

Like and as

A

Like = 'similar to', 'the same as'. You cannot use **as** in this way:

- What a beautiful house! It's **like a palace**. (*not as a palace*)
- 'What does Sandra do?' 'She's a teacher, **like me**.' (*not as me*)
- Be careful! The floor has been polished. It's **like walking on ice**. (*not as walking*)
- It's raining again. I hate weather **like this**. (*not as this*)

In these sentences, **like** is a *preposition*. So it is followed by a *noun* (like **a palace**), a *pronoun* (like **me** / like **this**) or *-ing* (like **walking**).

You can also say '... **like** (somebody/something) **doing** something':

- 'What's that noise?' 'It sounds **like a baby crying**'

Sometimes **like** = for example:

- I enjoy water sports, **like surfing, scuba diving and water-skiing**

You can also use **such as** (= for example):

- I enjoy water sports, **such as surfing, scuba diving and water-skiing**

B

As = in the same way as, or in the same condition as. We use **as** before *subject + verb*:

- I didn't move anything. I left everything **as it was**.
- You should have done it **as I showed you**.

We also use **like** in this way:

- I left everything **like it was**.

Compare **as** and **like**:

- You should have done it **as I showed you**. or ... **like I showed you**.
- You should have done it **like this**. (*not as this*)

Note that we say **as usual** / **as always**:

- You're late **as usual**.
- As always**, Nick was the first to complain.

C

Sometimes **as** (+ *subject + verb*) has other meanings. For example, after **do**:

- You can do **as you like**. (= do what you like)
- They did **as they promised**. (= They did what they promised.)

We also say **as you know** / **as I said** / **as she expected** / **as I thought** etc.:

- As you know**, it's Emma's birthday next week. (= you know this already)
- Andy failed his driving test, **as he expected**. (= he expected this before)

Like is not usual in these expressions, except with **say** (**like I said**):

- As I said** yesterday, I'm sure we can solve the problem. or **Like I said** yesterday ...

D

As can also be a *preposition*, but the meaning is different from **like**.

Compare:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> As a taxi driver , I spend most of my working life in a car.
(I am a taxi driver, that is my job) | <input type="checkbox"/> Everyone wants me to drive them to places. I'm like a taxi driver .
(I'm not a taxi driver, but I'm like one) |
|--|--|

As (*preposition*) = in the position of, in the form of etc.:

- Many years ago I worked **as a photographer**. (*not like a photographer*)
- Many words, for example 'work' and 'rain', can be used **as verbs or nouns**.
- London is fine **as a place to visit**, but I wouldn't like to live there.
- The news of the tragedy came **as a great shock**.

Exercises

117.1 In some of these sentences, you need **like** (not **as**). Correct the sentences where necessary.

- 1 It's raining again. I hate weather as this. weather like this
- 2 Andy failed his driving test, as he expected. OK
- 3 Do you think Lisa looks as her mother? _____
- 4 Tim gets on my nerves. I can't stand people as him. _____
- 5 Why didn't you do it as I told you to do it? _____
- 6 Brian is a student, as most of his friends. _____
- 7 You never listen. Talking to you is as talking to the wall. _____
- 8 As I said before, I'm thinking of changing my job. _____
- 9 Tom's idea seems a good one. Let's do as he suggests. _____
- 10 I'll phone you tomorrow as usual, OK? _____
- 11 Suddenly there was a terrible noise. It was as a bomb exploding. _____
- 12 She's a very good swimmer. She swims as a fish. _____

117.2 Complete the sentences using **like** or **as** + the following:

a beginner **blocks of ice** ~~**a palace**~~ **a birthday present**
a child **a theatre** **winter** **a tour guide**

- 1 This house is beautiful. It's like a palace.
- 2 My feet are really cold. They're _____.
- 3 I've been playing tennis for years, but I still play _____.
- 4 Marion once had a part-time job _____.
- 5 I wonder what that building is. It looks _____.
- 6 My brother gave me this watch _____ a long time ago.
- 7 It's very cold for the middle of summer. It's _____.
- 8 He's 22 years old, but he sometimes behaves _____.

117.3 Put in **like** or **as**. Sometimes either word is possible.

- 1 We heard a noise like a baby crying.
- 2 Your English is very fluent. I wish I could speak _____ you.
- 3 Don't take my advice if you don't want to. You can do _____ you like.
- 4 You waste too much time doing things _____ sitting in cafés all day.
- 5 I wish I had a car _____ yours.
- 6 You don't need to change clothes. You can go out _____ you are.
- 7 My neighbour's house is full of interesting things. It's _____ a museum.
- 8 We saw Kevin last night. He was very cheerful, _____ always.
- 9 Sally has been working _____ a waitress for the last two months.
- 10 In several countries in Asia, _____ Japan, Indonesia and Thailand, traffic drives on the left.
- 11 You're different from the other people I know. I don't know anyone else _____ you.
- 12 We don't need all the bedrooms in the house, so we use one of them _____ a study.
- 13 The news that Sarah and Gary were getting married came _____ a complete surprise to me.
- 14 _____ her father, Catherine has a very good voice.
- 15 At the moment I've got a temporary job in a bookshop. It's not great, but it's OK _____ a temporary job.
- 16 _____ you can imagine, we were very tired after such a long journey.
- 17 This tea is awful. It tastes _____ water.
- 18 I think I prefer this room _____ it was, before we decorated it.