

IMPERATIVE MOOD

by Seda Sürel

INTRODUCTION

1. Function

The imperative does not take a tense suffix. It is used for commands, instructions, requests, advice, and prohibitions. It addresses someone other than the speaker: sen, siz, and, indirectly, o / onlar. The imperative does not have first-person forms (ben, biz). Turkish uses optative forms such as -(y)Aylm and -(y)Allm for first-person intentions, offers, and shared suggestions (A2).

2. Forms by Person

Sen

For sen, Turkish uses the bare verb stem. No suffix is added.

git → Git!

gel → Gel!

oku → Oku!

Siz

Stem + -(y)ın / -(y)in / -(y)un / -(y)ün

gidin, gelin, okuyun, görün

A more formal variant also exists: -(y)İnlz (gidiniz, geliniz, okuyunuz). Gidin is what people say in everyday speech. Gidiniz sounds more formal and shows up in written instructions, signs, and official language.

O and Onlar

Stem + -sın / -sin / -sun / -sün (singular), -sınlar / -sinler / -sunlar / -sünler (plural)

gelsin, otursunlar

This form is used when the speaker wants an action to happen through someone else, often to say "let him/her..." or "have them...".

Çocuk gelsin. — Have the child come. / Let the child come.

3. Negation

The negative suffix -ma / -me attaches directly to the stem, before any person ending.

git → gitme

gidin → gitmeyin

gelsin → gelmesin

The meaning of a negative command depends on the situation and the speaker's tone.

Gitme! can sound like a request, a warning, or a strong command, depending on how it is said. With sakın, the warning becomes stronger: Sakın dokunma! — Don't touch it! / Make sure you don't touch it!

IMPERATIVE MOOD

by Seda Sürel

4. Tone and Politeness

The bare sen form is not polite or impolite by itself. The speaker's tone and the situation matter. You can also use lütfen, or turn the sentence into a question like Gelir misin?, to make a request softer.

Examples:

- Kapıyı kapat. — Close the door.
- Otur. — Sit down.
- Burada bekleme. — Don't wait here.
- Lütfen gelin. — Please come.
- Bunu okuma. — Don't read this.
- Sessiz olun. — Be quiet.
- Çocuk gelsin. — Let the child come.
- Kimse dokunmasın. — Let no one touch it.

Notes:

- For sen, Turkish uses the bare stem, no suffix.
- Gidin is the everyday spoken form. Gidiniz is more formal, common in writing and official contexts.
- The o/onlar form (-sın/-sin) is used to let or have someone else do something.
- A negative command's tone depends on context, not on -ma/-me itself.
- Negation always comes before the person ending.