

LANGUAGE FACT I

PRESENT TENSE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPERATIVES

In the chapter reading passage you have noticed some new verb forms: *manē, valē, audī*. These are commands.

The command is a mood of the verb called the **imperative**. The mood you have been concerned with so far has been the **indicative**—it states the simple fact of an action.

The indicative mood represents the action as actually happening: *manēs*, “you remain.”

The imperative mood represents the action as commanded to happen: *manē!* “remain!”

There are only two forms for the present active imperative: the second person singular (for commanding one person) and the second person plural (for commanding more than one person).

Here is how you form the present active imperative:

Singular active command

For verbs of all four conjugations, the singular form is identical to the stem (ending *-ā, -ē, -e, and -ī*, respectively). The imperative of the *-io* verbs looks like that of third conjugation verbs.

Plural active command

The plural imperative form of all conjugations ends in *-te*.

For verbs of the first, second, and fourth conjugations, *-te* is added directly to the stem. In the third conjugation (including *-iō* verbs), *-e-* changes to *-i-* before *-te*.

For a **negative** command, use *nōlī* (singular) and *nōlīte* (plural) followed by an infinitive. Do not use *nōn*.

Nōlī discēdere! “Do not go away!”

Nōlīte discēdere! “Do not go away (plural)!”



BY THE WAY

The forms *nōlī* and *nōlīte* are present active imperatives of the irregular verb *nōlō*, “not to want.”

Present Tense Positive and Negative Imperatives

	First Conjugation	Second Conjugation	Third Conjugation	Fourth Conjugation	Third Conjugation <i>-iō</i> Verbs
Singular Positive	parā! (prepare!)	tenē! (hold!)	petē! (seek!)	audī! (hear!)	cape! (seize!)
Plural Positive	parāte! (prepare!)	tenēte! (hold!)	petite! (seek!)	audīte (hear!)	capite! (seize!)
Singular Negative	nōlī parāre! (do not prepare!)	nōlī tenēre! (do not hold!)	nōlī petere! (do not seek!)	nōlī audire! (do not hear!)	nōlī capere! (do not seize!)
Plural Negative	nōlīte parāre! (do not prepare!)	nōlīte tenēre! (do not hold!)	nōlīte petere! (do not seek!)	nōlīte audire! (do not hear!)	nōlīte capere! (do not seize!)