

## Misused Words: Synonyms for “Said”

Have you found that you are overusing the word “said”? Do you want to give more meaning, action, and emotion to the dialogue in your writing? Do you want to use more descriptive words in your essays? Simply replacing the word “said” with one of the following synonyms could give your writing the “extra kick” you’re looking for.

Acknowledged	Boasted	Demurred
Acquiesced	Bragged	Denied
Added	Brought forth	Denounced
Addressed	Called	Described
Admitted	Cautioned	Dictated
Admonished	Charged	Directed
Advised	Chided	Disclosed
Advocated	Cited	Disrupted
Affirmed	Claimed	Divulged
Agreed	Commanded	Drawled
Alleged	Commented	Droned
Allowed	Complained	Elaborated
Announced	Conceded	Emphasized
Answered	Concluded	Enjoined
Approved	Condescended	Entreated
Argued	Confessed	Enunciated
Asked	Confided	Estimated
Assented	Consented	Exclaimed
Asserted	Contended	Explained
Assumed	Contested	Exposed
Assured	Continued	Expressed
Attested	Contradicted	Faltered
Avowed	Counseled	Feared
Babbled	Countered	Foretold
Bantered	Cracked	Fumed
Bargained	Cried	Gasped
Barked	Debated	Giggled
Began	Decided	Granted
Begged	Declared	Grinned
Bellowed	Decreed	Groaned
Beseached	Demanded	Growled

Grumbled	Narrated	Reiterated
Grunted	Noted	Rejoiced
Haggled	Notified	Rejoined
Hedged	Objected	Related
Held	Observed	Relented
Hesitated	Opined	Remarked
Hinted	Orated	Reminded
Howled	Ordered	Remonstrated
Imparted	Petitioned	Repeated
Implied	Pleaded	Replied
Implored	Pled	Reported
Indicated	Pointed out	Reprimanded
Inferred	Prayed	Requested
Informed	Predicted	Responded
Inquired	Proclaimed	Restated
Insinuated	Professed	Resumed
Insisted	Prompted	Retorted
Instructed	Pronounced	Returned
Interjected	Proposed	Revealed
Interrogated	Propounded	Roared
Intimidated	Protested	Ruled
Itemized	Proved	Sanctioned
Jested	Publicized	Scoffed
Judged	Queried	Scolded
Lamented	Questioned	Screamed
Laughed	Quibbled	Shouted
Lectured	Quipped	Shrieked
Lied	Quoted	Snapped
Lisped	Rambled	Sneered
Listed	Ranted	Sobbed
Made known	Reaffirmed	Solicited
Maintained	Reasoned	Specified
Mentioned	Reassured	Spoke
Mimicked	Reciprocated	Sputtered
Moaned	Recited	Stammered
Mumbled	Recommended	Stated
Murmured	Recounted	Stipulated
Mused	Referred	Stormed
Muttered	Refuted	Stressed
Nagged	Regretted	Stuttered

Suggested	Upbraided	Wept
Taunted	Urged	Whimpered
Testified	Uttered	Whistled
Thought	Vowed	Whooped
Threatened	Wailed	Wrangled
Told	Warned	Yelled
Twitted	Went on	

### Substituting for “Said”

Each of the above words, when used in the place of “said,” will make your writing much more concrete and vivid. Take the following sentence, for example:

<p>“I will love you until the end of time,” John said.</p> <p><i>versus</i></p> <p>“I will love you until the end of time,” John vowed.</p>
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Simply by replacing “said” with “vowed,” I have made the second sentence much more meaningful than the first.

Here is another example:

<p>“I think you had better go now,” Cindy said.</p> <p><i>versus</i></p> <p>“I think you had better go now,” Cindy snapped.</p>
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In the first sentence, readers have no hint at what Cindy is feeling when she speaks. In the second sentence, readers can sense a hint of anger and intensity in Cindy’s voice.

Choosing more concrete synonyms for “said” can also strengthen your academic writing, as shown in the following example:

<p>“An anonymous source <u>admitted</u> that the company had actually been losing profit for years and <u>remarked</u> that the reason for the loss was the poor judgment of the CEO.”</p>
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The words “admitted” and “remarked” both carry more weight than the word “said.” *To say* simply means to say, but *to admit* and *to remark* both mean to say in a distinct and specific way.

## Activity 1

Using the context clues in each sentence, fill in each blank with the appropriate synonym for “said” from the list below.

objected      questioned      described      professed      directed  
confessed      hinted      began      decided      nagged

1. “Well, you see,” Julie \_\_\_\_\_, “It all started like this.”
2. Joseph \_\_\_\_\_ that the Industrial Revolution was a time of growth and change in America.
3. Carol \_\_\_\_\_ whether or not she was making the right decision.
4. “You haven’t taken the trash out yet,” Lizzie \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The employee \_\_\_\_\_ that he had been taking naps under the bar on his breaks.
6. “I will not stand for this!” Jason \_\_\_\_\_.
7. In the story of Oedipus, the oracle \_\_\_\_\_ that Oedipus would kill his father and marry his mother.
8. “I supposed I will go to the movie after all,” Andrea \_\_\_\_\_.
9. “You, take the cake out of the oven. You, frost it,” the baker \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The author \_\_\_\_\_ that there would be a sequel to the novel.

## Activity 2

Often, more than one synonym for said will work in a sentence. In the next exercise, select up to three synonyms for said that you think are appropriate to fill in the blank. Following the exercise, you will find some suggested answers. Keep in mind that these answers are only some of the many possibilities.

1. Roger \_\_\_\_\_ that it would be a bad idea to leave the stove on all day.
2. “Please, don’t make me go,” Carla \_\_\_\_\_.
3. “I don’t want to eat here! This has to be the worst restaurant in all of San Jose,” Matthew \_\_\_\_\_.
4. “Even though I don’t like it, I guess you might be correct,” Sharon \_\_\_\_\_.
5. “I’m n-n-not so sure that w-w-we should go in there,” Shaggy \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Experts on the matter have \_\_\_\_\_ that a sufficient amount of evidence exists to prove the existence of Bigfoot.
7. “I am so angry with you, I hope that you never speak to me again!” Albert \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Many prospective jurors have \_\_\_\_\_ that the death penalty is a cruel and unusual punishment.

## Answer Key for Activity 1

1. began
2. described
3. questioned
4. nagged
5. confessed

6. objected
7. professed
8. decided
9. directed
10. hinted

***Answer Key for Activity 2***

1. insisted, pointed out, warned
2. groaned, pleaded, begged
3. complained, protested, ranted, objected
4. agreed, assented, conceded
5. murmured, stammered, hesitated
6. debated, argued, contended
7. roared, shouted, exclaimed, growled
8. argued, proclaimed, opined