

Imperative Verbs

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Grammar Notes

A. Introduction

Imperative verbs are common in English. They are different from other verbs because they don't need a subject! Imperative verbs are always in the **simple present tense**.

B. Pattern

With imperative verbs, the subject is always **you**, but it is hidden. We never say or write **you**. We only say or write the imperative verb. The verb can be followed by a **noun object**, an **adjective**, or an **adverb**.

Possible Patterns	
Pattern	Example
V	Stop!
V + N	Close the door.
V + Adj	Be quiet.
V + Adv	Drive slowly.

C. Use

Imperative verbs are used to give **commands**, **warnings**, or **instructions**. For example, parents, teachers, police officers, and doctors often use imperative verbs.

Commands

- Stop!
- Pay attention.
- Do it right now.

Warnings

- Be careful!
- Watch out!
- Watch where you're going!

Instructions

- Turn off the lights.
- Open your book to page 2.
- Take these vitamins.

Grammar Notes cont.

D. Form

Imperative verbs are very common in positive and negative sentences. Negative imperative verbs begin with **do not**, which is usually shortened to **don't**. They can also begin with the adverb **never**.

Positive Sentences

- **Be** on time.
- **Do** your homework.
- **Tell** me the truth.


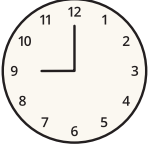




Negative Sentences

- **Don't** be late.
- **Do not** leave your homework until the last minute.
- **Never** lie to me.

Exercise 1

TEACHER TALK

What would a teacher say to a class? Choose one verb from the box on the right for each sentence.






#	Picture	Sentence
Ex		_____ <i>Pay</i> _____ attention in class.
1		_____ on time.
2		_____ down.
3		_____ your textbook to page 10.
4		_____ silently.
5		_____ the answers in your notebook.

Verbs:

- read
- raise
- open
- listen
- sit
- do
- repeat
- ~~pay~~
- write
- arrive
- look up



Exercise 1 cont.

#	Picture	Sentence
6		_____ to this recording.
7		_____ after me.
8		_____ your hand when you have a question.
9		_____ the word in your dictionary.
10		_____ your homework.

Exercise 2

DON'T DO THAT!

Complete these negative sentences with the imperative form of the verbs in parentheses. Then say who the speaker most likely is: **a teacher, a parent, or a boss.**

#	Sentence	Speaker
Ex	<u> </u> <i>Don't push</i> <u> </u> your little brother. (push, not)	<i>a parent</i>
1	<u> </u> late for work. (be, not)	
2	<u> </u> late for class. (be, not)	
3	<u> </u> late for dinner. (be, not)	
4	<u> </u> to hand in your homework. (forget, not)	
5	<u> </u> any office furniture out of your office. (move, not)	
6	<u> </u> junk food before dinner. (eat, not)	
7	<u> </u> to the meeting without your report. (come, not)	
8	<u> </u> video games all night. (play, not)	
9	<u> </u> when I'm explaining the assignment. (talk, not)	
10	<u> </u> your clothes on the floor. (leave, not)	

Exercise 3

ROAD RULES

Look at the pictures below. Then listen to the recording.
Write the letter of the imperative sentence below the matching picture.



1. _____



2. _____



3. _____



4. _____



5. _____



6. _____



7. _____



8. _____



9. _____

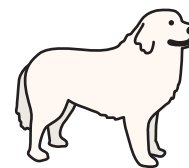
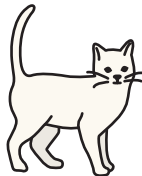
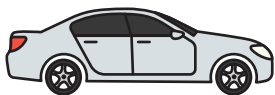
Exercise 4

FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS

Where does your partner see himself or herself in 5, 10, 15, and 20 years? Give your partner some advice! What steps can your partner take to reach his or her goals? Use the pictures for ideas.

Example:

- A: Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
 B: I want to get married and move to Hawaii.
 A: Sounds good! Find a kind person to marry. Get a good job because Hawaii is expensive. Follow your dreams!
 B: Okay! How about you? Where do you see yourself in 10 years?



Exercise 5

BOSS TALK

Imagine that you're the boss at a big company. Your employees are causing problems! What will you say to them? Think of a **positive** and **negative** imperative sentence to show what you mean for each situation.

Ex. Your employee always arrives late to work.

Positive: Get to work on time!

Negative: Don't be late again!

1. Your employee always spends too much time talking to coworkers.

Positive: _____

Negative: _____

2. Your employee always uses too many office supplies (pens, paper, etc.).

Positive: _____

Negative: _____

3. Your employee always takes an extra-long lunch break.

Positive: _____

Negative: _____

4. Your employee is always on social media during the workday.

Positive: _____

Negative: _____

5. Your employee always leaves work 15 minutes early.

Positive: _____

Negative: _____

Exercise 6

PLAN A PARTY

With a partner or a group, plan a party.
What should you wear? What should you bring?
What should you do while you're there?

Plan a party in small groups. Decide what the theme is,
what people should wear, what they should bring, etc.
Write an invitation to your party.

Example:



We're having a Valentine's Day party!

Come at 7:00 pm.

Wear pink or red clothes.

Bring chocolate or other snacks to share.

Get ready to dance all night long!

Exercise 7

QUIZ

Circle the correct answer.

1. Please _____ slowly.
 - a) to speak
 - b) speak
2. _____ talk to strangers.
 - a) Don't
 - b) Not
3. _____ hiking without a water bottle.
 - a) Never go
 - b) Go never
4. _____ me if you need help.
 - a) Call
 - b) Calls
5. _____ worry! Everything will be okay.
 - a) Don't be
 - b) Don't
6. _____ with a partner.
 - a) Working
 - b) Work
7. _____ the video before you answer the questions.
 - a) To watch
 - b) Watch
8. _____ to turn off the lights.
 - a) Don't forget
 - b) Forget not
9. _____ a break. You look tired.
 - a) Take
 - b) Be taking
10. _____ the window.
 - a) Open please
 - b) Please open

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students learn how and when to use imperative verbs. They practice with engaging activities such as discussing future plans and planning a party.

LEVEL: Beg

TIME: 2–3 hours

TAGS: imperative, imperative verbs, verbs, simple present, commands, warnings, instructions

Exercise 1

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| 1. Arrive | 6. Listen |
| 2. Sit | 7. Repeat |
| 3. Open | 8. Raise |
| 4. Read | 9. Look up |
| 5. Write | 10. Do |

Exercise 2

Speaker answers may vary.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Don't be / a boss | 6. Don't eat / a parent |
| 2. Don't be / a teacher | 7. Don't come / a boss |
| 3. Don't be / a parent | 8. Don't play / a parent |
| 4. Don't forget / a teacher | 9. Don't talk / a teacher |
| 5. Don't move / a boss | 10. Don't leave / a parent |

Exercise 3

Play the recording or read the transcript out loud. You may wish to play the recording twice. You may also wish to go over the images with your students before you begin.

Transcript:

- A. Go.
- B. Don't walk.
- C. Slow down.
- D. Don't speed.
- E. Stop.
- F. Watch out for people crossing the street.
- G. Don't park here for more than two hours.
- H. Walk.
- I. Don't park here anytime.

Answers:

- | | | |
|------|------|------|
| 1. E | 4. H | 7. G |
| 2. C | 5. B | 8. I |
| 3. A | 6. D | 9. F |

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Exercise 4

Answers will vary. Monitor your students for correct imperative verb usage.

Exercise 5

Answers will vary. Example answers:

1. Stop talking and get back to work!
Don't waste time talking to your coworkers!
2. Use only what you need!
Don't waste office supplies!
3. Come back to work on time after lunch!
Don't take long lunch breaks!
4. Stay off social media during the workday!
Don't go on social media during the workday!
5. Stay until the end of the work day!
Don't leave early!

Exercise 6

Answers will vary. Monitor your students for correct imperative verb usage.

Exercise 7

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. b | 3. a | 5. b | 7. b | 9. a |
| 2. a | 4. a | 6. b | 8. a | 10. b |

EDITOR'S NOTES:

1. You may wish to point out that imperative verbs are rarely used in question form. They are sometimes used to ask an informal question (e.g., *Come with me?*) or to confirm something (e.g., *Take this one, right?*).

2. If your students can handle it, you may want to mention that it is possible (but not very common) to have a double negative imperative verb. Like almost all double negatives in English, the meaning becomes positive. For example, *Don't not do it because you're afraid* means *Do it even though you're afraid*.