A reported question is when we tell someone what another person asked. Reported questions are one form of **reported speech (indirekte Rede)**. You end the sentence with a **full stop**, not a question mark.

direct question	reported question
She said: "Are you cold?"	She asked me if I was cold.
He said: "Where's my pen?"	He asked where his pen was.

We usually introduce reported questions with **reporting verbs** like

- Ask
- Want to know
- Wonder
- Inquire
- Think
- ...

Examples:

- He asked (me) if/whether... (YES/NO questions)
- He wanted to know (me) why/when/where/what/how... (question-word questions)
- He wondered if/whether ...

As with reported statements, we may need to do some **changes**:

1. **Word order (normal statement: subject – verb – object)**
2. **Pronouns**
3. **Tenses (backshift)**
4. **Time reference**
5. **Place reference**

## Word Order

direct question	reported question
She said: " <b>Are you cold?</b> "	She asked me if <b>I was cold.</b>
<i>verb – subject – object</i>	<i>subject – verb – object</i>

## Pronouns (personal pronouns, possessive pronouns, demonstrative pronouns)

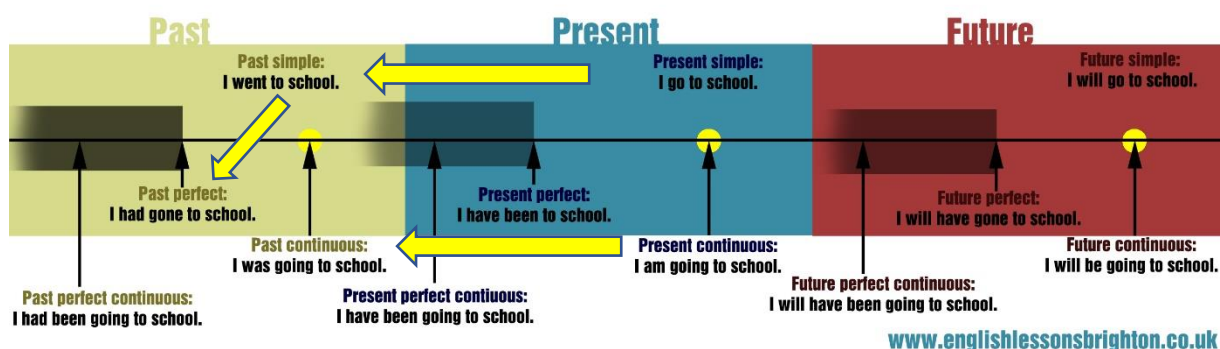
direct question	reported question
She said: " <b>Can I go home?</b> "	She asked me if <b>she could go home.</b>
<i>I</i>	<i>she</i>

## Backshift of Tenses

If the **introductory sentence** is in the **Simple Present**, there is **no backshift of tenses**.

direct question	reported question
She asks: "Does Mary work in an office?"	She asks me if Mary works in an office.
<i>Present Simple</i>	<i>Present Simple</i>

If the **introductory sentence** is in the **Simple Past**, there is usually **backshift of tenses**.



direkte Rede	indirekte Rede
<b>simple present</b> Carl: "I <b>eat</b> three burgers a day."	<b>simple past</b> Carl said he <b>ate</b> three burgers a day.
<b>present continuous</b> Sarah: "I <b>am applying</b> for a job."	<b>past continuous</b> Sarah answered she <b>was applying</b> for a job.
<b>simple past</b> Paul: "I <b>woke up</b> at 12 o'clock."	<b>past perfect</b> Paul said he <b>had woken up</b> at 12 o'clock.
<b>present perfect</b> Lisa: "I <b>have been</b> to India."	<b>past perfect</b> Lisa told us she <b>had been</b> to India.
<b>will-future</b> Tereso: "I <b>will be</b> a dentist."	<b>Conditional I</b> Tereso mentioned he <b>would be</b> a dentist.

### Time Reference (Adverbs of time)

now → then

today → that day

tomorrow → the next day

yesterday → the day before

last week → the week before

next week → the following week

### Place Reference (Adverbs of place)

here → there

Remember that there are basically **three types of question**:

- YES/NO questions: *Do you want tea?*
- Question Word questions: *Where did you drink tea?*
- Choice questions: *Do you prefer tea or coffee?*

**Reported choice questions** have the same structure as Reported YES/NO questions.

Questions with the verb BE always have a different structure: *Was the tea cold? Where is my tea?* You can see all these differences in the examples below.

## Reported YES/NO questions

We introduce reported YES/NO questions with **ask + if**:

**direct question** She said, "**Do you like coffee?**"

**reported question** She asked **if I liked coffee**.

Note that in the above example the reported question has no auxiliary "do". But there is pronoun change and backshift.

Note that we sometimes use "whether" instead of "if". The meaning is the same. "Whether" is a little more formal and more usual in writing:

- They asked us **if** we wanted lunch.
- They asked us **whether** we wanted lunch.

## Reported question-word questions

We introduce reported question-word questions with **ask + question word**:

**direct question** He said, "Where do you live?"

**reported question** He asked me where I lived.

Note that in the above example the reported question has no auxiliary "do". But there is pronoun change and backshift.

Look at these example sentences:

	<b>direct question</b>	<b>reported question</b>
<b>YES/NO questions</b>	I said: "Can I help you?"	I asked if I could help her.
	She said to us: "Did you feel cold?"	She asked if we had felt cold.
	He said: "Are your hands cold?"	He asked whether my hands were cold.
<b>question-word questions</b>	He said: "Where are you going?"	He asked me where I was going.
	He said: "Why didn't you say something?"	He asked me why I hadn't said anything.
	He said: "When will they come?"	He asked when they would come.
	He said: "Who has seen Avatar?"	He asked me who had seen Avatar.
	He said: "How much might it cost?"	He asked me how much it might cost.
	She said to me: "Where is the station?"	She asked me where the station was.
<b>choice questions</b>	He asked, "Do you want tea or coffee?"	He asked whether I wanted tea or coffee.
	He said, "Is the car new or second-hand?"	He asked whether the car was new or second-hand.