

Grammar – Imperative Form

12 Uses of Imperative Form – Part 2

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) Come and see me at 4 o'clock, OK?

b) Please help me make the dinner.

c) Have a lovely birthday.

d) Go upstairs and it's the first door on the right.

e) Think about joining the chess club.

f) Speak to the principal about your concerns.

g) Store in a cool, dry place.

h) Do not begin the exam until I tell you to.

i) Take an umbrella!

j) Turn that music down!

k) Don't mind me. Pretend I'm not here.

l) Get MORE for your money with Snacki Pal.

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Answers:

a)

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

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.