

Language Note: Make and Do

Why do you **drive** a car but **ride** a bicycle, **do** your best but **make** a mistake, **give** a performance but **play** a part? There is often no real reason except that a particular noun needs a particular verb to express what is done to it.

In order to speak English well, it is important to know which nouns take **make** and which take **do**. There are some general rules to help you decide (see Usage Note at MAKE) but often it has to be learnt through practice.

Some typical uses of make and do

You can **make**

an accusation	a meal (= prepare a meal)
an arrangement	a mistake
an attempt	money
a change	a movement
a comment	a noise
a deal (<i>AmE</i>)	an offer
a decision	progress
a demand	a promise
an effort	a recommendation
an estimate	a remark
a fuss	a request
a gesture	a statement
a guess (<i>BrE</i>)	
an impression (on someone)	

You can **do**

your best	the gardening (someone) a good turn
business (with someone)	harm
the cleaning	your homework
a course (of study)	the housework
(some) damage	the ironing
a dance	a job
a deal (<i>BrE</i>)	research
a degree (in engineering, philosophy, etc.)	the shopping
the dishes/the washing-up (<i>BrE</i>)	the washing/the wash (<i>AmE</i>)
your duty (someone) a favour	(some) work

Other verbs commonly used with particular nouns

You can **give**

(someone) a chance
a command
details
evidence
information
a party (*esp. BrE*)
a performance
permission
an opinion
an order
a talk/speech/lecture

You can **take**

action
advantage (of something or someone)
a bath (*esp. AmE*)
a guess (*AmE*)
a look
an exam
medicine
notice (of something)
a photo
a pill
responsibility (for)
risks
a walk (*AmE*)

You can **have**

an accident
a bath (*esp. BrE*)
a fit
a headache
an idea
an illness (flu etc.)
an interview
a look
a meal (= eat a meal)
an operation (if you are ill)
a party
a rest
a thought

You can **play**

cards
a game
a musical instrument
(some) music
a part
a record (cassette, tape, etc.)
a role
a trick (on someone)
a tune

You can **perform**

a duty
a function
an operation (if you are a surgeon)
a piece of music
a play
a task

(continued)