

# Do you know the difference between "Say", "Tell" and "Speak"?

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Are you talking to me? I said are you talking to me? There's no one else here, you must be talking to me. Can you notice the mistake? How many times the words were misused? Most of us get jumbled between the usage of say, tell and speak in a sentence. For instance, I speak English, I talk to my boss, she told me a secret, and you know what I'm saying? Say, tell and speak are some of the most [commonly confused English words](#)! Have a look on the rules to know the difference between, say, tell, and speak.



## Learn The Usage Of - Say, Tell And Speak

### Tell/Told

Tell means to give information to a person – hence, tell (present) and told (past) are always followed by a person. It is used when you need to use the object. This is because when using 'tell', the person who receives the information is more important than the information itself.

### Example

- Tell me about yourself.
- Purva, I told you not to eat any ice creams before dinner!
- Did you tell Sameer about what happened at office today?
- Raj and Priya told everybody that they were engaged to be married.
- Don't worry, I won't tell your secret to anyone.

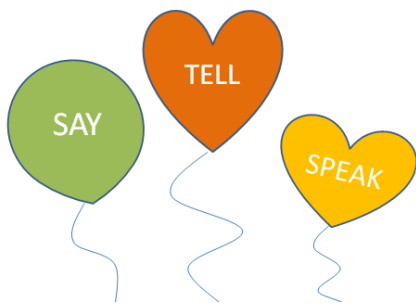


## Say/Said

Say means to speak words. It is commonly used in reported speech. Reported speech is when you are repeating what someone has said. When speaking in reported speech, you regularly make statements and it is not necessary to add the object.

### Example

- Seema says she doesn't like chocolate.
- I said that the new website design was great.
- What did the teacher say to you when you failed the test?
- "Nice to meet you," Kiran said.



## Speak/Spoke

Speak is used when the conversations are more of a monologue. Although speak and talk are synonyms words, the main difference between these would be that, speak is used in more formal situations and talk is for more informal conversations.

### Example

- "How many languages do you speak?"
- "She can speak English fluently"
- "She was speaking to her employees about the new services."

Hence, the above explanations and examples will help you to clarify your confusion and doubts and improve your [English speaking](#) skills. Practice them regularly and next time when you converse with someone identify whether you are talking or speaking to someone. This way you will automatically [improve your spoken English](#) skills.

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- By Shailja Varma

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