

What is Free Indirect Speech?

Worksheet

Free indirect speech reports a character's speech or thought in third person without quotation marks: 'Elle n'irait pas.' (She would not go.) The reader hears the character's voice but through the narrator's perspective. It merges direct and indirect speech.

Questions

1. Which is free indirect speech?

- A) 'I am tired,' she said.
- B) She said that she was tired.
- C) She was tired.
- D) She asked if he was tired.

2. Convert to free indirect: 'Je veux partir,' dit-elle.

- A) She wanted to leave.
- B) She said she wanted to leave.
- C) Did she want to leave?
- D) She would leave.

3. Free indirect speech is most like...

- A) A stage direction
- B) A character's inner monologue reported by the narrator
- C) A newspaper article
- D) An essay

4. What punctuation typically marks free indirect speech in French?

- A) Quotation marks
- B) Dashes only
- C) No special punctuation — just tense/person shift
- D) Ellipses (...)

5. Convert direct speech to free indirect: 'Je ne veux pas rester,' pensa-t-il.

6. Identify and explain the free indirect passage: 'Elle entra dans la pièce. Elle avait l'impression que tout le monde la regardait.'

7. Rewrite in free indirect: "'Will you come back?' she asked."

8. Define: What is free indirect speech?

9. Define: Example of free indirect in French?

10. Define: How does free indirect differ from indirect speech?

Answer Key

1. C) She was tired. — 'She was tired' — third person, no quotes, no 'she said,' yet the reader hears her perspective.
2. A) She wanted to leave. — 'She wanted to leave' — no quotes, third person, past tense shift.
3. B) A character's inner monologue reported by the narrator — It reads like character thought but is reported in third person by the narrator.
4. C) No special punctuation — just tense/person shift — Free indirect requires no special punctuation — the tense and person shift signal the technique.
5. Direct: 'Je ne veux pas rester,' pensa-t-il. (I don't want to stay, he thought.) Free indirect: Il ne voulait pas rester. (He didn't want to stay.) No quotes; third person; tense shifts to past.
6. Free indirect: 'Elle avait l'impression que tout le monde la regardait.' Direct would be: 'J'ai l'impression que tout le monde me regarde.' Third person ('elle') + thought without quotes = free indirect.
7. Free indirect version: 'Elle demanda s'il reviendrait.' Or, more intimately (free indirect): Il reviendrait-il? Elle y espérait. Reader hears her concern; narrator frames it.
8. Narrative reporting of character speech or thought in third person without quotation marks or explicit verbs.
9. 'Elle était heureuse.' (She was happy.) Direct would be: 'Je suis heureuse,' dit-elle.
10. Indirect: 'Il dit qu'il était fatigué.' Free indirect merges voice: 'Il était fatigué' (reader hears 'him').

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