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If we want to say what somebody has said, we can change the person's words into our own words. This is called **reported speech**.

Reported questions are one form of reported speech.

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.

Reported questions are used to describe *questions that someone has asked*.

Direct questions and reported questions use different word orders.

'If' and 'whether'

1 Closed questions

Closed questions require a 'yes' or 'no' answer.

Let's consider the example:

You go to a job interview and the interviewer asks you:

- *Are you friendly and outgoing?*
- *Have you done this kind of work before?*

Later, you want to tell a friend what the interviewer asked you. You have two options:

a) You can repeat her words:

- *She asked me, 'Are you friendly and outgoing?'*
- *She asked me, 'Have you done this type of work before?'*

These are **direct questions**.

b) You can also use **reported questions**.

If the answer to a question in direct speech is '*yes*' or '*no,*' '**if**' or '**whether**' is used to report the question. 'Whether' is more formal than 'if.'

- *She asked me **if** I was friendly and outgoing.*
- *She asked me **if** I had done this type of work before.*

Reported questions with '*if*' and '*whether*' leave out the auxiliary verb '*do.*'

- *Do you want me to stay for dinner? – Ian asked me **if we wanted** to stay for dinner.*

2 'Do', 'does' and 'did'

These auxiliary verbs are not used in reported questions. The **past form** of the verb is usually used.

- Interviewer: 'Do you like working as part of a team?' – *She asked me **if** I **liked** working as part of a team.*

3 Choice questions

'*If*' or '*whether*' can also be used to report questions that use "*or*" in direct speech.

- Interviewer: 'Do you want to work in the morning or in the afternoon?' – *She asked me **if** I **wanted** to work in the morning or the afternoon.*

4 Open questions

Open questions start with wh-words (interrogative pronouns) and require providing more information. Direct open questions are reported by *swapping the order of the subject and the verb*.

- What are your hobbies?
- Where do you live?

- Why did you apply for this position?
- What hours can you work?

The subject comes **before the verb** in reported questions.

- She asked me *what my hobbies were*.
- She asked me *where I lived*.

To summarize:

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via https://keepsmilingenglish.com/2015/12/reported-speech-the-basics/

Changing direct questions to reported questions

The change of *pronoun* and *tense* are similar to [reported statements](#).

In addition:

a) the word order changes

b) we add 'if' or 'whether' with 'yes' / 'no' questions

- Interviewer: 'Can you start tomorrow?' – She asked me **if I could** start the next day.

The tense in reported questions usually moves **one tense back** from the tense in direct questions.

- She asked me *why I had applied for the position*.
- She asked me *what hours I could work*.

Check out this video from British Council and learn how to use reported questions:

See also:

[Reported Speech: Overview](#)

[Reported Speech: Tenses](#)