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The imperative, (**l'impératif** in French) is used to give commands, orders, or express wishes, like 'Stop!', 'Listen!' You may recognize the imperative from commands such as 'Ecoutez' or 'Répétez'. It is one of four moods in the French language. Unlike the other moods, the imperative is not divided into tenses. Keep in mind that the imperative is a very direct way to give an order. It is often replaced with more polite alternatives like the conditional.

formation

There are three forms of the imperative: **tu**, **nous** and **vous**. For all verbs, the imperative is formed by taking the corresponding forms of the present indicative, but without subject pronouns. The lack of a subject pronoun is what identifies the imperative mood.

finir 'to finish'		
present	**imperative**	**translation**
tu finis	**finis**	finish (you, familiar)
nous finissons	**finissons**	let's finish
vous finissez	**finissez**	finish

The **tu** form is used to give an order to a child or when the speaker is on familiar terms with the person addressed. The **vous** form is used to give an order to a group of people or to address one person in the vous form. The **nous** form is used to give an order that involves oneself as well as others, though it often expresses a suggestion as its translation (Let's ...) indicates.

Drop the final **s** in the **tu** forms of the imperative for **-er** verbs, including **aller**, and **-ir** verbs like **ouvrir** and other verbs whose present indicative form of **tu** ends in **-es**:

present	**imperative**	**translation**
tu regardes	**regarde**	look
tu ouvres	**ouvre**	open
tu vas	**va**	go

When these forms are followed by the pronoun **y** or **en**, the **-s** is reattached for pronunciation purposes. For example:

Corey: Bette, **va** au supermarché! **Vas-y**! Et **achète** de l'insecticide pour moi ... Tu m'entends? **Achètes-en** pour moi!

Bette: Imbécile, l'insecticide est dangereux pour les cafards! Paf!

Corey: Oh, Bette ... aide-moi à me relever, s'il te plaît.

Bette: Tu es vraiment trop bête. Je m'en vais.

Corey: Bette, go to the supermarket! Go there! And buy some insecticide for me ... Do you hear me? Buy some for me!

Bette: Imbecile, insecticide is dangerous for cockroaches! Pow!

Corey: Oh, Bette, help me back up, please.

Bette: You are really too stupid. I'm leaving.

irregular imperatives

There are several verbs that have irregular imperative forms.

avoir	être	savoir	vouloir
aie	sois	sache	veuille
ayons	soyons	sachons	veuillons
ayez	soyez	sachez	veuillez

imperative of pronominal verbs

For pronominal verbs, the subject pronoun is dropped and the object pronoun is placed after the verb and is attached with a hyphen. **Te** becomes **toi** in this situation.

se souvenir 'to remember'		
present	imperative	translation
tu te souviens	souviens-toi	remember
nous nous souvenons	souvenons-nous	let's remember
vous vous souvenez	souvenez-vous	remember

negative commands

The forms of the **affirmative** imperative (an order to do something) have been presented in the above charts. In **negative** commands (an order **not** to do something), place the **ne ... pas** around the imperative, as in **Ne regarde pas** ('Don't look'). In negative commands for reflexive verbs, the object pronoun is placed in front of the verb.

Corey: **Ne te moque pas** de moi!

Corey: Don't make fun of me!

Joe-Bob: **Ne nous moquons pas** de Corey!

Joe-Bob: Let's not make fun of Corey!

pronoun object with imperatives

Other non-pronominal pronoun objects follow the same placement as objects of pronominal verbs. As usual, the subject pronoun is dropped. In the negative, the **ne** precedes the object pronoun and the verb. In the affirmative imperative, the pronoun object follows the verb, and the forms **moi** and **toi** replace **me** and **te**.

Corey: **Aidez-moi, aidez-moi!** Je n'arrive pas à me relever.

Corey: Help me, help me! I can't get back up.

Joe-Bob: **Retournons-le!** Allez, un, deux, trois ... Doucement, doucement. **Ne le faites pas** trop vite!

Joe-Bob: Let's turn him. Let's go, one, two, three ... Slowly, slowly. Don't do it too fast!

Listen to the following dialogue:

🔊 Corey: Merci, tout le monde. Ça va beaucoup mieux. **Allons** à Barton Springs cet après-midi.

Corey: Thanks, everybody. That's much better. Let's go to Barton Springs this afternoon.

Joe-Bob: D'accord, mais **écoute**, d'abord je dois mettre mon maillot.

Tammy: Okay, but listen, first I have to put on my swimsuit.

Corey: Oui, bien sûr, mais **dépêche-toi**.

Tex: Yes, of course, but hurry.

Joe-Bob: J'arrive. **N'oublions pas** l'insecticide. Il y a tant d'insectes empoisonnants en ce moment!

Joe-Bob: I'm coming. Let's not forget the insecticide. There are so many irritating insects now.

Corey: Eh moi alors?

Corey: And me?

Joe-Bob: Oh, pas toi, Corey. Tu n'es jamais empoisonnant!

Joe-Bob: Oh, not you, Corey. You are never irritating!

fill in the blanks

Fill in the blank with the imperative form of the verb between parentheses.

1. Tex : _____ Tammy! On étaient si heureux à Lyon! (se rappeler)

2. Tammy : Tex, _____ tes légumes! (finir)

3. Tex : _____ de nous disputer! (arrêter)

4. Tammy : _____ prétentieux, Tex! (ne pas être)

5. Tex et Tammy : _____ rester modestes! (savoir)

6. Tammy : _____ chez le coiffeur Tex! (aller)

7. Tammy : Tu as envie d'aller chez Bette, Tex? _____-y! (aller)

8. Tammy : J'achète du vin? Tex : Oui,_____-en plusieurs bouteilles! (acheter)

9. Tammy : Ta maison n'est pas propre Tex! _____ tes affaires! (ranger)

10. Tammy : Edouard, Corey, _____ ! Vous allez être en retard! (se dépêcher)

11. Tex : Edouard, Corey, ceci est secret! _____ à Tammy! (ne pas parler)

12. Tex : Chers amis, _____ tous à mon anniversaire! (venir)

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