

Test Your Grammar Skills

Say, Tell, Talk, or Speak? 2

say and **tell** have different uses in English:

5 forms: say / says / said / said / saying	5 forms: tell / tells / told / told / telling
say <i>something</i> to <i>somebody</i>	tell <i>somebody something</i>
object is a thing, e.g. 'say something'	object is a person, e.g. 'tell me'
more general target: say sth to people in general	more specific target: tell sby something specific
used in direct speech: "Good morning," said John. and reported speech: John said good morning.	tell: information, opinion, problem, order, secret, lie, gossip, joke, the time, tales

talk and **speak** are physical actions. Their meanings are quite similar, with a few key differences:

5 forms: talk / talks / talked / talked / talking	5 forms: speak / speaks / spoke / spoken / speaking
talk to <i>somebody</i> about <i>something</i>	speak to <i>somebody</i> about <i>something</i>
more informal: talk with family and friends	more formal: speak with people in authority and groups
more common in spoken English	less common – occurs in fewer situations
talk about anything: our family, work, feelings, problems, plans, etc.	speak about important matters, issues, situations speak a language

Complete each gap with **say**, **tell**, **talk**, or **speak** in the appropriate form:

- 'That dress is far too small for her.' 'You're _____ me!'
- Don't _____ You Love Me is one of my favourite Free songs.
- Daniel felt he had to _____ out against the injustices that he had experienced.
- 'I'm just preparing the surprise for Larry.' 'OK, _____ no more!'
- At what age does a baby usually learn to _____?
- 'Do you want another drink?' 'Just a little.' 'OK – _____ when.'
- I got _____ off for listening to my mp3 player in class.
- 'It's absolutely chucking it down!' 'You can _____ that again!'
- Our daddy was _____ us a story about pirates and castles at bedtime.
- Her mum tends to _____ her mind when it comes to topics like immigration.
- 'You are a complete idiot, Arthur!' 'Look who's _____!'
- 'What time does the film start?' 'I don't know. The poster didn't _____.'
- We've finished the hard work, so let's get a pizza.' 'Now you're _____!'
- If Tammy gets bullied again, you *will* _____ up for your little sister, won't you?
- We've been _____ things over, and your mum says that you *can* get a new cat.
- Whenever I try to make a point in class, somebody always tries to _____ over me.
- Could somebody _____ me what's going on, please?
- 'His hair looks ridiculous, doesn't it?' '_____ for yourself! I quite like it.'
- Louise will've _____ you what happened, by the time I get there.
- It is wonderful to be _____ to the whole college here this morning.

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