

SECTION 4

Communicating

1 USING WORDS TO SHOW THE WAY WE SPEAK

We use many verbs to show how people say something. They can often be used as nouns:

'It's your fault,' she sobbed / grinned / sneered.

- Here are examples of verbs we use in this way:
mutter shout scream whisper bark bellow cry

- 1 Tick (✓) the verbs that suggest quiet speaking;
put a cross (X) beside those that sound loud.

mumble shriek mouth yell roar howl purr

2 ADDING WORDS AND PHRASES TO SHOW HOW THINGS ARE SAID

As well as using particular verbs to show how people say something, we can add adverbs and adverbial phrases:

'I didn't mean it to happen,' he said defiantly / tearfully / grim-faced.

'It'll be all right,' he said in a conciliatory manner / in typical fashion / in a mysterious way.

'I've had enough,' he said in a whisper / in a strangely muted tone of voice / under his breath.

'Who cares?' he said with a smirk / with a shrug of his shoulders / with a shake of his head.

- 2 Write in the missing preposition.

*'What?' he said the top of his voice /
..... a high-pitched voice / a joke / afar /
..... a frown / himself / a whim.*

3 USING PHRASAL VERBS

We can use many phrasal verbs to express how people say or write something. For example, with the verb *come* we have:

come out with (a rude word) come up with (a good idea) come back with (a sharp response) come across (as a coherent speaker) come in for (a lot of criticism)

- With the verb *put*, there are even more possibilities:
put forward (a suggestion) put across or put over (your message) put in (a claim) put someone down (with a sarcastic comment) put out (a statement)
- Phrasal verbs are useful in showing how a speaker expresses himself / herself:
She suddenly blurted out the truth.

He spoke out against her sacking.

He reeled off a long list of reasons.

He sounded off about the lazy students he had.

She only briefly touched on the heart of the problem.

- 3 Complete each sentence with a particle or preposition.

- a Speak ! I can't hear you.
b Do I need to spell it for you?
c I'm sorry. I'd like to take what I said.
d He read a prepared statement.
e We shouldn't dwell our mistakes.
f To sum, I'm calling a completely fresh approach.

4 IDIOMATIC PHRASES

There are many idiomatic phrases associated with communicating. Here are some examples:

*Don't beat about the bush. Give it to me straight.
She let the cat out of the bag. She gave the game away.*

He came clean. He let it be known that he was unhappy.

*He ad-libbed. He spoke off the cuff.
Off the top of my head, I'd say ...*

- 4 Use one of the words to complete each sentence.

*gab confidence secret point cross plain words
shop syllable spit*

- a Get to the
b it out!
c I'll tell you in words of one
d He took me into his
e I'm not going to mince
f I'll tell you in English.
g Do I have to dot the i's and the t's for you?
h She let me in on her
i They talked all evening.
j She's got the gift of the

Practice

- 1 Replace a 'speaking' verb (underlined) with one of the words or phrases listed. The meaning of the sentence must not be changed.

Example: 'Shoot as soon as they come round the corner,' Bond whispered. *breathed*

*(breathed) said under his breath enquired snapped
roared chanted said with a smirk chortled declared
hinted admitted stammered shrieked*

- a 'Get out of my office!' he bellowed.
- b 'Can I help you in any way?' she asked.
- c 'Was it 20 or 25% you got in the test?' he sneered.
- d 'That's so typical of my young grandson,' the old man chuckled.
- e 'You'll regret this,' he muttered.
- f 'I want you in my office in two minutes,' he said angrily and sharply.
- g She confessed that she had been economical with the truth.
- h 'You did what?' he exclaimed loudly.
- i 'Jobs not hand-outs! Jobs not hand-outs!' they repeated together.
- j He insinuated that things had gone wrong because of me.
- k 'But, but, but. But surely not!' he stuttered.
- l She announced that she would be leaving within the month.

2 Fill each gap in the sentences below with one word.

- a 'Let's not speak ill the dead,' she said under her breath.
- b She poured her heart to him.
- c He blurted the names of his accomplices with a shrug of his shoulders.
- d The third candidate clammed , either through nerves or stubbornness.
- e Don't keep me the dark any longer. Tell me what's going on.
- f He reeled the names of all the people involved by heart.
- g They'll be trying to build this group as the new Spice Girls, won't they?
- h It says here black and white that you have to give three months' notice.
- i How do you propose to put your message ?
- j 'I just can't get to my parents any more,' he said with a shake of his head.
- k I feel gratified that you have confided me.
- l 'I'm sorry, I'd like to take what I said,' she said tearfully.
- m I think it's time I put you all the picture regarding future prospects.
- n The minister trotted the usual assurances in typical fashion.
- o He dredged the normal accusations against the opposition.
- p He dwelt the past achievements of the government rather too long.
- q Do you mind if I butt ? It's just that this is item 17!!!

3 Rewrite each of the sentences using the prompt word given. This word must not be changed in any way.

Example: I'd like to make a few suggestions.

forward

I'd like to put forward a few suggestions.

- a Can I give you an update on the latest figures?
fill
- b The actor suddenly couldn't remember what he was supposed to say.
dried
- c She found it impossible to apologise.
herself
- d She specifically stressed the need for absolute confidentiality.
emphasis
- e I tried to dissuade him from making any rash promises.
talk
- f I finally managed to persuade her to sell her collection.
talk
- g I couldn't work out what he was trying to say.
driving

4 Fill each of the numbered blanks in the passage with one appropriate word.

I'd like to (1) off by telling you some things to do and some definitely not to do. First of all, (2) up; don't mumble. Speak at normal speed, perhaps slightly slower; don't gabble. Don't just trot (3) a series of statistics. (4) to your notes, of course, but don't just read them (5). Maintain eye contact with your listeners. Don't go (6) too long; no guest should overstay their welcome. In any presentation there will be a number of points you can just (7) on rather than go (8) great detail about. Don't forget the need to paraphrase and summarise with expressions like 'in (9) words' or 'if I could put it (10) way'. If someone calls (11) or butts (12) while you're in (13) flow, don't get tongue-tied. Wait, and then come back (14) a light-hearted response. Don't, whatever you do, get involved in a running (15) of words or, worse, a slanging (16) with one particular member of the audience. And don't patronise any questioner; no one likes being talked (17) to. When it comes to question and answer time, try to stick to the point, try not to come out (18) too many clichés. Be careful not to talk yourself (19) a corner; it's very easy to start going (20) in circles.