

SAY and TELL

Say and **tell** have similar meanings. They both mean to communicate verbally with someone. But they are often used differently. The simple way to think of say and tell is:

You **SAY** something

Jack **said that he was fired.**

Anthony **says you have a new job.**

Tara **said: "I love you."**

You **TELL** someone something

Jack **told Jane that he was fired.**

Anthony **tells me you have a new job.**

Tara **told John that she loved him.**

But, of course, it is not always so easy. Here are a few rules to help you.

Personal object TELL is usually followed with a personal object

(the person that we are speaking to):

She **told me** that she loved John.

He **told everybody** that he had to leave.

SAY is usually used without a personal object:

She **said** that she loved John.

He **said** that he had to leave.

Say "to someone" With SAY, "to someone" is sometimes used (HOWEVER – it can sometimes sound rather strange / unnatural):

He **said to me** that he was tired.

Anthony **said to her**, "I hope you come soon."

Tara **said to Jack** that he had done very well.

"I'd like to sleep," she **said to him** quietly.

Direct speech SAY can be used with direct speech.

TELL is only used with direct speech that is an instruction or information:

She **told me**, "I have never been to England."

He **told her**: "Open the door quietly."

Amanda **said**, "Hello John. How are you?"

"That's great" she **said**.

SAY can be used with direct questions, but TELL cannot:

She **said**: "Do you love me?"

The policeman **said to the prisoner**, "Where were you at 8pm?"

Reported speech SAY and TELL can be used to talk about reported information:

She **said that it was raining.**

She **told me that she would call at 2pm.**

SAY and TELL cannot be used to talk about reported questions. ASK must be used (or a similar verb):

She **asked if I had ever been there.**

She **asked where he lived.**

They **asked what I wanted to eat.**

He **asked if she wanted to go home.**

Orders, advice TELL + OBJECT + INFINITIVE is used for orders or advice:

She **told him to sit down.**

They **told me not to wait.**

Tell Neil **to have a holiday and forget her.**

Phrases Here are a few fixed phrases with tell. SAY cannot be used with these phrases:

• tell (someone) a story

• tell (someone) a lie

• tell (someone) the truth

• tell the future (to know what the future will bring)

• tell the time (know how to read a clock)

PRACTICE - SAY & TELL

Fill in the blank spaces in the sentences below (1 - 6) with the correct form of the word SAY or TELL.

(1) Before we play the game, I will _____ you the rules.

(2) Can you _____ me about good book you think I should read?

(3) I'm going to _____ the manager about your behavior.

(4) The officials at the airport _____ that the flight would be delayed.

(5) You _____ something to me in part of your letter that you might be moving abroad.

(6) I didn't really want to go but he _____ me he would not take "no" for an answer.

PRACTICE - REPORTING VERBS

Fill in the blank spaces in the sentences below (1 - 6) with the correct form of one of the following reporting verbs – in the correct form.

ANNOUNCE (ohlasit)

COMPLAIN (stěžovat si)

EXPLAIN (vysvětlit)

INSIST (trvat na)

MENTION (zmínit)

SUGGEST (navrhnout)

(1) Before we play the game, I will _____ the rules.

(2) Can you _____ a good book?

(3) I'm going to _____ to the manager about your behavior.

(4) The officials at the airport _____ that the flight would be delayed.

(5) You _____ in your letter that you might be moving abroad.

(6) I didn't really want to go but he _____.

A reporting verb is often used when we refer to the work of other writers in academic text. For example:

- Diamond (2002) **points out** that only a small number of plant and animal species have been exploited for food.
- A number of studies **have shown** that a dietary intake of 10% canola oil significantly shortened the life span of laboratory rats [17, 18, 19].

Reporting verbs have one of three general functions. They indicate what writers:

- 1) **did** in their research (e.g., **study, measure, use**).
- 2) **found** in their research (e.g., **find, observe, show**).
- 3) **thought** or **said** in their writing (e.g., **think, believe; write, state**).

Look at the reporting verbs in this extract (**in bold**) from a research article looking at variation in writing in different academic subjects. Notice how the verbs are labelled according to the appropriate group (1 - 3) above.

In a preliminary investigation, Dudley-Evans (1984) **focused on [1]** dissertation titles. Recently, Dietz (1995) **conducted [1]** an extensive analysis on titles of scientific texts. Finally, Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) and Busch-Lauer (1997) **analysed [1]** the conventions of title writing in scientific research articles. They **revealed [2]** in their studies that newer titles are semantically richer and are characterised by an increasing syntactic fullness. In connection with this, Berkenkotter and Huckin **commented [3]** that stating the results of an investigation in the title of the article is becoming very common.

Fortanet, I. et al. (1998). Disciplinary variations in the writing of research articles in English. In Fortanet, I. et al (Eds.) *Genre Studies in English for Academic Purposes*, (pp. 59-78). Col·leccio Summa Seria Filologia 9, Universitat Jaume

EXAMPLES:

GROUP 1

- carry out
- examine
- explore
- investigate

GROUP 2

- demonstrate
- discover
- establish
- prove

GROUP 3

- argue
- claim
- consider
- note
- point out
- show
- suggest

The Grammar of Reporting Verbs

Look at the RULES for Reporting Verbs and examples of how the verbs *agree*, *analyse* and *demonstrate* are used.

RULE A: Some reporting verbs may be followed by a noun phrase but not by a *that*-clause. e.g., **ANALYSE**

- Roberts (2004) **analysed** postgraduate internships and found that the average duration was six months.

NOT: Roberts (2004) **analysed** that the average duration of postgraduate internships was six months.

RULE B: Some reporting verbs may be followed either by a noun phrase or a *that*-clause. e.g., **DEMONSTRATE**

- Henderson (1985) demonstrates the metaphoric use of words like 'door', 'gate' and 'fire' in the play.
- Henderson (1985) demonstrates that the words 'door', 'gate' and 'fire' are used metaphorically in the play.

RULE C: Some reporting verbs may be followed by a *that*-clause but not usually by a noun phrase. e.g., **AGREE**

- Johnson (1958) agreed that currency devaluation would have little effect in these circumstances.

NOT: Johnson (1958) **agreed** the ineffectiveness of currency evaluation in these circumstances.

MORE EXAMPLES:

[Page 3]

A-pattern verbs
(V + NP / V + that)

- analyse
- call for
- compare
- conduct
- define
- describe
- discuss
- examine
- investigate
- outline
- question
- reject

B-pattern verbs
(V + NP or V + that)

- consider
- demonstrate
- explain
- note
- point out
- recommend
- show
- state
- suggest

C-pattern verbs
(V + NP / V + that)

- agree
- argue
- believe
- claim
- comment
- conclude
- say
- write

PRACTICE:

Complete the following sentence with one of the verbs provided for that set (do not change the form).

CONDUCTED

INVESTIGATED

POINTED OUT

- (1) According to the survey _____ by Ambosa et al. [21], expecting medical staff to learn new software while caring for a full load of patients is a common reason for failure.
- (2) It has been _____ that even moderate storms can have an impact on coastal development (Steers, 1965).
- (3) Carman (1956) _____ the way in which insectivorous plants catch and digest insects.

CARRIED OUT

COMPARED

CONCLUDED

- (4) Dundee et al. (1994) _____ the use of acupuncture and paracetamol in pain relief.
- (5) Collins (2008) _____ that mental illness is twice as common in lower socioeconomic classes.
- (6) They _____ an investigation into employer attitudes towards the continuing professional development of their employees.

AGREED

CALLED FOR

EXAMINED

- (7) A number of studies have _____ the reasons for the slow pace of reform (e.g. Smythe, 1999; Trevor, 2008).
- (8) Bygrave (1989) _____ that chaos theory cannot be supported by data.
- (9) Other writers have _____ a change in planning policy (e.g. Lim, 2005; Newton, 2008)

PREPOSITIONS:

Complete the sentences below (1 - 10) by filling in the correct preposition.

- (1) The White House said there will be no change _____ policy.
- (2) We were expecting him _____ arrive yesterday.
- (3) Scientists are conducting an investigation _____ the causes of the accident.
- (4) Instructions on caring _____ your new sofa are included.
- (5) The witness's story was not supported _____ the evidence.
- (6) The overthrow of the regime was followed _____ a period of anarchy.
- (7) Everything is going according _____ schedule.
- (8) You will be employed to assist in the development _____ new equipment.
- (9) Technology has had an irreversible impact _____ society.
- (10) The current system is characterized _____ obsolete technology.

Look at sentences pages 2 & 3 to find the correct prepositions.

Reporting Verbs – Practice:

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Choose the correct option (a, b, c or d) for each of the following sentences (1 - 20).

- (1) Sharpling (2012) _____ that reporting verbs have subtle differences in meaning.
a) examines b) points out c) investigated d) calls for
- (2) University of Adelaide (2014) _____ that using the same reporting verb all the time is both repetitive and boring.
a) states b) questions c) analyses d) compared
- (3) Smith (2016) _____ that reporting verbs have different strengths.
a) recommends b) examines c) discusses d) insists
- (4) Smith (2016) _____ with Sharpling (2012) that reporting verbs have subtle differences in meaning.
a) compares b) believes c) explains d) agrees
- (5) The authors _____ that this policy had 'devastating economic results' (Smith & Jones 2008, p. 12).
a) call for b) describe c) show d) investigate
- (6) In her study on Internet privacy, Johnson (2005, p.197) _____ that a person can be identified by name on the Internet using age and address details.
a) examines b) concludes c) describes d) compares
- (7) In their study on suburban Internet usage, Smith et al. (2012, pp. 34-126) _____ that 90% of 2000 surveyed participants were concerned about violations of their privacy.
a) demonstrated b) questioned c) analysed d) investigated
- (8) TechTimes (2013, p. 73) _____ the reasons behind the increase in Internet bullying.
a) suggests b) believes c) discusses d) concludes
- (9) Smith et al. _____ the proposal that information technology is changing society.
a) show b) reject c) think d) argue
- (10) Brown and Peters (2013, pp. 3-5) _____ Johnson's findings as 'disturbing.'
a) conclude b) describe c) point out d) agree
- (11) In his latest article Morton (2012) _____ how information technology is changing society.
a) believes b) conducts c) comments d) explains
- (12) Schmidt (2010) _____ the process of language acquisition.
a) describes b) argues c) recommends d) thinks
- (13) Kon (2000) _____ that all poets are strongly influenced by their childhood.
a) examines b) calls for c) suggests d) discusses
- (14) Lee(2006) _____ that problems arose earlier than previously thought.
a) analyses b) compares c) defines d) states
- (15) Uvarov (2001) _____ that the causes of the revolution can be traced back to the 18th century.
a) claims b) questions c) conducts d) investigates
- (16) Van et al (2002) _____ that other historians have misinterpreted the period.
a) examines b) describes c) discusses d) believes
- (17) Patel (1987) _____ that governments should continue to fund space projects.
a) discusses b) argues c) outlines d) calls for
- (18) Levack (2010) _____ that there are contradictions in Day's interpretation of the poem.
a) compares b) notes c) discusses d) questions
- (19) Kim (2005) _____ how Bach's music draws considerably on earlier composer's work.
a) thinks b) rejects c) concludes d) demonstrates
- (20) Gerrand (2001) _____ previous interpretations of the play.
a) questions b) points out c) believes d) argues

What Comes After Reporting Verbs?

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Knowing how to use **reporting verbs** correctly in a sentence is important. Now we are going to look at what comes after **reporting verbs**. Some verbs appear more than once because they can be used in different ways.

- 1) Reporting verb + 'that' + clause:** admit, decide, deny, inform, insist, mention, suggest, recommend.

He **admitted that he was mean**.

She **decided that she would travel to India**.

The **suspect denied that he was at the scene of the crime**.

I've just been **informed that my luggage had already arrived**.

We **insist that you join us for dinner**.

He casually **mentioned that he was leaving his job**.

I **suggest that you arrive early**.

Note: People often leave out the **'that'** in spoken English. The meaning is the same:

I suggest you arrive early.

We insist you join us for dinner.

- 2) Reporting verb + verb-ing:** deny, mention, suggest

Lucia **denied meeting** the businessman last week.

My wife **mentioned seeing** you the other day.

Mark **suggested buying** stocks in the IT firm.

- 3) Reporting verb + preposition + verb-ing:** apologise, insist

She **apologised for forgetting** my birthday.

We **insisted on sharing** the cost of the meal

Note: You can also apologise **to** someone (**apologise + to + object**) (**apologise + to + object + for + ing**)

Baz **apologised to Lucia** for forgetting her birthday.

- 4) Reporting verb + 'to' + infinitive:** decide, demand, offer

We **decided to test** the theory experimentally.

Barry **demanded to know** the answer.

Brutus **offered to pay** for the damage.

- 5) Reporting verb + indirect object + infinitive:** advise, persuade

I **advised him to** apply.

The salesman **persuaded us to** buy his product.

- 6) Reporting verb + indirect object + 'that' + clause:** advise, inform

I **advised him that he should** apply.

A notice **informed the guests that formal dress was** required.

PRACTICE:

Complete the sentences below (1 - 12) with one of the following verbs (you may need to change the form). Use each verb **ONLY ONCE**.

ADMIT / ADVISE / APOLOGISE / DECIDE / DEMAND / DENY / INFORM / INSIST / MENTION / OFFER / PERSUADE / SUGGEST

- (1) She marched into my office _____ to know why I hadn't written my report.
- (2) I am writing to _____ you that your rent will be increased as of October 1st.
- (3) I _____ to pay the cost of the taxi.
- (4) The prime minister _____ that the crisis had been mishandled.
- (5) We _____ for the delay and any inconvenience caused.
- (6) Eventually Sam _____ her to accept an offer of marriage.
- (7) Statistics _____ that women live longer than men.
- (8) I strongly _____ you not to do this.
- (9) He _____ to devote the rest of his life to scientific investigation.
- (10) I _____ on paying for the damage.
- (11) She hotly _____ having taken the money.
- (12) He should not have _____ that her ex-boyfriend was now happily married.

Part 6: Key Word Sentence Transformation Practice – Reporting Verbs

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For Questions 1-10, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence using the word given. **Do not change** the word given. You must use between two (2) and five (5) words including the word given.

- (1) "I think you should stop eating so many sweets," Mary's sister said to her. ADVISED

Mary's sister _____ so many sweets.

- (2) "I'm sorry I didn't tell you the truth," Peter said to us. APOLOGISED

Peter _____ the truth.

- (3) "Why don't you try on a pair of jeans?" Peter asked Mary. SUGGESTED

Peter _____ a pair of jeans.

- (4) "You look really tired," he told her. SAID

He _____ really tired.

- (5) "I wasn't anywhere near the bank that day," he said. DENIED

He _____ anywhere near the bank that day.

- (6) "You really must let me cook dinner," said Anne. INSISTED

Anne _____ dinner.

- (7) "You must do your homework tonight," the teacher said. TOLD

The teacher _____ my homework that night.

- (8) "Eating more fruit is good for you too," she said. RECOMMENDED

She _____ more fruit.

- (9) Before we play the game, I will tell you the rules. EXPLAIN

Before we play the game, _____ the rules.

- (10) "I might be late for dinner," he told me. INFORMED

He _____ might be late for dinner.

SUPPLEMENT: The Subjunctive

The subjunctive was formerly used in English for situations that were improbable or that expressed a wish. It is only rarely used in modern English. It is, however, found in certain set phrases and in very formal forms of speech and writing.

- God **save** the Queen!
- God **bless** you!
- God **help** us!
- Heaven **help** us!
- Heaven **forbid** that that should happen to me.

The Present Subjunctive

The form in the present tense is exactly the same as the base form in all persons of the verb. That is, there is no **-s** on the 3rd person singular.

The subjunctive is used, in very formal English, in subordinate clauses that follow verbs expressing a desire, a demand, a formal recommendation, or a resolve. It also includes statements about one's state of mind, such as opinion, belief, purpose, or intention.

- I only ask that he **cease** behaving in this extraordinary manner.
- It is vital that they **be** stopped at once.
- Is it really necessary that she **work** all hours of the day?
- I demand that he **do** something to make up for this.

The clause containing the subjunctive is generally linked to the main clause with **that**.

- I only ask **that** he should cease behaving in this extraordinary manner.
- It is vital **that** they are stopped at once.
- It is vital to stop them at once.
- Is it really necessary for her to work all hours of the day?
- I demand **that** he do something to make up for this.

The Past Subjunctive

In written English and in very formal speech, the past subjunctive form **were** is sometimes used with the 1st and 3rd person singular, in place of the normal past form **was**.

The past subjunctive may be used:

– after *if* or *I wish*, to express regret or longing

- If your father **were** alive he would help you.
- If I **were** rich I would buy a Ferrari.
- I wish I **were** taller.
- If only he **were** here now!

– after *as if/as though* and similar expressions, to express doubt or improbability.

Some Verbs Followed By The Subjunctive

to advise (that)
 to ask (that)
 to command (that)
 to demand (that)
 to desire (that)
 to insist (that)
 to propose (that)
 to recommend (that)
 to request (that)
 to suggest (that)
 to urge (that)