

'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	
To talk about creating or producing something - there is a physical end product	<p>He's making a sandwich. She makes her own clothes. Children enjoy making things. I work for a company that makes computer components.</p>
With nouns related to plans and decisions	<p>We're making arrangements for the meeting. We have important choices and decisions to make.</p> <p>Other similar nouns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan • a date • an appointment • a reservation
To talk about producing an action, reaction or result	<p>He makes her happy. Sad films always make her cry! I hate chopping onions - they make my eyes water. The news made me smile. Thank you for making it possible. The new bus service makes 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 do last night? We need to do something about the staff turnover. I'll do as you ask. I don't know what to do . What are you doing tomorrow? We did nothing all weekend - it was great!
To talk about tasks and responsibilities - there is no physical end product	I do most of the housework but Bill does the washing and ironing. We did some research on 3-D printing. She has young children so she just does some part-time work. He always does his homework on Sunday night.
To talk about some leisure activities	She did yoga in the past but she does karate now. She likes doing crosswords.
As an alternative to some other verbs in conversation	She's not ready yet; she's doing her hair. [brushing/combing] She told the children to do their teeth before going to bed. [brush/clean] The storm did a lot of damage to the roof. [caused] I'm doing an IT course. I'll have to do an exam at the end. [take] I'll do the invitations if you do 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."

"Don't worry; I'll **do** it this afternoon."



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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Last update: 2023/02/14 14:21

