

## Words to use instead of SAID

There is nothing wrong with using the word said in written dialogue. Be careful not to treat the word said as a word to be avoided. Well written dialogue should never rely on tags such as the ones below, but should convey its own attitude. When using words instead of said, be sure you utilize them properly. For example, you cannot laugh and talk, or sneeze and talk at the same time. "That is so funny, laughed Bob," should not be used. A person can laugh before or after they speak, but not while they speak. Think about how your character is going to speak and the emotion that they are experiencing. Think it out before you write it down. Let me give you some examples. The following sentence does not use the word said:

"I hate you," spat Bob in disgust. Now think about that sentence. Can a person spit in disgust and speak at the same time?

Watch what happens this time when I use the word spat to describe Darla's actions: Darla clenched her fists in rage at seeing her boyfriend kiss another girl. "I hate you!" The words spat out her mouth as she stormed out the classroom, vowing never to talk to him again.

Here is an example where the word said works just fine: "Do have some more gravy, Bob," said Darla, spooning it out herself.

For dialogue to be effective it must appear to be realistic. The person reading your story must believe that your characters actually talk this way. You should use dialogue to reveal insights into your characters, set the mood, and even to clarify plot points. I was once told that when writing dialogue, to think of it as action. Use dialogue to make something happen.

Use the list below carefully and remember that there is nothing wrong with using the word said in dialog.

The emotion of ANGER 😡				
accused	argued	badgered	barked	bellowed
bickered	chastised	chided	clipped	clucked
commanded	complained	corrected	countered	cursed
dared	demanded	disagreed	exploded	fumed
goaded	growled	grumbled	harshly	hissed
hollered	howled	huffed	insulted	interrupted
muttered	objected	ordered	raged	ranted
retaliated	retorted	roared	scoffed	scolded
scowled	screamed	screeched	seethed	shot
shouted	shrilled	snapped	snarled	sneered
spluttered	stormed	swore	taunted	threatened
warned	yelled			
The emotion of DISGUST 🤢				
cringed	grimaced	grouched	grunted	mocked
rasped	refused	smirked	sniffed	snorted

The emotion of EMBARRASSMENT 😬				
admitted	confessed	hesitated	mumbled	sheepishly
The emotion of FEAR 😨				
babbled	croaked	denied	doubted	fretted
groaned	gulped	moaned	panted	prayed
quavered	shrieked	slurred	squeaked	squealed
stammered	stuttered	whimpered	whined	whispered
worried				
The emotion of HAPPINESS 😊				
approved	beamed	bubbled	burst	cackled
chatted	chattered	cheered	chirped	chortled
chorused	chuckled	complimented	congratulated	cooed
crowed	effused	exulted	forgave	giggled
grinned	gurgled	gushed	hummed	joked
praised	resounded	sang	simpered	smiled
thanked	trilled			
Words associated with PERSUASION 🗨️				
advised	appealed	asserted	assured	avowed
begged	beseached	cajoled	claimed	convinced
encouraged	entreated	implored	needled	pleaded
stressed	suggested	urged		
Words associated with PROVOCATION 😡				
bragged	exasperated	gibed	jested	jeered
joked	lied	mimicked	nagged	provoked
quipped	sassed			
The emotion of SADNESS 😞				
apologized	bawled	bewailed	blubbered	comforted
consoled	cried	glumly	lamented	mumbled
murmured	sighed	sniffled	sobbed	spilled
wailed	wept			
The emotion of SURPRISE 😲				
bleated	blurted	exclaimed	gasped	marveled
perplexed	sputtered	yelped		
Words associated with QUESTIONS or CURIOSITY 🤔				
asked	challenged	coaxed	hinted	inquired
pleaded	puzzled	queried	questioned	quizzed
wondered				

Words associated with UNCERTAINTY or CONFUSION 🤔				
cautioned	doubtfully	guessed	hesitated	vacillated
The emotion of LOVE or Romance 💕				
breathed	expressed	flirted	flirtatiously	proclaimed
promised	purred	swooned		
The action of ANSWERING 💬				
answered	clarified	conceded	concurred	deflected
disputed	explained	interjected	protested	reassured
remarked	replied	responded	stated	
Words not associated with any particular emotion 🌈				
acknowledged	acquiesced	added	addressed	affirmed
agreed	alliterated	announced	articulated	aside
began	bet	boasted	boomed	broke in
called	chimed in	coached	commented	concluded
confided	confirmed	considered	continued	contributed
conversed	deadpanned	decided	declared	defended
demurred	described	disclosed	divulged	drawled
echoed	emphasized	ended	finished	flatly
gently	gloated	greeted	heaved	hypothesized
imitated	implied	informed	insinuated	insisted
intoned	instructed	jabbered	lectured	lisped
maintained	mentioned	monotoned	mouthed	mused
motioned	nodded	noted	notified	observed
offered	opined	peppered	pestered	piped
pointed out	pondered	prattled	pressed	pronounced
proposed	put in	quietly	quoted	rambled
rattled on	read	reasoned	recalled	reckoned
recited	recounted	reiterated	related	remembered
reminded	repeated	reported	requested	restated
revealed	rhymed	ridiculed	sibilated	sneezed
snickered	speculated	spoke	started	surmised
sympathized	tartly	teased	tempted	tested
testified	theorized	thought aloud	told	uttered
ventured	verified	volunteered	vowed	went on
wheezed	wished	yakked	yapped	yawned