

# STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE 2: GINSENG

Hello. I'm Margot Politis. Welcome to Study English, IELTS preparation.

Today we're going to look at using the word 'say' in four different ways – to give examples, to narrow down, to quote and as a filler.

Our story looks at the anti-cancer qualities of the ginseng plant. Listen for the word 'say'.

What they've found, say, in the case of ginseng, is that it is something that is difficult and slow growing, in the wild and even in field cultivation. So you can imagine ginseng, to have a mature plant, it might be there for a period of say 4 to 7 years.



While it's in the ground, it can suffer from pests, pest problems. I've heard of instances where growers have had the crop in the ground for say 5 to 6 years. They've been keen to keep it that extra year or two, to say form the right shape of the ginseng plant, and then they've been struck by pests, virtually overnight.

The speaker, Dr David Armstrong, uses the word 'say' in several different ways.

Listen to the first one again.

What they've found, say, in the case of ginseng, is that it is something that is difficult and slow growing.

The word 'say' in this clip is used to introduce an example.

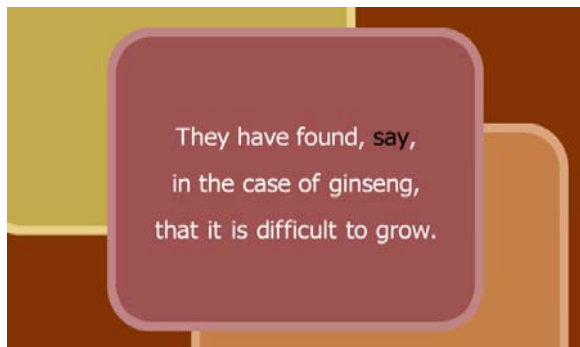
In formal English, instead of using 'say', we would use 'for instance' or 'for example'.

Have a look at these sentences:

"They have found, say, in the case of ginseng, that it is difficult to grow."

"They have found, *for instance*, in the case of ginseng, that it is difficult to grow."

"They have found, *for example*, in the case of ginseng, that it is difficult to grow."



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So 'say' can be used to introduce an example.

Let's listen to another use of the word 'say'.

So you can imagine ginseng, to have a mature plant, it might be there for a period of say 4 to 7 years.

'Say' in this clip has another meaning.

It's used for narrowing down a time period. It means 'around' or 'approximately'.

Listen for another example.

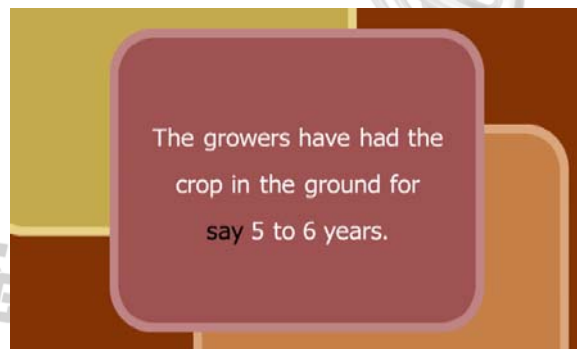
I've heard of instances where growers have had the crop in the ground for say 5 to 6 years.

The crop has been in the ground for say 5 to 6 years.

So the word 'say' here narrows down a time period.

"The growers have had the crop in the ground for 'say', 5 to 6 years."

"The growers have had the crop in the ground for 'around', 5 to 6 years."



Dr Armstrong uses the word 'say' in one more way. Listen here.

They've been keen to keep it that extra year or two to, say, form the right shape of the ginseng plant and then they've been struck by pests.

He says "to, say, form the right shape of the ginseng plant".

'Say' here is giving the speaker time to gather his thoughts. It's used as a filler. He could have said 'um', or one of the other language fillers.

For example: "to say, form the right shape of the ginseng plant."

"to, um, form the right shape of the ginseng plant."

There is one more use for the word 'say' – to quote. When we report what someone else has said we call it *indirect speech* or *reported speech*.

Speakers often introduce *indirect or reported speech* using the verb 'to say'.

Listen how the reporter talks about Dr McManus's new approach to cancer treatment.

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Dr McManus says it's a whole new approach to cancer treatment, using the slower acting, milder, traditional herbal compounds as well as Western cancer drugs to try to make conventional treatment more effective.

The reporter is quoting Dr McManus. She is talking about something that he has said.

"Dr McManus 'says' it's a whole new approach."

So we've looked at 4 different uses of the word 'say' in that one short story.

This one word, 'say' turns out to be very useful in English!

The story we've watched about ginseng provides us with lots of vocabulary relating to the topic of health and well being.

Now let's listen to Dr McManus talking about the benefits of ginseng.

Listen for the vocabulary that relates specifically to this topic.

Dr McManus says it's a whole new approach to cancer treatment, using the slower acting, milder, traditional herbal compounds as well as Western cancer drugs to try to make conventional treatment more effective.



Mild doses every day is believed to keep the body in equilibrium and just to maintain general health and vitality and stamina, and the other perhaps more valuable application is when someone's dying. It's believed to have life-enhancing properties, so because of that it commands very high prices. I saw in, in Beijing, in a herbal pharmacy there, one plant, a 50-year-old ginseng plant, worth \$100,000. It's because of the active components increase with age over time, so a one-year-old root is nowhere near as valuable as a six-year-old root and, of course a wild 50-year-old root is incredibly valuable.

He uses a lot of health related words.

He says:

'doses',  
'body',  
'equilibrium',  
'health',  
'vitality',  
and 'stamina'.



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Did you notice how these words were combined together?

Let's listen again.

Mild doses every day is believed to keep the body in equilibrium and just to maintain general health and vitality and stamina.

Dr McManus says "Mild doses every day is believed to keep the body in equilibrium".

The phrase 'mild doses' is a *collocation*.

In English, some word combinations commonly go together. These combinations are called *collocations*.

There is no particular reason for these words to go together. They just sound right to a native speaker, because of habit, history or usage.

*Collocations* occur in both *noun phrases* like 'mild doses', and *verb phrases* such as to 'keep the body in equilibrium'.

Let's look at some common *noun phrase collocations*.

We say 'high prices'.

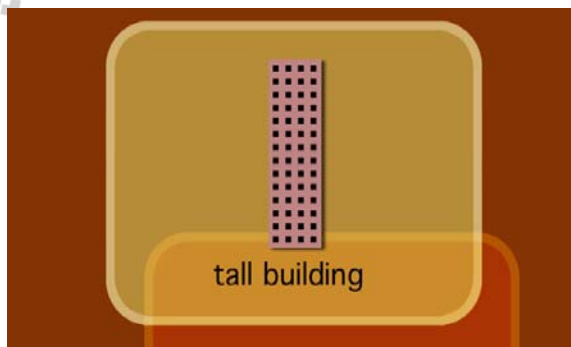
'High' collocates with 'prices'. We don't say 'large prices' or 'big prices', we say 'high prices'.

We say a 'tall building', not a 'high building'.

*Collocations* are not just about the words that go together, but also the order they go in.

We always say 'black and white', not white and black.

We say 'salt and pepper', and 'hot and cold'.



Another important *collocation* is the way we say 'directions'. English speakers always say 'north, south, east and west', in that order.

The topic of today's story is a *collocation* as well – 'health and well-being'. These nouns are often used together, in this order.



Listen to Dr McManus again. You'll hear him use a number of other *collocations*, such as 'general health', 'valuable application', 'life-enhancing properties' and 'high prices'.

Mild doses every day is believed to keep the body in equilibrium and just to maintain general health and vitality and stamina, and the other perhaps more valuable application is when someone's dying. It's believed to have life-enhancing properties, so because of that it commands very high prices.



Choosing the right word combination will make your speech and writing sound more natural. Also, choosing the best *collocation* will enable you to express yourself more clearly and precisely.

So today we've looked at the word 'say' for giving an example, narrowing down, quoting, and as a filler. We also looked at some *collocations* relating to health words.

Don't forget that you can go to our website for the transcript, study notes and exercises for today's story.

And I'll see you next time for Study English. Bye bye.

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