Changing an Imperative Sentence into the Indirect Speech

Imperative sentences do not normally have an expressed subject. This is because the subject ‘you’ is usually understood. As a result of this, imperative sentences begin with a verb in the simple present tense.

An imperative sentence expresses ideas such as advice, order, request, suggestion, instruction, permission, allowance etc.

In order to change an imperative sentence into the indirect speech, we use a **to-infinitive**. A **–that clause** is also possible in some cases. Note that instead of ‘said’ we use one of the following reporting verbs:

Advise, command, request, suggest, threaten, order, forbid, decree, propose, entreat, prompt, counsel, pardon, beg, persuade, instruct etc.

**Notes:**

After **suggest**, we use a **–that clause** and not an infinitive.
The verb **propose** is not followed by an object.
The verb **forbid** itself conveys a negative sense. Therefore, we do not use **not** in the following clause.

Study the following examples carefully.

**Direct:** The old woman said to the boy, ‘Please help me.’
**Indirect:** The old woman **requested the boy to help** her.

**Direct:** I said to him, ‘Love and obey your parents.’
**Indirect:** I **advised him to love and obey** his parents. OR I **advised that he should** love and obey his parents.

**Direct:** The teacher said to the students, ‘Work hard.’
**Indirect:** The teacher **advised the boys to work** hard. OR The teacher **suggested that the boys should work hard**.

**Direct:** Jim said to me, ‘Please lend me your pen.’
**Indirect:** Jim **requested me to lend** him my pen.

**Direct:** The doctor said to the patient, ‘Quit smoking.’
**Indirect:** The doctor **advised the patient to quit** smoking. OR The doctor **suggested that the patient should quit smoking**.

**Direct:** The officer said to the clerk, ‘Do it immediately.’
**Indirect:** The officer **ordered the clerk to do** it immediately.

**Direct:** The teacher said to the boy, ‘Come in, please.’
**Indirect:** The teacher **allowed (or asked) the boy to come** in.

**Direct:** He said to me, ‘Post this letter at once.’
**Indirect:** He **ordered me to post** that letter at once.

**Direct:** I said to the children, ‘Do not make a noise.’
Indirect: I forbade the children to make a noise. (NOT I forbade the children not to make a noise.)
Direct: I said to her, ‘Don’t mention his name.’
Indirect: I forbade her to mention his name.
Direct: I said to the child, ‘Do not look down into the well.’
Indirect: I warned the child not to look down into the well.
Direct: He said to me, ‘Wait here till I return.’
Indirect: He asked me to wait there till he returned.