

# 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	<b>Meet</b> me in my office. <b>Be</b> here at 08:00 tomorrow. <b>Come</b> back! <b>Go</b> !

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