



Do or Make? Which one do I use?

The verbs "make" and "do" are often confused by Spanish-speakers because both words mean "hacer." However, "make" and "do" have very distinct meanings in English. The verb "make" in English is *generally* used with the meaning of "create" while "do" is *usually* used with activities. There are many exceptions to this "rule".

Here are a few guidelines:

Make often has the meaning of produce, create, or prepare:

- I *made* a fire, then I *made* myself a meal. After the meal I *made* some coffee.
- That motorcycle *makes* a lot of noise, don't you think?

Do is usually the correct word when we are talking about a general activity; that is, we do not specify its nature.

- I hope you know what you are *doing*.
- If you *do* that, you'll regret it.

Do is usually the correct word when we are talking about work.

(In this sense it is often used with the *-ing* work activities: *cooking, shopping, washing-up, sewing, cleaning, etc.*).

- It's the weekend. I don't *do* any work on the weekend: no homework, no housework, nothing.
- I never *do* the shopping. My wife does that. But I always *do* the cooking.

Correct Forms	Common Errors
I <i>do</i> all the housework, including the cooking and the cleaning.	I make all the housework, including the cooking and the cleaning.
I was cold so I <i>made</i> a cup of coffee.	I was cold so I did a cup of coffee.

'Do' for Activities

Use the verb 'do' to express daily activities or jobs. Notice that these are usually activities that produce no physical object.

do homework
do housework
do the ironing
do the dishes
do a job

'Do' for General Ideas

Use the verb 'do' when speaking about things in general. In other words, when we do not exactly name an activity. This form is often used with the words 'something,

nothing, anything, everything, etc.' I'm not doing anything today.
He does everything for his mother.
She's doing nothing at the moment.

Important Expressions with 'Do'

There are a number of standard expressions that take the verb 'do'. These are standard collocations (verb + noun combinations) that are used in English.

do one's best
do good
do harm
do a favour
do business

'Make' for Constructing, Building, Creating

Use 'make' to express an activity that creates something that you can touch.

make food
make a cup of tea / coffee
make a mess

Important Expressions with 'Make'

There are a number of standard expressions that take the verb 'make'. In a number of cases the verb 'do' seems more

appropriate. These are standard collocations (verb + noun combinations) that are used in English.

make plans
make an exception
make arrangements
make a telephone call
make a decision
make a mistake
make noise
make money
make an excuse
make an effort

Do is usually used to describe an action. Do represents action verbs. Do can be confusing because it is also an auxiliary verb. It is common to hear, "What do you want to do?" The first do is an auxiliary verb and the final do represent any action verb.

Make usually refers to a product. It means to produce, fabricate, or construct.

Common Expressions with Do

- * do well
- * do badly
- * do a favor
- * do business
- * do the dishes
- * do your chores
- * do the laundry

- * do your homework
- * do lunch (to have lunch with someone)
- * do your hair
- * do your nails
- * do your makeup
- * do time (spend time in jail or prison)
- * do away with (murder)

Common Expressions with Make

- * make the bed
- * make dinner
- * make money
- * make a mistake
- * make do (to survive with very little)
- * make a living
- * make a difference
- * make a big deal
- * make end's meet
- * make a decision
- * make love
- * make war
- * make a mess
- * make a suggestion
- * make an excuse
- * make an exception
- * make changes

Here are some more examples:

Do is used to describe an action without saying exactly what the action is:

I'm going to do something that you won't believe!
We did some things around the house on the weekend.

Do is used to talk about work and jobs:

I didn't do any work today.
My mother usually does the housework during the week, but my father does most of the chores on the weekend.
Have you done your homework?

Make is used to speak about building, constructing, producing, creating etc.

Peter made a tree house for his children.
Who made this lovely birthday cake?
We make our own yogurt.

Let's Practice:

1. Can you ___ a reservation for me?
a. do
b. make
2. I'll ___ the shopping and you pick get the wine.
a. do
b. make
3. If you don't ___ the travel arrangements soon, it will be too late.
a. do
b. make
4. David doesn't ___ much money.
a. do
b. make
5. I'll ___ the housework later. Let's go to the beach now.
a. do
b. make
6. I'll ___ the appointment for 2:00 in the afternoon.
a. do
b. make
7. I'll try not to ___ any more errors.
a. do
b. make
8. Oh, dear! There is so much laundry to _____.
a. do
b. make
9. Look at the yard! You'll have to ___ it soon.
a. do
b. make
10. Will you ___ the painting this week or next week?
a. do
b. make

- 1 Good students always _____ their homework after class.
- 2 Before leaving for work, Judy usually _____ her bed.
- 3 I hate asking Roger anything. He can't _____ a decision.
- 4 After dinner last night, Keila _____ the dishes.
- 5 Dennis asked me if I wanted to _____ lunch at Joe's restaurant.
- 6 My wife asked me to _____ lunch for the children since she had to work.
- 7 Before she bought a washer and a dryer, Maria _____ her laundry at the laundromat.
- 8 My cousin _____ money every year by selling Christmas trees.
- 9 After the car wash scratched his car, Baruch said that he would never _____ business with them again.
- 10 After Sorn lost her job, her family had to _____ do with only her husband's income.
- 11 Rosa's brother asked her to _____ a favor for him.
- 12 Andrew doesn't understand why his mother _____ a big deal about taking out the garbage.
- 13 In 1991, the United States and other nations _____ war against Iraq.
- 14 Children will _____ a mess if no one watches them.
- 15 Bophavann lets her daughter go to the mall on Saturdays only after she _____ her chores.
- 16 Vanrith was happy because he _____ well on his test.
- 17 Customers aren't usually allowed behind the counter but the manager _____ an exception for Maria last week.
- 18 Steve works at the supermarket now but he used to _____ a living by working at a restaurant.
- 19 Elizabeth was supposed to turn left on Anaheim Street but she _____ a mistake and turned right.
- 20 Before going on her date, Somaly had to _____ her hair.
- 21 John and Jody barely earn enough money to _____ end's meet.
- 22 Bill had to _____ time in the county jail after he was convicted of robbing the gas station.
- 23 Before putting the new lesson on the Internet, Harold _____ changes that the teachers recommended.
- 24 After taking power, the dictator _____ away with all of his enemies.
- 25 The boss asked his employees to _____ suggestions about improving the business.
- 26 Saving a little money every week will _____ a big difference in a few years.

You can go here <http://www.usingenglish.com/handouts/103.html> for more practice.

Extra:

MAKE

(Generalmente tiene el significado de "crear.")

- make a scene** = causar un escándalo
- make plans** = hacer planes
- make an offer** = hacer una oferta
- make a suggestion** = hacer una sugerencia
- make a decision** = hacer una decisión
- make a bed** = tender la cama
- make an effort** = hacer un esfuerzo
- make an excuse** = hacer una excusa
- make a mistake** = hacer un error
- make a noise** = hacer ruido
- make a phone call** = hacer una llamada
- make money** = hacer dinero
- make dinner** = hacer la cena
- make trouble** = hacer problemas
- make a list** = hacer una lista

DO

(Generalmente se usa con actividades.)

- do the shopping** = hacer las compras
- do work** = hacer el trabajo
- do homework** = hacer la tarea
- do housework** = hacer los quehaceres de la casa
- do the cleaning** = hacer la limpieza
- do the dishes** = lavar los platos
- do gardening** = hacer jardinería
- do something interesting** = hacer algo interesante
- do a good job** = hacer un buen trabajo
- do business** = hacer negocios
- do errands** = hacer mandados
- do a favor** = hacer un favor
- do a puzzle** = hacer un rompecabezas
- do exercise** = hacer ejercicio
- do a quiz** = hacer una prueba (un examen)

Practice

Use do or make.

1. I need to my shopping today.
2. I need to a list of what I have to buy.
3. We will plans for the birthday party.
4. I try not to mistakes on tests.
5. Do you have a phone? I need to a call.
6. I need to my homework.
7. My children help me the cleaning.
8. I always a good job on my homework.
9. I need to go to the supermarket, the bank, and the dry cleaners. I don't like to errands.
10. Will you me a favor?
11. My husband sometimes helps me dinner.
12. I like to puzzles on the weekends.
13. I get nervous when I a quiz.
14. My children their beds every morning.
15. I will an effort to finish the work.
16. I am getting fat. I need to exercise.
17. I need to get a job so I can money.
18. I need to a decision quickly.
19. We will an offer to buy the house.
20. I don't know what to do. Can you a suggestion?