

Cheat Sheet for Говорить

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Still from the movie "Love and Pigeons"

Не говори!/: That's for sure!

The other day I tried to trot out an expression using the words говорить (to speak), так (so) and не (not), and got completely balled up, combining about three different expressions with all the words in the wrong order. After an hour of double-checking and correcting, I sorted it out. Now to make sure you don't make the same mistakes, here's my говорить cheat sheet.

Да что там

говорить: No question about it. You use this expression when you want to emphasize that what you are saying is the absolute truth and it's not worth the time and trouble to argue about it.

Да что там говорить о колхозных полях, если даже на личных

огородах ☒ полное и повсеместное запустение (Of course the collective farm's fields are a mess. What do ☒ you expect when even the farmers' private gardens are all totally neglected?)

Как ни говорите: No matter what anyone says. Use this when you ☒ want to support a position that not everyone shares. You say it at the end of ☒ an argument, often when you haven't been able to refute it. For emphasis, stick ☒ out your chin or wag your head:

В конце

концов, как ни говорите, директор ☒ это директор (In ☒ the end no matter what you say, the director is the director.)

Нечего и говорить: This phrase has three meanings, starting with ☒ "it goes without saying": Нечего говорить, воспитание играет огромную роль в ☒ развитии характера (It goes without saying that the way children are raised ☒ plays a huge role in their character development.) And then it can mean "there ☒ isn't anything to say":

Что ☒ мне сказать, когда

нечего говорить? (What can I say when I have nothing to ☒ say?) And finally, it can mean "there is nothing to discuss": В такую погоду о ☒ рыбалке нечего и говорить, сиди в домике. (Don't even think about fishing in ☒ this weather — stay at home.)

Ни о чём не говорит: It doesn't matter. ☒

You use this phrase when a decision ☒ isn't final or you don't have all the information: Он не

позвонил, но это

пока ни о

чём не говорит. Он

всё-таки очень занят. (He hasn't ☒ called, but that doesn't mean anything. He's very busy, after all.)

Говорю тебе (вам): I'm telling you. For when you are feeling ☒ emphatic. Finger stabbing optional: Делай, как хочешь, но говорю тебе, что этот человек производит на меня отталкивающее впечатление (Do what you want, but I'm telling you: I find ☒ that person revolting.)

Ну я тебе (вам) говорил!: What did I tell you? After you ☒ have poked someone in the chest with говорю тебе and the ☒ poked person has failed to listen, this is what you say:

Ну я

тебе говорила — меня в

институте не пустили! (I didn't get into the institute — I told you ☒ so!)

Не говори!: That's for sure! Use this when ☒ someone says something that you agree with: Не

говори! На ☒ вид-то они простецкие, а на самом деле свой расчёт имеют (

That's for

sure! They look ☒ like simple folks but actually they are very calculating.)

Что ты говоришь?: No kidding! When ☒ your significant other tells you to do what you've been saying for the last ☒ five years, this is your snarky response. Use a fake surprised voice.

Красить кухню? Что ты говоришь? (Paint the kitchen? What a great idea!)

Говорю вам правду! (I'm telling you the truth!)

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