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Grammar Reference

1. 'Shall'

The auxiliary '**shall**' is rarer in American than in British English; its meaning is most often conveyed, in speech as well as in writing, by the future auxiliary '**will**.' Nevertheless, many speakers use '**shall**' in first-person questions that ask opinions or imply suggestions.

Example: **Shall we** go?
What **shall we** do about them?
Shall we say Wednesday?
Shall I help you?

Shall can express **obligation**. This usage is common in legal texts and official rules.

Example: The insurance holder **shall** pay back the full loan amount within three years.

Students **shall not** play loud music after ten p.m.

Note. In the above examples, **shall** is a **modal of obligation** similar to **must** or **have to**. However, **shall** is generally considered to be stronger and more **formal** than other **modals of obligation**.

Also note that **shall not** is used in negative constructions.

Imperative sentences with **let's (let us)** can seem overly forceful in business contexts.

To **achieve a softer tone**, you can use **shall we** as a **question tag**.

Example: Let's work on the project this afternoon, **shall we**?

Let's finish this today, **shall we**?

Note. In **affirmative sentences** with **I'll (I will)**, **shall I** may be used as a **question tag**. However, this construction is **primarily British**.

Example: I'll give them a call, **shall I?**

I'll stop by your office at 10:00,
shall I?

2. 'To let'

- Permission is expressed using **'let' + object + infinitive without 'to.'**

Example: They **let their child do** what he wants.

- **'Let'** can also be used as an imperative auxiliary.

Example: **Let** her **do** what she likes.
Let me just **deal with** this lady first.

Note

A sentence formed with **let** to express permission **cannot be used** in the passive. The expression **'to be allowed to'** is therefore used.

Example:

The child **is allowed to** do what he wants.

- The infinitive without 'to' may be **implied**.

Example:

She would like to go to India but her parents won't **let** her.