

DECEMBER OPEN WORKSHOP

Do or Make?



Two of the most common verbs in the English language are “do” and “make”, and they are also two of the most easily confused. They both imply activity, but they function differently in sentences.

“do” usually relates to physical tasks and activities that are vague or indefinite, while “make” refers to a specific outcome or object created by that activity.

In general, when we use “do” and “make” with noun phrases, “do” focuses on the **process of acting or performing** something, whereas “make” places greater emphasis on the **product or outcome** of an action:

When he was **doing** [action] the calculations, he **made** [outcome] some minor mistakes.

I **did** [action] a lot of work at the weekend. I **made** [outcome] a pond in her garden.

Although there are some general rules about when to use ‘do’ and ‘make’, there are many expressions with ‘do’ and ‘make’ which do not adhere to any rules.

Today, we will try to learn the difference between these two verbs. **Let’s take a look!**

DO

- We use “do” for **work, jobs and daily tasks**, for example, *do a good job, do housework, do the shopping, do homework.*
- We use “do” for **non-specific activities**, e.g., *do something, do nothing, do anything, do everything.*
- We use “do” to **replace a verb when it’s obvious what we are talking about**, e.g., *do the dishes, do the laundry.*

Example sentences:

- When will you **do** your homework?
- Thank you. You’ve **done** a great job.
- Are you **doing** anything this evening?
- Their mother is quite elderly. They **do** everything for her.
- While you’re **doing** the shopping, I’ll **do** the cooking.
- He usually **does** the gardening at the weekend.

Do



MAKE

As mentioned earlier, we often use “**make**” to express an activity that creates something *tangible*, i.e., something we can touch, such as in the first example below. However, it’s important to remember that, although there are some general rules – guidelines - about when to use ‘**make**’ and ‘**do**’, there are many expressions which do not adhere to any rules, but these are standard English collocations – for example, ‘*make the bed*’.

- We use “**make**” with **food, drink and meals**, for example, *make a cake, make a cup of coffee, make breakfast*.
- We use “**make**” when **something produces a reaction**, e.g., *make your eyes water, make you sleepy, make you happy*.
- We use “**make**” with **plans and decisions**, e.g., *make a plan, make arrangements, make a decision, make a choice*.
- We use “**make**” with **speaking and sounds**, e.g., *make a noise, make a suggestion, make a speech, make a complaint*.
- We use “**make**” with **expressions related to money**, e.g., *make a profit (or loss), make a lot of money*.
- We use the past form of “**make**” to **talk about material and origin**, e.g., *made of gold, made in China, made by John*.

Example sentences:

- I’m **making** a cake for Jenny’s birthday party.
- I hate cutting onions. They always **make** my eyes water.
- Bill has already **made** all the arrangements for us for next month’s trip to Boise.
- I’m feeling really nervous. I have to **make** a speech at the Awards Ceremony next month.
- Hayley was the top salesperson again last quarter. With her commission, she’s **making** more money than her boss!
- I like your earrings. Are they **made** of silver?





WORKSHOP ACTIVITY

Complete the following sentences using an appropriate form of "do" or "make".

1. You will have to _____ a decision soon!
2. This weekend, I'd like to just relax and _____ nothing all day long.
3. _____ your homework first and then we'll have dinner.
4. My uncle is hoping to _____ a fortune with his new invention.
5. The primary goal of many large businesses is simply to _____ a profit for their shareholders.
6. I just need to _____ my hair and I'll be ready!
7. I've been promoted! Let's _____ something special this weekend to celebrate.
8. If you mow the lawn, I'll _____ the dusting and vacuuming.
9. That picture on the wall was _____ by my 6-year-old daughter.
10. We _____ business in countries around the world.
11. Don't worry. I'll _____ all the arrangements for the meeting tomorrow.
12. Would you like me to _____ a cup of tea?
13. I like to listen to music while I _____ the ironing.
14. We are currently _____ plans for next year's sales and marketing event.
15. Please note that you can now _____ payments online.
16. It's been great _____ business with you!
17. Several of the speakers at the conference _____ really inspiring speeches.
18. The politician stated that he would not be _____ any comments about his recent resignation.
19. Thank you, Jenny. I think you've _____ a great job on this report. It looks excellent.
20. John is going to _____ an accountancy course next year.