Reported Questions – Lesson

1. Why Reported Questions Matter in Journalism

Journalists often need to report what officials, witnesses, experts, or sources asked without quoting them directly. Reported questions help maintain neutrality, summarize interviews, and provide clarity in news stories.

Direct Question: "Where did the funds go?"

Reported: The investigator asked where the funds had gone.

2. Types of Questions: Yes/No and Wh- Questions

A. Yes/No Questions

Use: ask + if/whether + clause (no question word order)

Direct: "Did the minister resign?"

Reported: Reporters asked if the minister had resigned.

B. Wh- Questions

Keep the question word, remove question form, use statement order.

Direct: "Why is the website down?"

Reported: Users asked why the website was down.

3. Structure Rules for Reported Questions

– No question marks in reported questions.

– Subject comes before the verb (statement order).

– Tense usually shifts back (backshifting).

– Pronouns and time expressions change based on context.

Examples:

Direct: "When will the results be released?"

Reported: Journalists asked when the results would be released.

Direct: "Who leaked the documents?"

Reported: Investigators questioned who had leaked the documents.

4. Backshifting in Reported Questions (Journalism Examples)

Present simple → Past simple

Direct: "Where do the donations go?"

Reported: The reporter asked where the donations went.

Present continuous → Past continuous

Direct: "Why are they blocking the road?"

Reported: She asked why they were blocking the road.

Past simple → Past perfect

Direct: "When did the system fail?"

Reported: Analysts asked when the system had failed.

Present perfect → Past perfect

Direct: "How many users have complained?"

Reported: The editor asked how many users had complained.

Will → Would

Direct: "When will the update be published?"

Reported: Producers asked when the update would be published.

5. Pronoun, Time, and Place Changes in Reported Questions

Pronouns:

Direct: "Do you support the proposal?"

Reported: The journalist asked whether the officials supported the proposal.

Time expressions:

today → that day

yesterday → the previous day

tomorrow → the following day

now → then

Example:

Direct: "Why was the site down yesterday?"

Reported: Readers asked why the site had been down the previous day.

6. Why Journalists Use Reported Questions

– To summarize press conferences without quoting every question.

– To maintain objectivity and avoid emotional tone.

– To include only the relevant information in a news article.

– To transform chaotic spoken interactions into coherent narrative reporting.

Example:

Direct: "Are you hiding information from the public?"

Reported: Several reporters questioned whether the officials were hiding information from the public.

7. Reported Questions in Investigative Journalism

Reported questions allow investigators and journalists to present inquiries without assigning direct blame.

Example:

Direct: "Who ordered the data to be deleted?"

Reported: The committee sought to determine who had ordered the data to be deleted.

8. Reported Questions in Digital Journalism

Used in:

– summaries of live interviews

– fact-checking reports

– multimedia scripts

– newsletters and digital bulletins

Example:

Direct: "How will the new policy affect freelancers?"

Reported: Analysts asked how the new policy would affect freelancers.

9. Summary for Journalism Students

Use reported questions when:

– condensing interviews

– summarizing press conferences

– reporting without quoting

– maintaining neutrality

Structure:

ask + question word/if/whether + subject + verb (backshifted)

Reported questions help journalists turn spoken language into clear, professional written reporting.

Reported Polite Requests – Lesson for

1. Why Reported Polite Requests Matter in Journalism

Journalists frequently report polite requests made by officials, institutions, eyewitnesses, or sources. These requests often appear in:

– press conferences

– official statements

– public announcements

– crisis communication

– interviews and field reporting

Reported polite requests help maintain neutrality and professionalism when transforming spoken requests into written journalistic language.

Example:

Direct: "Could you send the documents?"

Reported: The spokesperson asked if the documents could be sent.

2. What Is a Polite Request?

A polite request is a question or statement used to ask someone to do something in a polite or indirect way.

Common forms:

– Could you…?

– Would you…?

– Can you…?

– Please + verb

– I would like you to…

– Do you mind…?

In journalism, these must be converted into indirect (reported) form.

3. Structure of Reported Polite Requests

General rule:

reporting verb (asked, requested, urged, appealed…) + object (optional) + to + base verb

Examples:

Direct: "Please provide more details."

Reported: The officials requested reporters to provide more details.

Direct: "Could you clarify the statement?"

Reported: Journalists asked the minister to clarify the statement.

Direct: "Would you send us the final report?"

Reported: The editor asked the team to send the final report.

4. Common Verbs Used in Reporting Requests (Journalistic Context)

– asked

– requested

– urged

– called on

– appealed to

– encouraged

– reminded

– advised

Examples:

The agency urged citizens to remain indoors.

The spokesperson called on journalists to wait for official updates.

5. Grammar Rules for Reporting Polite Requests

A. Remove question structure

Direct: "Could you check the data?"

Reported: She asked him to check the data.

B. Use "to + verb"

Direct: "Would you review this draft?"

Reported: The editor asked the reporter to review the draft.

C. Backshifting is NOT required for "to + verb" structure

Direct: "Please send the images today."

Reported: The photographer requested the team to send the images that day.

D. Transform "please" into a reporting verb

Direct: "Please wait outside."

Reported: The officer asked them to wait outside.

6. Pronoun, Time, and Place Changes

As in all reported speech, pronouns and time expressions shift depending on the context.

Example:

Direct: "Can you publish this today?"

Reported: The manager asked if it could be published that day.

Pronouns:

"you" → journalists, the team, them, staff, etc.

7. Journalistic Uses of Reported Polite Requests

A. Summarizing press conferences

Direct: "Would you avoid speculation?"

Reported: The minister asked reporters to avoid speculation.

B. Reporting crisis-management instructions

Direct: "Please stay away from the damaged area."

Reported: Authorities urged citizens to stay away from the damaged area.

C. Writing formal news articles and press releases

Direct: "Could you verify the figures before publication?"

Reported: The editor requested the team to verify the figures before publication.

D. Representing communication between officials

Direct: "Would you attend the emergency meeting?"

Reported: The committee asked members to attend the emergency meeting.

8. Polite Requests with "If / Whether"

Used when the request is phrased as a question, not an imperative.

Direct: "Could you tell us when the system failed?"

Reported: Analysts asked if he could explain when the system had failed.

Structure:

ask + if/whether + clause

(no inversion, no question mark)

9. Advanced Journalistic Examples

Direct: "Please refrain from sharing unverified information."

Reported: The ministry advised the public to refrain from sharing unverified information.

Direct: "Could you keep the cameras off during the briefing?"

Reported: Security staff asked journalists to keep the cameras off during the briefing.

Direct: "Would you provide access to the archived files?"

Reported: Investigators requested access to the archived files.

10. Summary for Journalism Students

Use reported polite requests to:

– maintain objective tone

– avoid quoting every request directly

– summarize long interactions efficiently

– ensure clarity in news reports and press releases

Forms:

ask/request/urge + person + to + verb

ask + if/whether + clause (for question-form requests)

Reported polite requests allow journalists to transform spoken language into concise, professional, and neutral reporting.