

17a Say something!

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1 Do you know the difference between *say*, *tell*, *talk*, *speak* and *discuss*? Circle the best verb to complete each sentence. Sometimes both verbs are possible.

- a He (said/told) me that he couldn't attend the meeting.
- b He (said/told) that he was sorry for his mistake.
- c We (talked/discussed) about the situation in Japan.
- d We (talked/discussed) the new marketing plan.
- e Did she (speak/talk) to you about the reorganisation plans?
- f Did she (speak/talk) about the cost of the project?

When you have checked your answers, work with a partner and discuss the meanings and grammatical rules for the verbs. Then complete these sentences with the correct form of *say*, *tell*, *speak*, *talk* or *discuss*.

- g Where is she? She _____ she would be here half an hour ago.
- h I phoned your office and _____ to your assistant.
- i Do you have a free moment to _____ the Zurich deal?
- j I'll _____ for about half an hour and then answer your questions.
- k I _____ him that he would have to wait for an answer.
- l I'm sorry, I don't understand. What are you _____ about?

2 Work with a partner. Look at the following expressions and check their meaning.

I think he was **talking** rubbish actually.

It's very important that you **say** what you expect from the deal.

I'm sorry, I can't hear you. It's a bad line. Can you **speak** up?

He started his speech by **telling** us a very funny anecdote.

This is a free and open discussion, so please **speak** your mind.

That was a really interesting presentation you **gave**.

Can I **give** you a definite answer next week?

To **tell** you the truth, I don't really care what happens.

What did he **say** about my proposal at the meeting?

Let's go for lunch now and we can **talk** business afterwards.

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3 Complete the questions with the correct form of *say*, *tell*, *speak*, *talk* or *give*. Then discuss the questions with your partner.

- a Do you get nervous when you have to _____ a speech in public?
- b How many languages do you _____?
- c Have you ever _____ a lie to get a job?
- d Are you good at _____ jokes?
- e Do you find it difficult to _____ 'no' to people when they ask for help?
- f Do you prefer to _____ business on the phone or face-to-face?
- g Are you the kind of person who likes to _____ your mind?