

Like and as

A

Like = similar to, the same as:

- What a beautiful house! It's like a palace. (*not* as a palace)
- "What does Sandra do?" "She's a teacher, like me." (*not* as me)
- Be careful! The floor has been polished. It's like walking on ice. (*not* as walking)
- We heard a noise like a baby crying. (*not* as a baby crying)

In these sentences, **like** is a *preposition*. So it is followed by a *noun* (like a palace), a *pronoun* (like me), or *-ing* (like walking). You cannot use **as** in these sentences.

Sometimes **like** = "for example." You can also use **such as**:

- Some sports, like race-car driving, can be dangerous. *or* Some sports, such as race-car driving, can be dangerous.

B

We use **as** (= in the same way) before a *subject + verb*:

- I didn't move anything. I left everything as I found it. (= the way I found it)
- You should have done it as I showed you. (= the way I showed you)

You can also use **like** in these sentences, especially in informal speech:

- I left everything like I found it.

Compare **like** and **as**:

- You should have done it like this. (*not* as this)
- You should have done it as I showed you *or* ... like I showed you.

Note that we say **as usual** / **as always**:

- You're late as usual.

C

Sometimes **as** (+ *subject + verb*) has other meanings. For example, after **do**:

- Please do as I say. (= do what I say)
- They did as they promised. (= they did what they promised)

We also say **as you know** / **as I was saying** / **as she expected** / **as I thought**, etc.:

- As you know, it's Tom's birthday next week. (= you know it's his birthday)
- Ann failed her driving test, as she expected. (= she expected this)

You can also say **like I was saying** / **like I said**, but generally **like** is not used in the other expressions (as you know, etc.).

D

As can also be a *preposition*, but the meaning is different from **like**. Compare:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Brenda Casey is the manager of a company. As the manager, she has to make many important decisions. (As the manager = in her position as the manager) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mary Stone is the assistant manager. Like the manager (Brenda Casey), she also has to make important decisions. (Like the manager = similar to the manager) |
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As (*preposition*) = in the position of, in the form of, etc.:

- A few years ago I worked as a bus driver. (*not* like a bus driver)
- We've got a garage, but we don't have a car, so we use the garage as a workshop.
- Many English words (for example, "work" and "rain") can be used as verbs or nouns.
- New York is all right as a place to visit, but I wouldn't like to live there.
- The news of her death came as a great shock.

Exercises

113.1 Put in *like* or *as* (see Sections A–C). Sometimes either word is possible.

1. It's raining again. I hate weather *like* _____ this.
2. Jane failed her driving test *as* _____ she expected.
3. Do you think Carol looks _____ her mother?
4. He really gets on my nerves. I can't stand people _____ him.
5. Why didn't you do it _____ I told you to do it?
6. "What does Bill do?" "He's a student, _____ most of his friends."
7. _____ I said yesterday, I'm thinking of changing my job.
8. Tom's idea seemed to be a good one, so we did _____ he suggested.
9. It's a difficult problem. I never know what to do in situations _____ this.
10. I'll phone you tomorrow _____ usual, OK?
11. This tea is awful. It tastes _____ water.
12. Suddenly there was a terrible noise. It was _____ a bomb exploding.
13. She's a very good swimmer. She swims _____ a fish.
14. We saw Keith last night. He was very cheerful, _____ always.

113.2 Complete the sentences using *like* or *as* + one of the following (see Sections A and D):

a beginner blocks of ice a palace a birthday present
a child a church winter a tour guide

1. This house is beautiful. It's *like a palace* _____.
2. Margaret once had a part-time job _____.
3. My feet are really cold. They're _____.
4. I've been learning Spanish for a few years, but I still speak _____.
5. I wonder what that building with the tower is. It looks _____.
6. My brother gave me this watch _____ a long time ago.
7. It's very cold for the middle of summer. It's _____.
8. He's 22 years old, but he sometimes behaves _____.

113.3 Put in *like* or *as*. Sometimes either word is possible.

1. Your English is very fluent. I wish I could speak *like* _____ you.
2. Don't take my advice if you don't want to. You can do _____ you like.
3. You waste too much time doing things _____ sitting in cafes all day.
4. I wish I had a car _____ yours.
5. You don't need to change your clothes. You can go out _____ you are.
6. My neighbor's house is full of interesting things. It's _____ a museum.
7. I think I preferred this room _____ it was, before we decorated it.
8. When we asked Sue to help us, she agreed immediately, _____ I knew she would.
9. Sharon has been working _____ a waitress for the last two months.
10. While we were on vacation, we spent most of our time doing active things _____ sailing, water skiing, and swimming.
11. You're different from the other people I know. I don't know anyone _____ you.
12. We don't need all the bedrooms in the house, so we use one of them _____ a study.
13. _____ her father, Catherine has a very good voice.
14. The news that Sue and Jim were getting married came _____ a complete surprise to me.
15. At the moment I've got a temporary job in a bookstore. It's OK _____ a temporary job, but I wouldn't like to do it permanently.