

Expressing oneself

Reading

Read this man's speech. See how soon you can tell what he is talking about. In it he includes over fifty variations on the words *say* and *speak*. See how many of them you can incorporate into your own use of English.

'Ladies and Gentlemen!

I hope you will excuse me for **butting into** your conversations in this way. I know nobody likes being **interrupted** at such a time, but I have been asked to **say a few words, make a speech** if you like, on this extra-special occasion. And **may I say** first what a pleasure and honour it is to have the opportunity to **address** you like this, this afternoon.

You know, ever since you first **hinted** to me that something of this sort might be on the cards, I have been **debating with myself** constantly as to how I could best **express** the **sentiments** I want to **convey** to you, here, this afternoon. And then when you actually **broke the news** and **announced** a date, I began to **consult** friends and acquaintances who have been in this position, **discussing** the subject with them **at length** and **in detail**.

I can **reveal** today, however, that the problems of **phrasing my message** have not been solved. I suppose if I were an actor, I could **recite** a relevant **speech** of Shakespeare's. Were I a priest, I might **preach** to you, but I fear it would be a poor **sermon**. As a politician, I could **read out** a prepared **statement** and then go on **repeating** 'No comment'. If you were a class of students, I might **give you a lecture**. Were you secretaries, I could **dictate** what I have to **say**. If we had more time, we could **chatter** and **gossip** together for hours. But you and I are none of these things, so I shall have to **put my message across** in more ordinary **terms**. I suppose I could simply **declare** that this is one of the happiest days of my life and **claim** that I never thought I could be as happy as I am today. Or I could just **state** a few useless **facts and figures** and **leave it at that**. I could, on the other hand, **refer** to what great men – and women – have said or written on this theme, and just **quote** a few famous lines. I might also **mention** my own experience, **reminisce** a little, **recount** a few **anecdotes**, tell a few **stories** and make some significant **comment** on young people today.

Standing here, I can **assure** you, my main fear is not that I shall '**dry up**' – I have already **uttered** too many words on this **theme** to **be at a loss for words** now – but that I shall, in a rash moment, **blurt out** what I have to say, **gabble** away for a few seconds and **leave** too much **unsaid, unspoken**. Then again, while I stand here **thinking aloud, arguing** with myself, **contradicting** myself perhaps, you will no doubt be thinking, 'Why's the old man **rambling** on like this without **getting to the point**?' 'Why doesn't he just **come out with it**?' you'll be saying. '**Spit it out!**' I hear you cry.

Well, time marches on, and I can see that you have no need of **explanations** or **illustrations** from me; no **account** of my own life is required, no **descriptions** or **recommendations**. I shall not bother to **sum up** what I have said so far. All I should like to **add** on this – how shall I **put it**? – extra-special occasion is: I **hope** you'll both be very happy.'

Dialogue

The items in italics on the next pages are what people actually say. Below each of the items in italics is a statement about the way in which that person is expressing him or herself. The key words are left out and are in the Key at the back of the book. Try to complete each statement. Then check your answers.

PART ONE

- 1 *Hello. How are you doing? Nice to see you again. Haven't seen you for ages. How are you?*
He's simply ... an old friend; it's quite a warm, friendly
- 2 *This is Françoise. She's over here – er – staying with me for a few weeks. She's from Paris.*
Now he's ... a third party to his friend – a normal sort of ...
- 3 *Look, would you like to join us? We're just going down the road to the Steakhouse for a bit of dinner.*
He's ... his friend to join them for dinner.
(For some reason, I don't get as many ... as I used to.)
- 4 *Well, er, that's very nice of you. Yes, I'd love to.*
She has ... the invitation; an informal ... , of course – nothing on paper.
- 5 *Oh no, I've just remembered. I have to meet Harold – you remember Harold? – at eight, so I'd better not come with you. Thanks all the same.*
Oh dear, now she finds she has to ... the invitation, because of a prior arrangement.
- 6 *Well, why don't we get together tomorrow, the three of us, and go for a picnic, something like that?*
He's ... a picnic tomorrow; a good ... in this weather.
- 7 *Look, I'll pick you up at your place, so you won't have to get a bus.*
He's ... to pick her up in his car; a gentlemanly ...
- 8 *Well, er, I don't know, er, I mean, er, it's, er ...*
She's clearly very ..., ... over every word like that. I wonder what could be behind her ...
- 9 *Oh come on, you must come, really you must! We won't take no for an answer.*
He's ... that she comes with them tomorrow; he's very ...
- 10 *Well, all right then. Fine, OK.*
Ah, good, she's finally ... to go. Thank goodness.
- 11 *Look, I'm sorry, but you won't pass this exam if you go on wasting time the way you have been these past few weeks.*
The teacher is ..., her student not to take things easy; a friendly ... this time – maybe next time it will be harsher.
- 12 *If I were you, I'd try and read twenty pages every day; write one or two compositions a week, and spend some time every evening just going through your notes.*
Now she's ... him as to how he can make progress; but will he listen to her ...?

- 13 *You're right. I'm sorry. I know I've let you down. I don't deserve to have a teacher like you. I really am dreadfully sorry.*
He's ... for not doing much work as he might have done; it sounds like a sincere ..., but it's easy to be ... when it suits you, isn't it?
- 14 *Oh come on now. It'll be all right. You'll do well. I'm sure you'll pass as long as you keep your head.*
She's ... him now that he will pass.
- 15 *James, things'll get better for you, I'm sure they will. Don't worry. Don't be upset. I do feel for you.*
Now she's with him, trying to ... him.
She's certainly a very ... teacher, but I'm not so sure he deserves her Male students of thirty-five shouldn't need this sort of
- 16 *Excuse me. Is this the customer service section here?*
She's ... as to whether she's in the right place; she's probably at the desk.
- 17 *Well, look! I'm not satisfied with this jumper I got here last Saturday. I washed it once and you can see for yourself what's happened to it.*
She's ... about the garment she bought; the girl probably hears hundreds of ... like this every day.
- 18 *What do I want? I want my money back, of course. And I want it now!*
She's ... her money back; it sounds like a pretty forceful
- 19 *Look, if you don't give me that money this instant, I'll make life so uncomfortable for you that you'll wish you'd never set foot in this store.*
Now she's ... the poor girl; that's quite a violent
- 20 *You, you stupid little girl, you're a fat lot of use!*
That's unfair, madam, if you don't mind my saying so. I just work here.
Now she's ... the girl, who sounds rather offended. I'm not surprised. That was a nasty
- 21 *Can I help to sort things out here? I'm the manager. We don't like to see our customers upset in any way – especially the young ladies and especially the beautiful ones – and especially the well-dressed, elegant ones.*
He's ... the woman on her appearance – a big ..., as she's over seventy.
- 22 *So if you'd like to choose another jumper from our range, we'll happily exchange this one for it, even if the one you choose does cost more. All right?*
What he's ... sounds very fair – unless someone can come up with a better
- 23 *Congratulations, Marlon. Marvellous performance. Best Hamlet I've seen. I don't know how you do it.*
They're ... the actor on his performance; they're offering / giving him hearty

- 24 *Well, I'm very grateful. You're very kind. I appreciate that.*
He's ... them for their kind words; he's offering /
giving them heartfelt ...
- 25 *Fantastic show. We were wondering – The way you expressed your – We thought perhaps you might get us – Incredible performance! Er, any chance of some free tickets for our friends?*
Ah, it was all ...; they were ...
him in order to get some free tickets.

PART TWO

- 26 *Comrade Stalin was the finest leader we have ever produced. He did more for our nation than any other. He deserves to be ...*
It's 1953, and Comrade Khrushchev is ...
Comrade Stalin; generous ... indeed.
- 27 *Comrade Stalin was a criminal. No-one in the history of our great country has done more to destroy ...*
It's 1956 and Khrushchev is ... Stalin as a
criminal.
- 28 *Right, now where were you? What were you doing? Who were you with? What was his name?*
This is an ...; the police are ...
the suspect, ... him about his activities at the
time of the crime.
- 29 *Look, come off it, Dad. I'm twenty-one. Stop treating me as if I was a baby!*
Oh no, it wasn't a policeman; it was a father. The
daughter is ... that she's not a baby any more;
youthful ...
- 30 *Come on, tell me. You'll feel better once you've told me. Don't be shy.*
She's ... her husband to tell her the
latest bit of gossip. He seems to need ...
- 31 *Do tell me. Really, you ought to. You've got to. Look, come on. Tell me, for goodness' sake.*
She's ... him to tell her now – as if it
was terribly ...
- 32 *No, no. And, for the last time, no!*
Oh dear, he has ... to tell her; a stubborn ...
- 33 *Oh please, Winston, please. Don't keep things from me - please!*
Now she's ... with him, ... him to
tell her – on her knees perhaps.
- 34 *Look, I won't tell anyone, not a soul. I won't really.*
She's ... to be discreet; but will she keep her
... or break it?
- 35 *Well, all right then. The thing is – and you mustn't mention a word of this to anyone – the thing is, you know Tom's got this new secretary called Belinda?*
Well, ...
Well, he's given in and is ... in her –
on this very ... matter; I suppose a husband
really should have ... in his wife, though,
shouldn't he?

- 36 *I propose ... (What about the unemployed?) (How would you like to live on £38 a week?) (Give us back our jobs!) I propose ...*
A few of the crowd are ... the politician.
Some ... are welcomed by politicians – it gives
them the chance to show how clever they are.
- 37 *As I was saying, I propose to increase basic income tax along the following lines.*
Ah, this politician has completely ...
the heckling.
- 38 *It was all your fault. If you hadn't opened your big mouth, neither of us would be in the mess we are in now.*
It seems one man is ... the other for the
trouble he's in – it's not clear whether he's to
... or not.
- 39 *Yeah, OK. I realise that it wasn't so clever of me. I know I shouldn't have ...*
Ah, now he's ... that it wasn't the cleverest
thing to have done – an honest ...
- 40 *And there's something else, I'm afraid. Er – when I told you I'd written to the tax people, well, I hadn't. I lied. The whole story was a lie.*
Now he's going further, actually ... that he
had lied – quite a serious ..., really.
- 41 *How could you? I mean, we agreed that the only way we were going to succeed was if we were both completely honest with each other. And now this!*
He's ... the other one now for what he did.
His eyes are ... and his voice full of ...
- 42 *Oh, so you got ten per cent in the exam, did you? You genius! You must be so tired after all the work you did for it!*
He's ... his poor friend, ... of him,
... him as brothers do. Perhaps he's only joking,
though, simply ... the other boy's ...
- 43 *I got 99% myself. Of course, I expected to do well. After all, I'm obviously the brightest student in the class.*
Now he's ... about how clever he is, the
little horror.
- 44 *You only got so many because you cheated. I saw you looking at Sarah Nicholls' paper, all the way through the exam.*
Ah, now his friend's ... him of cheating –
quite a vicious ...
- 45 *What do you mean? I didn't. I didn't do anything of the sort.*
He's ... that he cheated – a fairly
forceful ...
- 46 *Look, for Heaven's sake, you two; try and behave like sixteen-year olds, not six-year olds.*
Their mother's ... both of them, ...
them off quite firmly.
- 47 *Now get upstairs, both of you. And get that mess tidied up in your room. Go on, get upstairs.*
Now she's ... them upstairs to clean up
their rooms.

- 48 *It is my considered opinion that the defendant has not got one ounce of decent human feeling in his whole body ...*
The judge is ... the defendant as 'a pretty nasty piece of work'. A strong ..., don't you think?
- 49 *Please excuse me, your Lordship, but could I possibly have a quick word with you?*
The clerk is ... a moment of the judge's time
– a very polite ...
- 50 *It's just that, you won't forget, will you, that your wife asked you to pick up a few things from the supermarket on your way home, and it's very nearly quarter past five, so ...*
He's ... the judge about certain other duties he has to perform – a timely ...

Practice

- 1 Describe how you used to get on with members of your family when you were younger.
- 2 Write or relate two conversations you have heard in which people were being particularly kind, unkind or rude to each other.
- 3 Compare English and your language. Write or discuss the ways in which people seem to express their feelings towards each other in each language.
- 4 Write on one of the following topics.
 - 1 A letter apologising to a friend following the big row you had last week and how rude you were to him or her.
 - 2 'People don't really mean most of the things they say.' How far do you think this is true?
- Add any other words about how we express ourselves as you meet them.

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