

Say, Talk, or Tell?

Pt. A: *Fill in the blanks with either say, talk, or tell. Be sure to use the correct form of the verb.*

1. Brian, can you just _____ me what's wrong with that truss?
2. Well, have you _____ to Darren?
3. I'll _____ a little bit more about that afterwards.
4. We're _____ that there isn't gonna be any sort of an, excavation...
5. He _____ it's gonna cost more to deliver that inside than to put it underground.
6. I'm just _____ that (DeAngelo) would think this was quite wasteful of space.
7. I do wanna _____ that I commend you on the thoroughness of a lot of the things in your presentation
8. What I _____ was they're building according to the hall...
9. Yeah. I _____ it's gonna cost a lot more to, to build this parking.
10. Could you _____ a bit about how you chose the form of your roof?
11. Could you _____ about corridors?
12. Actually we _____ about this the other time.
13. Joe, I'll _____ you very quickly how we got to that.
14. We should _____ about that.
15. We _____ you earlier, we don't have any short-term summer housing.
16. Now one thing I was gonna _____ a minute ago, one thing that you might do to help yourself out here...
17. In my first outline you _____ me to try and make broader conclusions...
18. We'll probably be _____ about that tomorrow.
19. Several faculty _____ me "yeah, this is the center of cutting-edge, engineering research".
20. Okay so why don't you _____ me what he has in his notes.
21. Today we're going to _____ about the theory of relativity.
22. Oh actually one other thing, yesterday I _____ I would bring my DSM-4, this is the large...
23. We know, as you _____, that there are photons and neutrinos and such....

Pt. B: Some common idioms with ‘say’ ‘speak’ ‘tell’

1. as I said (before/earlier/previously)

This is a common way of referring back to something you’ve already said.

- **As I said before** this is the main entrance...
Other uses: as I was saying (before/earlier/previously), as you say, as you were saying

2. I must say, I have to say, etc. [I +modal verb +say]

How do these phrases change or add to the tone of the rest of the sentence?

- **I must say** they’re pretty run down.
- **I must say** I do find the relationship of your site a bit too linear.
- On the one side though **I have to say** I’m sympathetic to the idea...
- **I do wanna say** that I commend you on the thoroughness of a lot of things in your presentation
Other possible uses: I do have to say, I would say, I want to (wanna) say, I do want to say

3. say/let’s say

How is this phrase different from ‘suppose’ or ‘let’s suppose’?

- **Let’s say** you were to come up from here and then go down into the auditorium
- If you’re given an assignment, **say** you’re hired by a state park...
- ...but **say** you were to come up from here...

4. so to speak

What do the phrases preceding (or following) the phrase ‘so to speak’ have in common?

- Professors now can’t complain that they’re away from students... they’ll have their own private spaces so they’re in the woods **so to speak**.
- What I wanted to do is go from the garden now sort of, to the garden gate **so to speak**, entering this idea of a door of a threshold...
- I just wanted to be part of the wallpaper, **so to speak**
- (For Isaac Newton...) The apple was just, **so to speak**, the last apple that broke the problem’s back.

5. I can’t tell

Can you explain the three different uses of this phrase as used in the following examples?

- **I can’t tell you** how valuable that is.
- **I can’t tell you**, I mean that’s all I know, that there’s this debate about...
- **I can’t tell** exactly, I think it’s just the first layer...

6. can you tell.... ?

How is the meaning of this question different from ‘do you know’?

- How **can you tell** that without ever looking at this table...?