

# Grammar: Indirect statement

## *Overview*

Indirect statements are reported statements:

They said that he was coming.

The basic construction involves putting the reported subject into the accusative, and the reported verb into the infinitive, missing out the 'that'.

They said him to be coming

or in Latin:

**dixerunt eum venire**

They tend to follow verbs of thinking, perceiving, feeling etc., which can be termed '**VAN-verbs**' (**Verbs Above the Neck**). Examples of verbs that will trigger an indirect statement construction include:

dico	say	respondeo	reply
intellego	understand	nego	deny
scio	know	constituo	decide
nescio	not know	nuntio	announce
puto	think	affirmo	assert
existimo	think, calculate	iuro	swear
spero	hope	cognosco	get to know
sentio	perceive, realise	promitto	promise
credo	believe	polliceor	promise

## *Notes*

- If there is more than one accusative in the reported statement, the first one is the subject accusative dixit dominum servum vituperare the master is cursing the slave, not the other way around.
- If the reported statement concerns the same subject as the main

verb, this is expressed using *se mercator dixit eum multas ancillas emere* the merchant is talking about someone else buying slave girls *mercator dixit se multas ancillas emere* the merchant is talking about buying slave girls himself

- *dico ... non* is not an acceptable negative. Use *nego* instead.
- This construction can stand as the subject of an impersonal verb, or of *est* with an abstract substantive or neuter adjective.
- With verbs of hoping, promising, swearing or threatening it is usually necessary to use the future infinitive.
- The accusative and infinitive construction can also be used after verbs such as *iubeo, veto, patior, sino, volo, malo, nolo, cupio*

### *Examples drawn from the exercises*

The number after each question indicates the exercise from which it has been drawn, so that you can look at the example in context.

1. quadrigae inter se occurrentes sine periculo commeare dicuntur.  
*Exercise 10*
2. credo ... quia tutius visum est pluribus locis spargi.  
*Exercise 10*
3. nam neque de caelo cecidisse animalia possunt nec terrestria de salsis exisse lacunis.  
*Exercise 9*
4. nos autem fortes viri satis facere rei publicae videmur ...  
*Exercise 7*
5. quis non cupit te amare?  
*Exercise 5*

### *Examples drawn from Cicero*

1. non intellegebat, animos iudicium non illius eloquentia sed defensionis impudentia commoveri. *Pro Cluentio XXI.58*
2. se a Sulla et alios praeterea tres factos esse dixit  
*Pro Cluentio VIII.25*
3. patere tua consilia non sentis? *In Catilinam 1.I.1*

4. dico te priore nocte venisse inter falcarios - non agam obscure -  
in M. Laecae domum. *In Catilinam 1.IV.9*

5. hoc autem uno interfecto intellego hanc rei publicae pestem  
paulisper reprimi, non in perpetuum comprimi posse.  
*In Catilinam 1.XII.30*