

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 said and describe Bob's actions: "I hate you," said Bob as he clenched his fists. His lips snarled with rage as he stormed out the room, vowing never to return.

Here is another 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 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.

accused	acknowledged	added	addressed	admitted
advised	affirmed	agreed	announced	answered
apologized	approved	argued	asked	asserted
assured	avowed	babbled	barked	bawled
beamed	began	begged	bellowed	bet
bleated	blurted	boasted	boomed	bragged
breathed	broke in	bubbled	bugged	burst out
called	cautioned	chatted	chattered	cheered
chided	chimed in	chirped	chittered	choked
chortled	chorused	chuckled	claimed	clarified
clucked	coaxed	commanded	commented	complained
conceded	concluded	confessed	confided	congratulated
continued	convinced	cooed	corrected	coughed
countered	cried	croaked	crowed	cursed
dared	decided	declared	demanded	denied
described	disagreed	disclosed	divulged	doubted
drawled	dribbled	echoed	ended	exclaimed

explained	finished	fretted	gasped	gawked
gently	gibed	giggled	gloated	greeted
groaned	growled	grunted	grumbled	guessed
gulped	gurgled	gushed	hinted	hissed
hollered	howled	hypothesized	imitated	implied
informed	inquired	insisted	interjected	interrupted
intoned	jeered	jested	joked	laughed
lectured	lied	lisped	maintained	marveled
mentioned	mimicked	moaned	mumbled	murmured
mused	muttered	nagged	nodded	noted
notified	objected	observed	offered	ordered
panted	pestered	piped	pleaded	pled
pointed out	pondered	praised	prayed	proclaimed
promised	proposed	protested	provoked	purred
put in	puzzled	quavered	queried	questioned
quietly	quipped	quoted	ranted	reasoned
reassured	recalled	reckoned	related	remarked
remembered	reminded	repeated	replied	reported
requested	resounded	responded	retorted	revealed
roared	sang	sassed	screamed	scoffed
scolded	shot	shouted	shrieked	shrilled
sighed	simpered	smiled	smirk	snapped
snarled	sneered	sneeze	snicker	sniffed
sniffled	snorted	sobbed	spat	speculated
spluttered	spoke	sputtered	squeaked	squealed
stammered	started	stated	stormed	stuttered
suggested	surmised	taunted	teased	tempted
tested	theorized	threatened	told	trilled
urged	uttered	volunteered	vowed	wailed
warned	went on	wept	wheezed	whimpered
whined	whispered	wondered	worried	yawned
yakked	yelled			

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