



1. What is an Imperative Sentence?

An **imperative sentence** gives requests, demands, or instructions; or, shares wishes or invitations for others. Basically, they tell someone what to do! As one of the four main [types of sentences](#), they have an important role in both speaking and writing.

Imperative sentences make up a huge part of our everyday language and serve all kinds of purposes!

2. Examples of Imperative Sentences

Imperative sentences are a big part of your conversations and your everyday life, whether you know it or not! Here are some everyday examples:

- *Do Not Enter*
- *Please be quiet in the library.*
- *Let's eat.*
- *Come with me.*
- *Be nice!*
- *Help me!*

Even common road signs and advertisements use imperatives, like these:



Finally, imperative sentences can even be funny or lighthearted too—you've probably seen many versions of the posters below online, on t-shirts, and on signs:



3. Parts of Imperative Sentences

Imperative Mood

All imperative sentences include verbs written in what is called an “**imperative mood**,” meaning they give commands. Some of the big ones that you use are “don’t,” “please,” “go,” and so on. Imperatives tell someone what to do or not to do. Look at these two sentences:

- *Don’t feed the dog.* **Imperative verb “don’t” expressing a command**
- *He didn’t feed the dog.* **Indicative verb “didn’t,” reflecting a lack of action**

Imperative verbs give commands, while indicative verbs “indicate” (show) things that happened. So, you can’t use an indicative verb to tell someone what to do.

Here are some more examples of verbs in the imperative mood:

- *Please be quiet.*
- *Let me help you.*
- *Go away!*
- *Have fun!*
- *Wait for me!*

4. Types of Imperative Sentences

As mentioned above, imperative sentences

- relay instructions



- relay requests
- relay demands
- share invitations
- share wishes for someone.

a. Share a request or wish

There are several types of imperative sentences that each work in different ways. Here are some imperative sentences that share polite requests or **wishes** for someone:

- *Have fun at the fair tonight!*
- *Eat lots of popcorn!*
- *Have a safe trip!*

b. Share an Invitation:

Here are some imperative sentences that extend an invitation to someone (notice that they are not in the form of questions).

- *Come to the fair with me!*
- *Please join us for dinner.*
- *Let's go to the fair together.*

c. Share a request or command

Here are some imperative sentences that each share a **request** or **command** (notice that these are more firm requests).

- *Please don't give the dog popcorn.*
- *Go find the dog at the fair.*
- *Eat your popcorn.*
- *Stop feeding the dog!*

d. Give instructions

Imperative sentences that give **instructions** are very common, like driving directions or a recipe:

1. *Preheat the oven.*
2. *Roll out your cookie dough.*



3. *Cut out the cookies with a cookie cutter and put them on a baking sheet.*
4. *Put them in the oven for about 10 minutes.*
5. *Take the cookies out when they are golden.*
6. *Let them cool, and then eat them with milk.*

As you can see, imperative sentences can relay all kinds of information.

5. How to Write an Imperative Sentence

Writing an imperative sentence is a bit different than other types of sentences, mainly because of the [subject](#). Imperative sentences generally begin with a verb, and may seem to be missing a subject! But, that's because imperative sentences are naturally directed *at someone* since they give direct orders. Since it is implied that the sentence is directed at a person or group of people, it is usually unnecessary to name the subject.

To make this simpler to understand, let's try adding a person's name to the beginning of some imperative sentences:

- *Sally, please don't give the dog popcorn.*
- *Drivers, drive slowly.*
- *Sam, eat your popcorn!*
- *Everybody be quiet!*

Now, if you take away the underlined subjects from the sentences above, they still make sense:

- *~~Sally~~, Please don't give the dog popcorn.*
- *~~Drivers~~, Drive slowly.*
- *~~Sam~~, Eat your popcorn!*
- *~~Everybody~~ Be quiet!*

You can see that they all still make sense because the imperative verbs let us know that the sentences are commands.

Here are a couple more tips for writing imperative sentences:

a. Decide on tone of voice

Decide which tone of voice is the best match for the purpose of your sentence. An imperative sentence's tone can be:

- neutral (like a recipe)



- fairly neutral (like a request)
- used to express strong emotions (like a serious command)

b. Decide on punctuation

The sentence's tone will decide whether it ends in a period or exclamation mark:

- Ask yourself: Is your sentence it a demand, a suggestion, a wish?
- A forceful or demanding tone should have an exclamation mark: *Stop feeding the dog!*
- A suggestive or polite tone only needs a period: *Please don't give the dog popcorn.*

Overall, the tone of an imperative sentence, and its [punctuation](#), are up to you.

6. When to Use an Imperative Sentence

Using imperative sentences is pretty easy—in fact, you do it all the time without even noticing! Here are a few tips for using them successfully:

a. Purpose

Remember their purpose. You can use them to:

- express your wishes for someone
- invite someone to do something
- give requests
- give instructions
- give important demands

b. Subject

Remember that the **subject** of an imperative sentence is understood, because **all** imperative sentences are directed at another person or group of people



c. Differences

Remember the distinctions between imperative sentences and other types of sentences:

- Even if it ends with an exclamation mark, an imperative sentence **CANNOT** be an exclamatory sentence, because exclamatory sentences **do not share commands** (see below).
- Even if it ends with a period, an imperative sentence **CANNOT** be a declarative sentence, because declarative sentences only share statements, **not commands or wishes**.

Exercise 1: Identify the imperative sentences.

1. Close the door.
2. Please pass me the salt.
3. She is working on her project.
4. Let's go to the park.
5. Don't touch that!

Answers:

1. Imperative
2. Imperative
3. Not imperative (it's declarative)
4. Imperative (suggestive form)
5. Imperative (negative command)

Exercise 2: Convert the following sentences into imperative sentences.

1. You should stop talking.
2. Can you turn off the lights?
3. Everyone must be careful.
4. We should start the meeting now.
5. You need to sit quietly.

Answers:

1. Stop talking.
2. Turn off the lights.



3. Be careful.
4. Let's start the meeting now.
5. Sit quietly.

Exercise 3: Change the negative sentences into positive imperatives.

1. Don't run in the hallway.
2. Don't speak during the exam.
3. Don't forget to lock the door.
4. Don't be late for the meeting.
5. Don't play in the rain.

Answers:

1. Run in the hallway.
2. Speak during the exam.
3. Remember to lock the door.
4. Be on time for the meeting.
5. Play in the rain.

Exercise 4: Complete the sentences using an imperative form of the verb.

1. ____ (bring) me a glass of water.
2. ____ (write) your name at the top of the page.
3. ____ (drive) carefully on the icy road.
4. ____ (let) me know when you're ready.
5. ____ (finish) your homework before dinner.

Answers:

1. Bring me a glass of water.
2. Write your name at the top of the page.
3. Drive carefully on the icy road.
4. Let me know when you're ready.
5. Finish your homework before dinner.