Say or Tell

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Target Students: Lower-intermediate
Corpus used: Corpus Concordance English
Class duration: 35 mins
Materials: Worksheet 2_say or tell
Aim: Emphasize the semantic and phraseological differences between the verbs tell and say

I. Individual Work
Can you spot the errors? Look at the sentences in the pictures and tick the correct ones.

What did he tell me? ☐ ☐
What did he tell to me? ☐ ☐
What did he say to me? ☐ ☐
What did he say me? ☐ ☐
II. Pair Work.

Read Disney *Frozen* script lines below and see if you can find the answers to Question I.

1. ELSA: **Tell** the guards to open up the gate.
2. ANNA: Okay, just **tell** me one thing: What was happening on the North Mountain? Did it seem magical?
3. KRISTOFF: Hm. So **tell** me, what made the queen go all ice-crazy?
4. KRISTOFF: You don't **tell** him what to do!
5. ANNA: Elsa! Elsa! Elsa, it's me, Anna—Your sister who didn't mean to make you freeze the summer. I'm sorry. It's all my f-f-fault. … Of course, none of this would have happened if she'd just **told** me her secret.
6. They **say**, ‘Have courage’, and I'm trying to -- I'm right out here for you — Just let me in.
7. ANNA: Okay, can I just **say** something crazy?
8. ANNA: No. Whatever you have to **say**, you—you can **say** to both of us.
9. HANS: You **said** she’d never hurt you.

III. Group Work.

Now put the two words into the online corpus, look at the examples in it and try to work out their difference. Groups can then feedback to each other, explaining the words.

First go to http://www.lextutor.ca/conc/eng/.
Type in the word **tell** in the "keyword" box, choose corpus “2k Graded Corpus (920,000)”, hit the "Go concordancer" icon.
IV. Pair Work.

Check your understanding. Circle T for True or F for False for each statement about say or tell.

Differences between say and tell
a) The word *tell* need a person as object before reporting what was said. T F
b) The word *tell* do not need a person as object and its object is usually what has been said. T F
c) The verb commonly used for reporting what someone says is *say*. T F
d) The word *tell* never has a person as the object. You *tell* something or something to somebody. T F

V. Group Work. Try it yourself.

Try to summarize the use patterns of the two words. Groups can then feedback to each other, explaining the words. The first example of each word has been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tell</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>use pattern</th>
<th>Example</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to say sth to sb, usually giving them information</td>
<td>1.tell sb</td>
<td><em>Don’t tell him.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To order or advise sb to do sth</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speak words</td>
<td>Say + direct object (sth)</td>
<td><em>She said sorry.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Say direct speech</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to speak or tell sb sth</td>
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</table>
VI. Individual Work.

Which word fits all the gaps in each set, tell or say?

Holmes said. 'I wrote to them.' 'What did you ______?' 'I asked them about the man in the ady how many students live upstairs? Three, did you ______? And they all go past your door.' 'Yes, she answered. 'A woman knows. But he doesn't ______ or do anything.' 'What's his job?' Holmes your beard, Bob,' he said. 'I know it's you. _______ hello to my new wife!' Our friend pulled it love?' 'I don't know. It's too difficult to _______ exactly. But it's going to be a good ti probly Angela James, twenty-one. Hmm. Shall I ______ something to her about that case? No, no.

's name. After that, it was easy.' 'Will you ______ Miss Sutherland all this?' I asked. 'No, He / you can help.' 'All right,' Holmes said. ' ______ me. What happened?' 'Tomorrow is the first mm he said, 'I'll help you, Mr Soames. Now, ______ me something. Did anybody visit you in your 'Please close the door,' Holmes said. 'Now, ______ me - what really happened yesterday?' Banni! There's nothing more?' 'No, sir.' 'Then I'll ______ you,' Holmes said. 'When you sat down on the you're talking now,' Holmes said. 'Gilchrist, ______ us! It's not a secret now.' Gilchrist put h: but you're sorry now. I know that; I'll ______ Mr Soames the story. You can

VII. Pair Work – I am an Examiner! (See Worksheet_ I am an Examiner!)

Each one (examiner) of the pair develops a test paper with 10 fill-the-gap questions from the corpus for the words tell and say, then answer each other’s test paper (full mark: 10 points) and discuss.