**Grammar Lesson 14: Interrogative, Imperative, and Exclamatory Sentences**

“Three common reshapings of the basic declaractive sentence are the interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory. All three make demands. A question calls for an answer, an imperative calls for an action, an exclamation calls for experiencing an emotion.

Interrogatives, imperatives, and exclamations can set an expressive tone, accent a point, serve as a summary or transition, create a structure for a paragraph, and function in parallel to structure several paragraphs.” Virginia Tufte, Artful Sentences, p. 205.

**Interrogative Sentences**

* "Are you a good witch or a bad witch?"  
  (Glinda, the Good Witch of the North, in *The Wizard of Oz*, 1939)
* "What has four legs, two legs, and three legs? (The Sphinx, in the Myth of Oedipus)
* Inigo Montoya: I do not mean to pry, but you don't by any chance happen to have six fingers on your right hand?  
  Man in Black: Do you always begin conversations this way?  
  (Mandy Patinkin and Cary Elwes in *The Princess Bride*, 1987)

**Imperative Sentences: basically make commands, requests, give advice or instructions. Usually they begin with the base form of a verb (run, exit) and have an implied you as the subject.**

* "We're going into the attic now, folks. *Keep your accessories with you at all times.*"  
  (Buzz Lightyear, *Toy Story 3*, 2010)
* "*Go ahead, make my day.*"  
  (Clint Eastwood as Harry Callahan in *Sudden Impact*, 1983)
* "*Always do right.* This will gratify some people and astonish the rest."  
  (Mark Twain)

**Exclamatory sentences: A type of** [**sentence**](http://grammar.about.com/od/rs/g/senterm.htm) **that expresses strong feelings by making an** [**exclamation**](http://grammar.about.com/od/e/g/exclamationterm.htm)**. (Compare with sentences that make a** [**statement**](http://grammar.about.com/od/d/g/declsenterm.htm)**, express a** [**command**](http://grammar.about.com/od/il/g/impersent09.htm)**, or ask a** [**question**](http://grammar.about.com/od/il/g/interrogterm.htm)**.)**

**With the appropriate** [**intonation**](http://grammar.about.com/od/il/g/intonationterm.htm)**, other sentence types (especially** [**declarative sentences**](http://grammar.about.com/od/d/g/declsenterm.htm)**) can be used to form exclamatives. Richard Norquist, <http://grammar.about.com/od/e/g/exclamsent7term.htm>**

* "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams!"  
  (Henry David Thoreau)
* "Boy, do I hate being right all the time!"  
  (Jeff Goldblum as Dr. Malcolm in *Jurassic Park*, 1993)
* "What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!"  
  (William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II)
* "Gentlemen, you can't fight in here! This is the War Room!"  
  (Peter Sellers as President Merkin Muffley in *Dr. Strangelove*, 1964)
* Shrek: Now, let's go before they light the torches!  
  Princess Fiona: Hey, they're my parents!  
  Shrek: Hello, they locked you in a tower!  
  (*Shrek 2*, 2004)
* Avidly, ardently! As if my life depended on it. Joyce Carol Oates, *The Faith of a Writer*, 8.

Putting it together

1. Identify the three different types of sentences in the following passages. Explain how the three different sentences display a shift in the tone of the character.

**HELENA**

Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.  
Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!  
Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air  
More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,  
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.  
Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,  
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;  
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,  
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.  
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,  
The rest I'd give to be to you translated.  
O, teach me how you look, and with what art  
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart. \

William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*

“*Come out, come out, little Harry*!” she called in a mock-baby voice, which echoed off the polished wooden floors. “What did you come after me for, then? I thought you were here to avenge my dear cousin!”

“I am!” shouted Harry, and a score of Harrys seemed to chorus *I am! I am! I am* all around the room.

“Aaaaah..did you *love* him, little baby Potter?”

Hatred rose in Harry such as he had never known before. He flung himself out from behind the fountain and bellowed “Crucio!” JK Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, p. 810.

And when the creature spoke, it used Harry’s mouth, so that in agony he felt his jaw move…

“*Kill me now, Dumbledore*…”

Blinded and dying, every part of him screaming for release, harry felt the creature use him again…

“*If death is nothing, Dumbledore, kill the boy*….”

*Let the pain stop*, thought Harry. *Let him kill us…End it, Dumbledore…Death is nothing compared to this*.”

*And I’ll see Sirius again.*

JK Rowling, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, p. 816.

1. Write the dialogue to a conversation between yourself and a parent involving your wanting to take their new car out with your friends on a weekend. Move from interrogative, to imperative, to exclamatory sentences within the conversation.