

Like / as if / as though

A

You can use **like** to say how somebody or something **looks/sounds/feels**:

- That house **looks like** it's going to fall down.
- Helen **sounded like** she had a cold, didn't she?
- I've just got back from holiday, but I feel very tired. I don't **feel like** I've had a holiday.

You can also use **as if** or **as though** in all these examples:

- That house **looks as if** it's going to fall down.
- Helen **sounded as if** she had a cold, didn't she?
- I don't **feel as though** I've had a holiday.

Compare:

- You **look tired**. (**look** + *adjective*)
- You **look like you haven't slept**. (**look like** + *subject* + *verb*)

As if and **as though** are more formal than **like**.



B

You can say **It looks like ... / It sounds like ...**:

- Sarah is very late, isn't she? **It looks like** she isn't coming.
- We took an umbrella because **it looked like** it was going to rain.
- The noise is very loud next door. **It sounds like** they're having a party.

You can also use **as if** or **as though**:

- It **looks as if** she isn't coming. *or*
- It **looks as though** she isn't coming.
- It **looked as if** it was going to rain.
- It **sounds as though** they're having a party.



C

You can use **like / as if / as though** with other verbs to say how somebody does something:

- He ran **like he was running for his life**.
- After the interruption, the speaker went on talking **as if nothing had happened**.
- When I told them my plan, they looked at me **as though I was mad**.

D

After **as if** (or **as though**), we sometimes use the *past* when we are talking about the *present*.

For example:

- I don't like Tim. He talks as if he **knew** everything.

The meaning is not past in this sentence. We use the past (as if he **knew**) because the idea is not real: Tim does *not* know everything. We use the past in the same way in other sentences with **if** and **wish** (see [Unit 39](#)).

Like is not normally used in this way.

Some more examples:

- She's always asking me to do things for her – **as if I didn't** have enough to do already. (I *do* have enough to do)
- Gary's only 40. Why do you talk about him **as if he was** an old man? (he isn't an old man)

When you use the past in this way, you can use **were** instead of **was**:

- Why do you talk about him **as if he were** (or **was**) an old man?
- They treat me **as if I were** (or **was**) their own son. (I'm not their son)

118.1 What do you say in these situations? Use the words in brackets to make your sentence.

- You meet Bill. He has a black eye and some plasters on his face. (look / like / be / a fight)
You say to him: You look like you've been in a fight.
- Claire comes into the room. She looks absolutely terrified. (look / like / see / a ghost)
You say to her: What's the matter? You
- Joe is on holiday. He's talking to you on the phone and sounds happy. (sound / as if / have / a good time)
You say to him: You
- You have just run one kilometre. You are absolutely exhausted. (feel / like / run / a marathon)
You say to a friend: I

118.2 Make sentences beginning **It looks like ... / It sounds like ...**

you should see a doctor	there's been an accident	they're having an argument
it's going to rain	she isn't coming	we'll have to walk

- Sarah said she would be here an hour ago.
You say: It looks like she isn't coming.
- The sky is full of black clouds.
You say: It
- You hear two people shouting at each other next door.
You say:
- You see an ambulance, some policemen and two damaged cars at the side of the road.
You say:
- You and a friend have just missed the last bus home.
You say:
- Dave isn't feeling well. He tells you all about it.
You say:

118.3 Complete the sentences with **as if**. Choose from the box, putting the verbs in the correct form.

she / enjoy / it	I / go / be sick	he / not / eat / for a week
he / need / a good rest	she / hurt / her leg	he / mean / what he / say
I / not / exist	she / not / want / come	

- Mark looks very tired. He looks as if he needs a good rest.
- I don't think Paul was joking. He looked
- What's the matter with Amanda? She's walking
- Peter was extremely hungry and ate his dinner very quickly.
He ate
- Tanya had a bored expression on her face during the movie.
She didn't look
- I've just eaten too many chocolates. Now I don't feel well.
I feel
- I phoned Liz and invited her to the party, but she wasn't very enthusiastic about it.
She sounded
- I went into the office, but nobody spoke to me or looked at me.
Everybody ignored me

118.4 These sentences are like the ones in **Section D**. Complete each sentence using **as if**.

- Andy is a terrible driver. He drives as if he were the only driver on the road.
- I'm 20 years old, so please don't talk to me I a child.
- Steve has never met Nicola, but he talks about her his best friend.
- It was a long time ago that we first met, but I remember it yesterday.