



Verb Moods

Identifying and writing them correctly

Verb Moods

- In the English language, we *have different verb tenses to demonstrate time*, and we have verb moods that indicate a state of being or reality.
- These moods are: indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional and subjunctive.
- Every sentence communicates a mood.

Indicative

- **Indicative** indicates a state of factuality or states something that is happening in reality. Most sentences in English are written in the indicative mood. For example, the sentence *The dog jumps into the car.* simply states what is really happening in the present moment.
- The indicative mood can also be used in sentences that include words like 'might' or 'may' because it indicates something that is a real possibility:
- *That house might collapse if they don't make the necessary repairs.*
- The fact that the house could actually fall down if it isn't fixed is indicative of reality, so we would say this sentence is written in the indicative mood.

IMPERATIVE

- ▶ **Imperative** is a command. A way of remembering this is to think of your parents saying, 'It is imperative that you do your chores.' This is not a suggestion, a statement about what is going on, or a question. It is a direct command, telling you what to do.
- ▶ Most people know someone who is pretty bossy and demanding. He or she might say imperative sentences all the time, like:
 - ▶ *Sit over here.*
 - ▶ *Give me that cookie.*
- ▶ Notice how in both examples, the word 'you', which is the subject, is not stated. It is only implied. This is often the case with imperative sentences.
- ▶ Sometimes imperative sentences can be more like a desperate plea to do something, such as the sentence:
 - ▶ *Help me!*
- ▶ It is still giving a command, but it is meant as an earnest request, not a bossy demand.

INTERROGATIVE

- **Interrogative** asks a question. A great way to remember the term 'interrogative' is to think of an interrogation room where a suspect is asked a series of questions.
- The sentence - *Will you please leave me alone?* - is an example of an interrogative sentence because it asks a question rather than demands it. If the sentence were revised to say - *Leave me alone.* - that would be a command, or an imperative sentence. But by asking someone to leave you alone, you are creating an interrogative sentence that is a request.

CONDITIONAL

- **Conditional** depends on something else to happen under certain conditions. A way to remember this is to think of the phrase 'If this, then that.' The conditional often uses words like might, could, and would.
 - *The baby might cry if you pick him up.*
- This sentence shows what could happen under the condition of picking up the baby, so it's an example of the conditional mood.
- Another example is:
 - *He would look older with a beard.*
- This shows that the man looking older depends on whether or not he has a beard, so under that specific condition, he would appear to have aged.

SUBJUNCTIVE

- **Subjunctive** is a wish or hypothetical and is contrary to reality. An easy way to recall the definition for subjunctive is to think: What if? The subjunctive mood is uncertain and may never happen, unlike the conditional mood. The subjunctive is rarely used compared to the other moods we've discussed, but it's still important to be able to identify, use and understand.
- Thankfully, pop icon Beyoncé can help us out. Her song 'If I Were a Boy' uses the subjunctive. More specifically, she uses the subjunctive in the line:
 - *If I were a boy, I think I could understand.*
- This sentence is written in the subjunctive mood because it isn't possible for Beyoncé to snap her fingers and be a boy. It is contrary to reality and is a wish that she is expressing.
- Another example is:
 - *I wish I had something to eat.*