

# As if / as though / like

A

You can use **as if** or **as though** to say how somebody or something looks/sounds/feels:

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



You can use **as though** in all these examples:

- I don't feel **as though** I've just had a holiday.

In informal spoken English you can also use **like**:

- That house **looks like** it's going to fall down.

Compare:

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

B

You can say **It looks as if ... / It sounds as if ...** :

- Sandra is very late, isn't she? **It looks as if** she isn't coming.
- We took an umbrella because **it looked as if** it was going to rain.
- Do you hear that music next door? **It sounds as if** they are having a party.

It sounds as if they're having a party next door.



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

- It looks as though** she isn't coming. or  
**It looks like** she isn't coming.

C

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

- He ran **as if** 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.

In informal spoken English, you can also use **like** in these examples.

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 **if** sentences and after **wish** (see Unit 39).

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 look/sound/feel + as if ... . Use the words in brackets to make your sentence.

- You meet Bill. He has a black eye and some plasters on his face. (be / a fight)  
You say to him: You look as if you've been in a fight.
- Christine comes into the room. She looks absolutely terrified. (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 very happy. (enjoy / yourself)  
You say to him: You .....
- You have just run one kilometre. You are absolutely exhausted. (run / a marathon)  
You say to a friend: I .....

118.2 Make sentences beginning It looks as if ... / It sounds as if ... .

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

- Sandra said she would be here an hour ago.  
You say: It looks as if 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
<del>he / need / a good rest</del>	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 Liz? She's walking .....
- Peter was extremely hungry and ate his dinner very quickly.  
He ate .....
- Caroline had a bored expression on her face during the concert.  
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.

- Brian 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.