

The imperative

Introduction



"**Take** me to the airport, please."

Definition

The imperative mood expresses an intention to influence the listener's behaviour.

Construction

It consists of the **bare infinitive**: **Call** me. **Meet** me at 9:00.

The negative form uses **don't**: **Don't forget** your umbrella. **Don't be** late.

Uses

| Uses | Examples |
|-------------|--|
| Give orders | Meet me in my office. Be here at 08:00 tomorrow. Come back! Go! |

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|---|---|
| Make requests | Take a message if he calls, please. Please lend me your pen. Bring me a coffee when you come back. |
| Give advice | Go by train; it's cheaper. Use this computer; it's faster. Don't worry . Never talk while you're eating. Always arrive early for an interview. Try a hot drink at bedtime. |
| Give instructions or directions | Attach part A to part B. First mix the flour and the eggs. Turn left at the traffic lights. Then go past a church. |
| Make offers | Call me if you have any questions. Let me know if you need any help. Let me help you with that. |
| Make invitations | Come to my party if you can. Please sit down. Marry me! Stay for dinner. |
| Give a warning | Be careful. Don't lean out of the window. Watch out! |
| Express good or ill wishes | Have a good weekend. Enjoy your meal. Have fun. |
| Make suggestions which include the speaker | Let's try that new Greek restaurant. Let's begin the meeting. Let's not use this supplier in future. Don't let's tell them. |

Being emphatic

We can use 'never' or 'always' before the verb.

Always **send** a confirmation email.
Never **share** your password.

Being polite

We need to be careful when using the imperative to give orders because it can sometimes sound too direct. It is a good idea to add 'please' when we are not speaking to friends, family or close colleagues etc.

Please **get** it done by tomorrow.
Please **call** back later.

Including the speaker

Let's is a contraction of 'let us'. We always use the contracted form in conversation. The negative has two forms:

Let's not have the meeting on Monday.
Don't let's be late again!

Recipes and technical instructions

1. We can use time markers such as 'first', 'next' and 'finally' before the verb.

First **boil** the kettle.
Then **put** the tea in the pot.
Next **pour** boiling water onto the tea.
After that, **find** the tea strainer.
Finally, **pour** the tea into the cup.

2. In technical and other instructions, we might find a list with numbered steps.

In order to learn English:
1. **Relax!**
2. **Concentrate.**
3. **Practise** every day.

4. **Read** the grammar rules.
5. **Do** your preparation exercises.
6. **Listen** to your coach.
7. **Enjoy** it.



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