

Eh? Say what? Tell me, again! ... but be SURE to do it, correctly! ... Can you?



1. Join* these, correctly:

They said WHAT to you?!



Tell me a story! / Tell a story to me!

Yes! We're going to help you use what Star calls “speaking verbs,” correctly, but...just what are they?!

*Draw a line from the sentences to the upper left hand corner of the appropriate pictures

Star calls “speaking verbs” all those verbs that express, well, speaking in its many forms both personal and professional. You need many of these verbs every day, so let’s see how to use them, correctly. Look at the sentences, above, and YOU tell ME what differences, *other than imperative vs. question*, you see.



2. (Choose) _____



3. How well do you know the following common speaking verbs? Tick the correct answers

- ____ I answered him, yesterday | ____ I answered to him, yesterday | ____ I answered by him, yesterday.
____ They’ll respond him, soon. | ____ They’ll respond to him, soon. | ____ They’ll respond by him, soon.
____ She’ll explain it him. | ____ She’ll explain it to him. | ____ She’ll explain it by him.
____ Don’t ask him, he’s mad. | ____ Don’t ask to him, he’s mad. | ____ Don’t ask by him, he’s mad.

4. Some speaking verbs need different prepositions depending on what you want to say. (Tick right answers)



- Mom talks to her every day. ____ monologue | ____ dialogue | ____ third party
Mom talks with her every day. ____ monologue | ____ dialogue | ____ third party
Mom talks about her with her neighbor. ____ monologue | ____ dialogue | ____ third party

How can you know which prepositions can be used, and how they change the meaning? (Learner’s Dictionary!)

This is true if you use a speaking verb with a modal or as a second verb (ex., needs to speak...), too. Drag & drop:

The candidate will speak to them.
The doctor needs to present that to them.
The boss could say it to them.
The sales rep explained it to us.
The mayor stated it to them.



The candidate will speak with them.
The doctor needs to present that with them.
The boss could say it with them.
The sales rep explained it with us.
The mayor stated it with them.
(N.B., sometimes “with” also means
“together with,” i.e., both are speakers.)



The candidate will speak about them.
The doctor needs to present that about them.
The boss could say it about them.
The sales rep explained it about us.
The mayor stated it about them.



5. _____

So, you’ve seen that lots can take “to” and even other prepositions before the listener. Which can’t?

There are three commonly used verbs that **don’t** want “to” before the listener: **answer** (*Watch out ... NEVER pronounce the “w”!*), **ask**, and ... *when the listener immediately follows the verb ...* **tell** ... Look at these:



He **asked me** the day before yesterday.

I **answered him**, yesterday.

She’ll **tell him** a joke, tomorrow.

(BUT...She’ll **tell** a joke **to him**, tomorrow.)

6. Your turn! (*ungraded*)

“ask” – her: _____

“answer” – them: _____

“tell” – me – a story: _____

“tell” – a story – to me: _____

There are two last things to look at...what could they be?

What’s the difference between **talk** and **speak**? It has to do with “register”... maybe you’ve seen this, before.



6. Let’s see what you know, first. Thinking about **REGISTER**, *tick* the sentences that are better:

____ The chairman talked with the board members. | ____ The chairman spoke with the board members.

____ Grandma talked to me about that, yesterday. | ____ Grandma spoke to me about that, yesterday.

____ That speaker talked to the attendees, today. | ____ That speaker spoke to the attendees, today.

____ I’ve already talked to mom about that. | ____ I’ve already spoken to mom about that.

Last, but not least, use **tell** to emphasize the *narration / tale*; use **say** to emphasize *the act of speaking*:



7. Now it’s your turn. Write your own sentences (*ungraded*):

say – him – a thousand times: _____

tell – Johnnie – a bedtime story: _____

explain – that – us: _____

(N.B., all images are Microsoft Clipart from the Word program used to make this file.)