

Grammar – Imperative Form

12 Uses of Imperative Form – Part 1

We mostly use **imperative form** to give orders, make requests, and give instructions or advice, but there are several other uses, which can be seen in the table below.

Imperative form consists of **bare infinitive** (without to), often at or near the beginning of a sentence, e.g. 'Bring that laptop over here'. The negative form consists of **don't + infinitive**, e.g. 'Don't bring that laptop over here'. The question form is made with **shall** or **should**, e.g. 'Shall I bring that laptop over here?' or simply by using rising intonation in the voice: 'Bring me that laptop?'

There is no **subject** in imperative form. The subject is implied: you. The time is **now** or **future**.

If you are **giving orders** with imperative form, your listener may find it rude or even offensive. Depending on **who** you are talking to, and your relative statuses, the tone of your Imperative Form sentence can range from friendly to offensive. For example, 'Make me a cup of tea!'

to a mate
friendly

to a colleague
acceptable

to a parent
impolite

to your boss
rude

to an elderly nun
offensive

Your **volume**, **tone of voice** and **how** you phrase the sentence will also affect how polite it sounds.

In general, imperative form as an order or request should be avoided (or you could at least add **please** before the infinitive). It may be better to rephrase the sentence using modal verbs like **can** and **could**, e.g. *NOT*: 'Pass me the remote.' *BUT*: 'Could you pass me the remote, please?'

1.	order	Come here!
2.	request	Please bring your maths book tomorrow.
3.	permission	Don't do that!
4.	warning	Be careful!
5.	instructions	Take Piece B and insert it into Piece A, like so.
6.	directions	Walk to the end of the road, then turn right.
7.	advice	Just tell Jean that you don't want to see her again.
8.	suggestion	Eat more fruit and vegetables.
9.	invitation	Pop round this evening at about eight, if you want to.
10.	recommendation	Try new and improved Rice Wheetos – give your breakfast a buzz!
11.	wish	Have fun at the party.
12.	apology	Excuse me.

a) Match the sentences below to the uses above. b) Rewrite each sentence without imperative form.

a) Don't wear that top with those leggings. It looks awful.

b) Have a nice day!

c) Sit up straight!

d) Try having soya milk instead of cow's milk on your cereal.

e) Look out!

f) Join us for a barbecue on Saturday!

g) Please tell your parents that I called.

h) Forgive me. I'm hopeless with names. What's your name again?

i) Add the flour and the eggs, then beat for about half a minute.

j) Get the latest news where you are, 24-7, 365 days a year!

k) *Do not* touch the paintings!

l) Go straight on. Go past the school, then turn left.

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Answers:

a)

1. c)
2. g)
3. k)
4. e)
5. i)
6. l)
7. a)
8. d)
9. f)
10. j)
11. b)
12. h)

b) Answers will vary. Here are some options to change imperative form:

- Can you
 - Could you
 - You can
 - You could
 - You should
 - Are you able to
 - Is it possible for you to
 - Why don't you
 - Feel free to
 - Would you like to
 - Would you be able to
 - I wouldn't
 - You shouldn't
- + IMPERATIVE FORM

Other options:

- Do you fancy
 - Do you mind
 - Would you mind
- + GERUND

etc.