How to report commands and requests

The following rules are observed when we report commands and requests.

Use a reporting verb like request, order, tell, advise, beseech, threaten, beg, implore, ask, propose and forbid.

Note that all of these verbs except propose must be followed by an object.

Commands and requests are usually reported using a to-infinitive.

That-clauses can also be used. Note that after certain verbs, only to-infinitives are possible. In the same way, after some reporting verbs, only that-clauses are possible.

You will also need to observe the rules for the change of tenses and pronouns.

Direct speech: I said to him, ‘Obey your parents.’

Indirect speech: I advised him to obey his parents. OR I advised him that he should obey his parents.

Direct speech: The teacher said to the boys, ‘Work hard.’

Indirect speech: The teacher advised the boys to work hard.

Direct speech: Jim said to me, ‘Lend me your pen, please.’

Indirect speech: Jim requested me to lend him my pen.

Direct speech: The doctor said to the patient, ‘Do not consume too much sugar.’

Indirect speech: The doctor advised the patient not to consume too much sugar.

Direct speech: The father said to the son, ‘Put that book back on the shelf when you have
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finished with it.’

Indirect speech: The father asked the son to put that book back on the shelf when he had finished with it.