

Say or Tell? Learn the correct usage

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Hello there! In today's class, we will learn about the difference between say and tell. Do you know the difference? When to use say and when to use tell? Most of us get confused between the usages of the two. Here's a basic rule of differentiation.

- You say something to someone
- But, you tell someone something

Is this even more confusing to understand? Don't worry; let's take help of a few examples to get it right.

You **say** some**THING**

John said that he was tired.

Mike says you have a new job.

Tara said: "I love you."

You **tell** some**ONE**

John told Jane that he was tired.

Mike tells me you have a new job.

Tara told John that she loved him.

Say

Say hello to your aunt
Did you say welcome to Mr. Shetty?

Say is used to report someone's direct speech.

For instance:

- Mr. Arun said, "He will be arriving late for the conference."
- Tina said, "Her brother is getting married in winters."



Tell

Usually, tell is followed with a personal object.

For instance:

- Sachin told me the exact location
- I told the class to go home.

Tell is used along with orders and advice.

For instance:

- She told Janhavi that the test is tomorrow but she was not agreeing with her.

Tell is used along with some phrases

For instance:

- Tell a story
- Tell the time
- Tell a lie
- Tell the future
- Tell a joke

Tell is used with indirect questions

Can you tell me where the airport is?

Can you tell me the way to the cricket stadium?

Exercise – Say or tell?

Complete the below sentences with the right word – say or tell.

1. Please ____ me how to use a computer
2. Manoj ____ he would be coming to India at 10 am.
3. Fatima ____ me that she was shifting to Dubai.
4. What did he ____ when he learned about the surprise?
5. “I’m so exhausted”, ____ Peter.

1-tell, 2, said, 3. told, 4. say, 5. Said

Conclusion

Once your concepts are clear, you can speak English fluently. Hope the above explanation and examples will clear your doubt on the usage of say and tell. Although, these are very basic to learning English, we often tend to ignore the minor aspects. Through our improve English blogs, it’s our aim to acquaint you with the best of knowledge in the most simple way.

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- By Shailja Varma

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