

Managing Mood

Grammatical mood is a verb feature that allows speakers to express their attitude toward what they are saying.

KEY POINTS

- Grammatical mood is a verb feature that allows speakers to express their attitude toward what they are saying.
- In English, the indicative mood, or evidential mood, is used for factual statements, positive beliefs, and questions.
- The subjunctive mood discusses imaginary or hypothetical events and situations, expresses opinions or emotions, or makes polite requests.
- The conditional mood is used to speak of an event whose realization is dependent upon another condition, particularly, but not exclusively, in conditional sentences.
- The imperative mood expresses direct commands, prohibitions, and requests.
- English has five moods: indicative, imperative, subjunctive, infinitive, and potential.
- Irrealis moods are any verb or sentence mood that are not realis moods.
- Irrealis moods may be part of expressions of necessity, possibility, requirement, wish or desire, fear, or as part of counterfactual reasonings, etc.
- Common irrealis moods are the imperative, the conditional, the subjunctive, the optative, the jussive, and the potential.
- The subjunctive mood is sometimes called conjunctive mood.
- The subjunctive mood discusses imaginary or hypothetical events and situations, expresses opinions or emotions, or makes polite requests.
- The conditional mood is used to speak of an event whose realization is dependent upon another condition, particularly, but not exclusively, in conditional sentences.
- In modern English, the conditional mood is expressed via a periphrastic construction, with the form would + infinitive.
- The optative, jussive, and potential moods are not used in English.
- The imperative mood expresses direct commands, prohibitions, and requests.
- The negative imperative mood is also called the prohibitive mood.
- In English, second person is implied by the imperative except when first-person plural is specified.
- In English, the imperative is sometimes used to form a conditional sentence.
- English has three moods: indicative, imperative, and subjunctive.

- English expresses conditionality periphrastically with the verb would.
- Romance languages have four moods: indicative, imperative, subjunctive, and conditional.

TERM

- [grammatical mood](#)
In linguistics, grammatical mood is a grammatical (and specifically, morphological) feature of verbs, used to signal modality.

EXAMPLE

- The indicative mood is used to express factual statements, positive beliefs, and questions. It is the most commonly used of the grammatical moods. An example would be: "She will leave for New York tomorrow morning."
- — I write clearly when I've had a good night's sleep.
- The imperative mood is used to express factual statements, positive beliefs and questions. It is the most commonly used of the grammatical moods.
- — Paul, do your homework now.
- The imperative mood expresses direct commands, prohibitions, and requests, or tells someone to do something without expecting any argument.
- — I suggest that Paul eat an apple.
- The subjunctive mood is commonly used for discussing imaginary or hypothetical events and situations, expressing opinions or emotions, or making polite requests.
- — To makes mistakes is human.
- The infinitive mood expresses being, action, or passion, in an unlimited manner, and without person or number.
- — She may go to the store this afternoon.
- The potential mood is a mood of probability indicating that, in the opinion of the speaker, the action or occurrence is considered likely. In English, it is formed by means of the auxiliaries "may," "can," "ought" and "must."
- — I would be a fool to let him get away with this!
- The conditional mood is used to speak of an event whose realization is dependent upon another condition. In modern English, this type of modality is expressed with the form would + infinitive, and thus is a mood only in the broad sense and not in the more common narrow sense of the term "mood."

Give us feedback on this content: [Edit this content directly](#)

Grammatical Mood Defined

Grammatical mood is the use of verb inflections that allow speakers and writers to express their attitudes toward what they are saying (for example, whether it is intended as a statement of fact, of desire, or of command). In English, there are generally thought to be up to five expressible grammatical moods, those being the indicative, the imperative, the subjunctive, the infinitive, and the potential. English also expresses conditionality, but not with a mood (that is, not inflectionally). Rather, conditionality is expressed periphrastically using the modal auxiliary verb would. Other languages work with additional and different grammatical moods, but for the sake of concision, we'll focus on those relevant to English.

The Indicative Mood

In English, the indicative mood, or evidential mood, is the most commonly used mood. It is used to express factual statements, positive beliefs, and questions. Here are a few examples of the indicative mood:

- I write clearly when I've had a good night's sleep.
- She will leave for New York tomorrow morning.
- Who are you?

The Imperative Mood

The imperative mood expresses direct commands, prohibitions, and requests. In other words, it is used to tell someone to do something without argument. In English, the bare verb stem is used to form the imperative. The second person is implied by the imperative except when first-person plural is specified. Examples of the imperative mood include:



Let's go.

The title is an example of the imperative mood, which expresses direct commands, prohibitions, and requests. The imperative mood is one type of grammatical mood.

- Paul, do your homework now.
- Let's go.
- Don't leave your bag there.

In English, the imperative is also sometimes used to form a conditional sentence, as in this instance:

- Go eastwards a mile, and you'll see it. (This sentence means the same as, "If you go eastwards a mile, you will see it.")

The Subjunctive Mood

The subjunctive mood, sometimes called the conjunctive mood, has several uses in dependent clauses, though its use in modern English is somewhat uncommon. It is used for discussing imaginary or hypothetical events and situations, expressing opinions or emotions, or making polite requests. Here are a few examples of the subjunctive mood:

- I suggest that Paul eat an apple.

- I suggest that Paul should eat an apple.
- It is important that volunteer work be done in today's society.

The Infinitive Mood

The infinitive mood expresses being, action, or passion, in an unlimited manner, and without person or number. Here are a few examples of the infinitive mood:

- To err is human.
- "To die, to sleep; To sleep, perchance to dream! " (from Shakespeare's Hamlet)

The Potential Mood

The potential mood is a mood of probability indicating that, in the opinion of the speaker, the action or occurrence is considered likely. In English, it is formed by means of the auxiliaries may, can, ought, and must. Here are a few examples of the potential mood:

- She may go to the store this afternoon.
- I can let the dogs out tonight.

Conditionality

The conditional mood is used to speak of an event whose realization is dependent upon another condition. In modern English, this type of modality is expressed with the form would + infinitive, (e.g., I would buy), and thus is a mood only in the broad sense and not in the more common narrow sense of the term "mood. " Thus, the conditional version of John eats if he is hungry is: John would eat if he were hungry.

Give us feedback on this content: [Edit this content directly](#)

Prev

Avoiding Sexist Language

Next

Writing Concisely

KEY TERM GLOSSARY

argument

In philosophy and logic, an argument is an attempt to persuade someone of something by giving reasons or evidence for accepting a particular conclusion. An attempt to persuade someone of something, by giving reasons or evidence for accepting a particular conclusion.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Anticipating Potential Objections](#)
- [Raising the Stakes of Your Argument](#)
- [Assembling Your Argument](#)

clause

In grammar, a clause is the smallest grammatical unit that can express a complete proposition.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Choosing the Correct Pronoun and Noun Cases](#)
- [Using a Variety of Sentence Formats](#)
- [Making Pronouns and Antecedents Agree](#)

concision

Concision refers generally to brevity, or the practice of using no more words than necessary to describe an idea. When increasing concision (without omitting important information), it increases the effectiveness of communication by making it more efficient and by making information easier to understand. Concision has been described as one of the elementary principles of writing.

dependent clause

In linguistics, a dependent clause (sometimes called a subordinate clause) is a clause that augments an independent clause with additional information, but which cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Using Varied Sentence Lengths and Styles](#)
- [Eliminating Comma Splices and Fused Sentences](#)
- [Using Subordination and Coordination](#)

fact

Something concrete used as a basis for further interpretation.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Writing Concisely](#)
- [Marking Words with Italics](#)
- [Turning Your Working Hypothesis into a Claim](#)

infinitive

The uninflected form of a verb. In English, this is usually formed with the verb stem preceded by to. For Example, to sit.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Avoiding Misplaced Modifiers, Dangling Modifiers, and Split Infinitives](#)
- [Incorporating Core Sentence Components](#)
- [Using Commas](#)

person

A linguistic category used to distinguish between the speaker of an utterance and those to whom or about whom he is speaking. See grammatical person.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Entertaining Objections](#)
- [Repeating Key Terms and Phrases](#)
- [Looking Beyond the Traditional References](#)

plural

: a word in the form in which it potentially refers to something other than one person or thing; and other than two things if the language has a dual form.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Using the First Person in Academic Writing](#)
- [Making Subject and Verbs Agree](#)
- [Avoiding Sexist Language](#)

question

A subject or topic for consideration or investigation.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Generating Further Questions](#)
- [Reading Challenging Texts](#)
- [Developing a Question in Your Topic](#)

verb

A word that indicates an action, event, or state.

Appears in these related concepts:

- [Naming Your Naysayers](#)
- [Choosing Appropriate Verb Tenses](#)
- [Making Sure Subjects and Verbs Agree](#)

SOURCES

Boundless curates and validates high quality, openly licensed content from around the Internet. This particular unit used the following sources:

"All sizes | Man of the Fort Story, Va. coastal defense (LOC) | Flickr - Photo Sharing!."

http://www.flickr.com/photos/library_of_congress/2179841134/sizes/o/in/photostream/Flickr [Public domain](#).

Project Gutenberg.

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/39329/39329-h/39329-h.htm>Public domain.

"grammatical mood."

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/grammatical+mood>Wikipedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#).

"Grammatical mood."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_moodWikipedia [CC BY-SA 3.0](#).

"English in Use/Verbs."

http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/English_in_Use/Verbs#MoodsWikibooks [CC BY-SA 3.0](#).