

IMPERATIVE

The Imperative Mood of the Verb

The imperative is a form of the verb that, when speaking to another person (or persons), expresses a suggestion, a command, a recommendation, or some attempt to convince the listener to engage in an activity uttered by the speaker.

The imperative mood exists in contrast to the indicative mood. Whereas the imperative mood tries to get the listener to engage in an activity, the indicative mood only reports an activity. In the following examples, you can see how the speaker attempts to make the listener engage in an activity using the imperative mood of the verb. In contrast, the indicative mood simply reports what is actually happening.

Examples in English contrasting the imperative with the indicative:

<i>Imperative Mood (a command)</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Indicative Mood (a report)</i>
Go home.	I suggest that you should go home.	You are going home.
Be quiet.	I want you to stop talking.	You are being quiet.
Learn German.	I think you should learn German.	You are learning German.
Sleep well.	I wish to you a good night's sleep.	You sleep well.
Have a nice day.	I hope you will enjoy the day.	You are enjoying the day.
Drink more water.	I recommend to you that you need to drink more water.	You drink a lot of water.

In German,

there are several forms of the imperative based on:

- the number of listeners,
- the register of the address,
- whether you include yourself or not.

General Grammar Points:

Word Order: Verb First.

Punctuation: Exclamation Point
(to distinguish from a question).

Examine the following examples:

'du' - You are speaking to one person on a first-name basis.

Grammar = Stem of the verb; No conjugation; No subject pronoun (omit 'du').

Geh nach Hause!	Go home.
Lern Deutsch!	Learn German.
Trink mehr Wasser!	Drink more water.
Kauf mehr Milch!	Buy more milk.
Sei ruhig!	Be quiet.

If the verb takes a stem change e > i, the 'du' form of the imperative follows that change.

Iss den Kuchen!	Eat the cake.	(essen)
Nimm eine Tablette!	Take a tablet.	(nehmen)
Hilf mir!	Help me.	(helfen)
Gib mir Geld!	Give me money.	(geben)

(Imperative - Continued)

'ihr' - You are speaking to multiple people on a first-name basis.

Grammar = Use the normal 'ihr' conjugation of the verb; No subject pronoun (omit 'ihr').

Geht nach Hause!	Go home, all of you.
Lernt Deutsch!	Learn German, you guys.
Trinkt mehr Wasser!	Drink more water, y'all.
Kauft mehr Milch!	All of you, buy more milk.
Seid ruhig!	Be quiet, everyone.
Esst den Kuchen!	Eat the cake, everyone.
Nehmt ein Stück Brot!	Take a piece of bread, all of you.
Helft mir!	Help me, you guys.
Gebt mir Geld!	Give me money, you all.

'wir' - You include yourself ('let's ...').

Grammar = Use the normal 'wir' conjugation of the verb; Verb first followed by subject pronoun 'wir'.

Gehen wir nach Hause!	Let's go home.
Lernen wir Deutsch!	Let's learn German.
Trinken wir mehr Wasser!	Let's drink more water.
Kaufen wir mehr Milch!	Let's buy more milk.
Seien wir ruhig! *	Let's be quiet. (*Note the imperative conjugation: 'seien'.)
Essen wir den Kuchen!	Let's eat the cake.
Nehmen wir ein Taxi!	Let's take a taxi.
Helfen wir!	Let's help.
Geben wir mehr Geld!	Let's give more money.

'Sie' - You are speaking to one person or multiple people on a last name basis (formal).

Grammar = Use the normal 'Sie' conjugation of the verb; Verb first followed by subject pronoun 'Sie'.

Gehen Sie nach Hause!	Go home.
Lernen Sie Deutsch!	Learn German.
Trinken Sie mehr Wasser!	Drink more water.
Kaufen Sie mehr Milch!	Buy more milk.
Seien Sie bitte ruhig! *	Please be quiet. (*Note the German conjugation: 'seien'.)
Essen Sie den Kuchen!	Eat the cake.
Nehmen Sie eine Tablette!	Take a tablet.
Helfen Sie mir bitte!	Help me please.
Geben Sie mir bitte Geld!	Please give me money.

Imperatives Expressing Negatives (Examples) :

Geh nicht nach Hause!	Don't go home.	go not to home
Kauf kein Brot!	Don't buy any bread.	buy no bread
Trink keinen Kaffee!	Don't drink any coffee.	drink no coffee
Sei nicht so ernsthaft!	Don't be so serious.	be not so serious
Iss nicht so schnell!	Don't eat so fast.	eat not so fast