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, it's 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.