Verb – Moods

The simplest use of a verb is to make a statement or to ask a question.

I got up early in the morning.
Who wrote that story?
A verb may also be used to express a command.

Shut up!
Or a verb may be used to express a mere supposition.

If I were you, I would not do it.
These different modes or manners in which a verb may be used are called moods. There are three moods in English: indicative, imperative, subjunctive.

Indicative mood

The indicative mood is used to make a statement of fact.

She is a teacher.
They are our friends.
My parents live abroad.
The baby is sleeping.
He is sick.
The indicative mood is also used to ask a question.

Where are you going?
What are you doing?
Are you happy?
Imperative mood

The imperative mood is used to express ideas such as a command, a request, an order, a prayer or an entreaty.

Come here.
Keep quiet.
Do better.

Verb – Moods

Have mercy on us.

Note that the imperative mood can strictly be used only in the second person, since the subject is always the person spoken to. However, in the first and the third persons a similar sense can be expressed by the use of the verb let.

Let me go.

Let's wait.

The subject of a verb in the imperative sentence is usually omitted.

Subjunctive mood

The subjunctive mood hardly exists in modern English. It has two forms: present subjunctive and past subjunctive.

The present subjunctive has no -s in the third person singular. It is sometimes used in that-clauses after words such as *suggest, recommend, ask, insist, vital, essential, important and advice.*

It is important that every child get the same educational opportunities.

She insisted that she be allowed to go.

The subjunctive may also occur in traditional phrases such as the following:

God bless you!

God save the King!

The subjunctive is unusual in British English. In that-clauses British people prefer should + infinitive.

She insisted that she should be allowed to go.

It is important that every child should get the same educational opportunities.