

Quotes direct-indirect

Getting the Story · By Simon Townsend · 1 min read

Here's some advice on direct quotes and indirect quotes. When you use quotes, you are using fresh words said to YOU the journalist by someone you have spoken to, usually on the phone. Most quotes are inside quotation marks (direct quotes) and these are the person's words verbatim. Some quotes are paraphrased (indirect) and this is your (the writer's) version of the person's spoken words:

DIRECT: "Elsie took the knife out, and then sharpened it slowly, and then, well, she plunged it, sudden like, into Arthur's chest," Rosanna said.

INDIRECT: Rosanna claimed that Elsie took the knife out, sharpened it slowly and suddenly plunged it into Arthur's chest.

Yes, you can use a quote like this: She told The Australian last week: "I wouldn't spit on him if he was on fire." It may be that you can't get to speak to the person, or this was the only time she made this dramatic statement. But your editor primarily wants fresh and exclusive quotes (spoken words said recently only to you). Not old quotes and not re-hashed quotes from other media.

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