

# 'Make' or 'do'?



I **did** my preparation but I **made** a few mistakes.

There is no rule that will enable you to choose the correct verb every time but there are some guidelines as well as some fixed expressions which use either 'make' or 'do'.

## Make

Examples	
<b>To talk about creating or producing something - there is a physical end product</b>	<p>He's <b>making</b> a sandwich.      She <b>makes</b> her own clothes.      Children enjoy <b>making</b> things.      I work for a company that <b>makes</b> computer components.</p>
<b>With nouns related to plans and decisions</b>	<p>We're <b>making</b> arrangements for the meeting.      We have important choices and decisions to <b>make</b>.</p> <p>Other similar nouns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plan</li> <li>• a date</li> <li>• an appointment</li> <li>• a reservation</li> </ul>
<b>To talk about producing an action, reaction or result</b>	<p>He <b>makes</b> her happy.      Sad films always <b>make</b> her cry!      I hate chopping onions - they <b>make</b> my eyes water.      The news <b>made</b> me smile.      Thank you for <b>making</b> it possible.      The new bus service <b>makes</b> my journey to work easier.</p>

### With nouns relating to communication and sounds

He **made** a comment about her being late.  
Stop **making** that noise!  
Can I **make** a suggestion?  
They're going to **make** a complaint.

Other similar nouns include:

- a point
- an announcement
- a speech
- a remark
- a sound
- a phone call
- enquiries

### With lots of other nouns

- a living
- a loss
- a mess
- a mistake
- a prediction
- a profit
- a promise
- a difference
- a fortune
- a fuss
- a scene
- an effort
- an attempt
- an error
- an exception
- an excuse
- an impression
- an observation
- an offer

### To talk about materials

This table is **made** of wood and metal.

## Do

### Examples

To talk about an activity generally - without naming it	What did you <b>do</b> last night? We <b>need to do</b> something about the staff turnover. I'll <b>do</b> as you ask. I don't know what <b>to do</b> . What <b>are you doing</b> tomorrow? We <b>did</b> nothing all weekend - it was great!
To talk about tasks and responsibilities - there is no physical end product	I <b>do</b> most of the housework but Bill <b>does</b> the washing and ironing. We <b>did</b> some research on 3-D printing. She has young children so she just <b>does</b> some part-time work. He always <b>does</b> his homework on Sunday night.
To talk about some leisure activities	She <b>did</b> yoga in the past but she <b>does</b> karate now. She likes <b>doing</b> crosswords.
As an alternative to some other verbs in conversation	She's not ready yet; she's <b>doing</b> her hair. [brushing/combing] She told the children to <b>do</b> their teeth before going to bed. [brush/clean] The storm <b>did</b> a lot of damage to the roof. [caused] I'm <b>doing</b> an IT course. I'll have to <b>do</b> an exam at the end. [take] I'll <b>do</b> the invitations if you <b>do</b> the report. [send...write]

## Fixed expressions

Here are some examples:

Make	Do
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fun of someone  
love  
war  
sense  
certain  
a/the bed  
one's mind up  
friends/a friend  
advances  
progress  
money  
room (for something/someone)  
sure  
trouble

someone a favour  
business (with someone)  
someone good  
right  
wrong  
well  
badly  
the right/wrong thing  
one's best  
good  
harm

See also **auxiliary verbs**, **bare infinitive** and **verbs for sports and leisure activities**.

## Examples



"Remember to **make** an appointment with Paul."



I don't have much to **do** at the moment - I'll **make** us a coffee and a sandwich.



It's important to **make** a good first impression.



Do you **do** a lot of business with Swedish companies?



She's **doing** really well in her new job and **making** a lot of money.



We need to **make** sure we're **doing** the best thing for everyone.



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