

The Imperative in English

Imperative is used to give instructions, orders, instructions, advice, warn or invite someone to do something:

To use the imperative in English, we use an infinitive verb:

- Clean the kitchen.
- Open the window.
- Leave me alone!
- Wear a jacket, its too cold outside!

To the negative form it is necessary to add 'do not' or 'don't' (*do not* is more insistent than *don't*).

- Do not smoke!
- Don't go!
- Don't leave the door open.
- Don't talk to me.

Using the imperative

1. To give instructions

- Push the red button.
- Turn right after the post office.

2. To give an order

- Come here!
- Sit down!
- Stop talking!
- Go out

3. To give advice

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Tell him what you really think.

4. To invite someone to do something (preferably with *Please*)

- Please, come to the party!
- Please hold the line.
- Please, have a drink.
- Please wait here.

English people use the word *Kindly* in writing to make a request:

- Kindly send me a copy of the last email as soon as possible.

We can also use *just*, *please* or *if you wouldn't mind* to make the imperative less brutal and more polite:

- Come with me, please, if you wouldn't mind.
- Just give me a minute, please.

5. To warn

- Stop!
- Help!
- Watch out! / Look out!
- Don't move!

Using DO with the imperative

DO can be used before the imperative to emphasize what you mean:

- Do drink plenty of water.

You can also accentuate imperative sentences by using **Never** or **Always** before the main verb:

- Never drive without a seatbelt.
- Always wash your hand before lunch.

The imperative with let's (= contraction of *let us*)

- Let's have a break.
- Let's not tell him about it.
- Let's ask this man.
- Let's not forget to close the door.

Some common phrases to the imperative

- Have fun
- Hurry up
- Enjoy your meal.
- Don't be late.
- Keep quiet.
- Give me a minute
- Don't worry
- Please take a seat.