

# 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)