

A

Say (say / said / said)

We use **say** when we report someone's words.
She **said**, 'This is horrible!'
He **said that** he wanted a drink.

We **say hello / goodbye** and we **say please / thank you / Happy Birthday / Merry Christmas / Happy New Year / Congratulations!**
/kəŋgrɪtʃə'leɪʃənz/

B

Tell (tell / told / told)

Tell is usually followed immediately by a person.
Say is not followed immediately by a person.
Tell is often used with *how* and *wh-* words (when, what, why, where) to find out and give information.

Tell me when you want to have dinner. She **told me how** to fill in the application form.
You can **tell someone the time / a story / a joke / your name / your address / your phone number.**

C

Ask

Ask is used for questions.

My sister **asked me** where I was going. / My sister **asked (me)**, 'Where are you going?'

A: Can I **ask you a question**?

B: Yes.

A: What day of the week were you born?

B: Thursday.

You can **ask someone the way / the time.**

You can **ask somebody to do something** and **ask someone for something.**

I **asked him to** turn off his radio. (*or* I said, 'Please turn off your radio.')

She **asked for** the bill. (*or* She said, 'Can I have the bill, please?')

D

Speak / talk / answer / reply

I like **talking to** you. [having a conversation with you]

Common mistakes

Do you speak Japanese? (used for languages) [NOT Do you talk Japanese?]

Can you **answer** the telephone / the door, please? [pick up the phone / open the door to see who it is]

Teacher: Who can **answer** the next question? Joanna?

He didn't **reply to** my email. (also used for letters / texts)

[he did not send me an email back]



We use **say** when we ask about language.

Common mistakes

He **told me** his name. [NOT He said me his name.]

Common mistakes

Can you tell me where the bus station is, please? [NOT Can you say me ... ?]



Exercises

48.1 Fill the gaps with the correct form of say or tell.

- 1 Can you *tell* me where the Plaza Hotel is, please?
- 2 She me her name.
- 3 I goodbye to her.
- 4 'Please me a story,' the little boy
- 5 'Come here!' the police officer
- 6 The teacher her students that they were very good.

48.2 What do you say?

- 1 You want to know if an English friend can help you talk to a Russian person who does not know English.
Can *you speak Russian?*
- 2 You want to know the word for 'tree' in German.
How
- 3 You want to know the time.
Excuse me, can you
- 4 Your course is finished. You want to say goodbye to your teacher.
I just want to
- 5 You want to know when the exam is.
Can you
- 6 The telephone rings. You are busy cooking food. A friend is watching you.
(to your friend)
Can you

48.3 Match the verbs on the left with the words on the right.

- | | |
|------------|-----------------------|
| 1 say | a an email |
| 2 answer | b someone to help you |
| 3 ask for | c Japanese |
| 4 reply to | d Happy New Year |
| 5 tell | e a friend |
| 6 talk to | f someone a joke |
| 7 ask | g the bill |
| 8 speak | h the door |

48.4 Complete the phrases.

- 1 (on December 24th or 25th) *Happy* Christmas!
- 2 (you want to pay in a restaurant) Can we have, please?
- 3 (on the first day of the year) Year!
- 4 (small child to parent) a story before I go to sleep. Please!

