

Say & Tell, Speak & Talk

Say	Tell
<p>For reporting what was said. Often used with direct speech:</p> <p><i>"Follow me" she said.</i></p> <p><i>She said I should follow her.</i></p>	<p>For reporting what was said. Normally used to instruct or inform someone. More commonly used with indirect speech:</p> <p><i>She told me to follow her.</i></p>
<p>Often used without a personal object:</p> <p><i>She said that she was coming later.</i></p> <p>To use with an object, it requires say + to</p> <p><i>She said to him that she was coming later.</i></p> <p><i>What did you say to James?</i></p>	<p>Used with a personal object</p> <p><i>She told me she was coming later.</i></p> <p><i>What did you tell James?</i></p>
<p>For reporting 'orders' or 'instructions' modal verbs can be used:</p> <p><i>They said we had to get off the boat</i></p> <p><i>She said I must stop the car.</i></p>	<p>Used before object + to infinitive to mean 'order' or 'instruct' in reported speech:</p> <p><i>They told us to get off the boat.</i></p> <p><i>She told me to stop the car</i></p>
<p><u>Expressions with 'say':</u></p> <p><i>To be about to say</i> is used after you've been interrupted</p> <p><i>I'd like to say a few words</i> = when you want to make a short speech</p> <p><i>You can say that again!</i> – When someone states the obvious</p> <p><i>To say no more</i> – when you understand you shouldn't bring up a certain subject any more or you want to put an end to a topic of conversation.</p> <p><i>I hate to say it...</i> - to reluctantly share information, that you know the listener doesn't want to hear</p> <p><i>How can you say that!</i> = when you strongly disagree with what someone has just said.</p>	<p><u>Expressions with 'tell':</u></p> <p><i>Did you tell the truth?</i></p> <p><i>He's always telling tales!</i> = lying</p> <p><i>To tell the truth, I wasn't interested.</i></p> <p><i>I never told a lie!</i></p> <p><i>Can you tell the time?</i></p> <p><i>He tells jokes all the time.</i></p> <p><i>She told stories that made everyone cry with laughter.</i></p> <p><i>Could they tell the difference?</i> – here 'tell' is used to mean 'see' or 'notice'</p> <p><i>He was told off for stealing the biscuits.</i> = to be criticised or spoken to seriously or angrily for doing something wrong.</p>



Speak	Talk
<p>To communicate with words, to use the voice, or to communicate with someone.</p> <p>The meaning is often the same as talk</p> <p><i>He's not speaking to me at the moment.</i></p> <p><i>Will you speak to Sally?</i></p>	<p>To communicate with words; to use the voice, to have a conversation with someone.</p> <p>The meaning is often the same as speak.</p> <p><i>He isn't talking to me at the moment.</i></p> <p><i>Will you talk to Sally?</i></p>
<p>Can be used for a more formal or serious matters:</p> <p><i>I'd like to speak to the manager.</i></p> <p><i>The Minister of Finance has just spoken to journalists about the crisis.</i></p>	<p>Can be used with a more informal meaning than speak:</p> <p><i>I need to talk to James when he gets back.</i></p> <p><i>Our reporter has been talking to local residents about the project.</i></p>
<p>Used to refer to the ability in or knowledge and use of language(s):</p> <p><i>Do you speak Hindi?</i></p> <p><i>He can speak five different languages fluently.</i></p>	<p>'Talk + in' can be used to refer to the act of communicating in another language:</p> <p><i>It was a surprise to hear them talking in Turkish.</i></p> <p><i>We thought it would be rude to talk in a language that no one else understood.</i></p>
<p>Used for a formal presentation or lecture:</p> <p><i>She has spoken at many conferences over the years.</i></p>	<p>Used for an informal presentation or talk:</p> <p><i>He's going to talk to us about cloud formations at the local community centre.</i></p>
<p><u>Expressions with 'speak':</u></p> <p><i>Speak up!</i> = speak louder</p> <p><i>Speaking of which/...</i> - when you want to add more information about a topic/person which has just been mentioned.</p> <p><i>To speak out</i> = to raise concerns or give an opinion on an issue openly or publicly</p> <p><i>To speak one's mind</i> = to give your honest opinion on a subject</p> <p><i>To speak highly of someone/something</i> = to praise</p> <p><i>To speak up for</i> = to openly give your support for someone.</p>	<p><u>Expressions with 'talk':</u></p> <p><i>You can't talk!</i> or <i>You're a one to talk!</i> = you are being a hypocrite</p> <p><i>To talk someone out of something</i> = to persuade someone not to do something</p> <p><i>To talk back (to someone)</i> = to respond in a rude manner or question someone's authority</p> <p><i>To talk down (to someone)</i> = to speak condescendingly to someone</p> <p><i>To talk over someone</i> = to start speaking when someone else is already speaking</p> <p><i>To talk something over</i> = to discuss something in detail.</p>