THE SERBIAN IMPERATIVE VERB FORMS

When to use imperatives?
Imperative sentences are used in contexts when you want to tell someone:
- to do something, as in a affirmative command: e.g. 'Pevaj! (Sing!)
- not to do something: e.g. 'Nemoj pevati!' ('Don't sing')
- when you're making a suggestion: e.g, Hajde da pevamo! ('Let's sing!)

How to make imperatives?
The base for an imperative is the present tense verb stem for 3rd person plural. It is important that you check the present tense conjugations to see how to make 3rd person plural.

IMPERATIVE STEM	Take out the final vowel of the present tense 3rd person plural (–u or –e). a) If what remains ends in –j, that's the imperative stem. b) Otherwise, add –i. c) Add the imperative endings to the imperative stem.

There are three imperative endings for three persons: **ti** (you –singular) **vi** (you - plural) and **mi** (we). They are: -**j/i**, -**te** or –**mo,** respectively.

Table 1: Examples of imperative verbs

Infinitive	3rd pl. present	Imperative Stem	2nd sing. imperative	2nd pl. imperative	1st pl. imperative
čitati 'read'	čitaju	čitaj	čitaj	čitajte	čitajmo
dati 'give'	daju	daj	daj	dajte	dajmo
kupovati 'buy'	kupuju	kupuj	kupuj	kupujte	kupujmo
pisati 'write'	pišu	piš	piši	pišite	pišimo
doći 'come'	dođu	dođ	dođi	dođite	dođimo
ići 'go'	idu	id	idi	idite	idimo
raditi 'work'	rade	rad	radi	radite	radimo

The above imperative endings issue a command or a suggestion to 2nd person and to the inclusive first person plural. It is also possible to issue a command or a request to the 3rd person, i.e. a person not actively participating in a conversation. This is done by using the word **neka** 'let' + 3rd person present tense verb:

IMPERATIVE RULE FOR 3RD PERSON	Neka ('let') + 3rd person present (singular or plural)

Table 2: Examples of imperative with 'neka'

Infinitive	3rd singular		3rd plural	
čitati 'read'	neka čita	'let him/her read'	neka čitaju	'let them read'
dati 'give'	neka da	'let him/her give'	neka daju	'let them give'
doći 'come'	neka dođe	'let him/her come'	neka dođu	'let them come'
ići 'go'	neka ide	'let him/her go'	neka idu	'let them go'
raditi 'work'	neka radi	'let him/her work'	neka rade	'let them work'

In colloquial speech, the imperative mood is made by inserting the word 'hajde' (a colloquial version of 'let's') to the infinitive verb or present tense verb, or to the imperative verb form. The rule is shown below.

COLLOQUIAL IMPERATIVE RULE:	1. **Hajde + da + present tense verb (or infinitive verb)** 2. **Hajde + imperative verb form**

Table 3: Examples of imperative with 'hajde' (let)

Infinitive	1. rule 2nd singular	1. rule 1st plural	2. rule 2nd singular	2. rule 2nd plural
čitati 'read'	hajde da čitaš	hajde da čitamo	hajde čitaj	hajde čitajte
dati 'give'	hajde da daš	hajde da damo	hajde daj	hajde dajte
doći 'come'	hajde da dođeš	hajde da dođemo	hajde dođi	hajde dođite
ići 'go'	hajde da ideš	hajde da idemo	hajde idi	hajde idite
raditi 'work'	hajde da radiš	hajde da radimo	hajde radi	hajde radite

Using negative imperative forms

How do you tell someone not to do something? Basically, you negate the imperative verb. There are a few ways to do that. I'll provide two.

NEGATIVE IMPERATIVE 1:	**Ne + imperative imperfective verb form**

As the rule says, you put the negative particle '**ne**' in front of the imperative **imperfective** verb. Some examples:

Table 4: Examples of negative imperative with 'ne'

Infinitive	Imperative Stem	Negative 2nd sing.imperative	Negative 2nd pl.imperative
čitati 'read'	čitaj	ne čitaj	ne čitajte
radi 'give'	rad	ne radi	ne radite
ići 'go'	id	ne idi	ne idite

It is also possible to make negative imperatives out of perfective verbs that denote involuntary psychological states, as in: ne zaboravite 'don't forget'.

Another way to use negative command or a request is by using the negative imperative 'nemoj' (don't) plus the infinitive verb or the present tense verb. This is a more polite command form than with **ne + imperative** above.

NEGATIVE IMPERATIVE2:	1. **Nemoj/nemojmo /nemojte + the infinitive verb** 2. **Nemoj/nemojmo /nemojte + da + present tense verb**

Table 5: Examples of negative imperative with 'nemoj'

Infinitive	Nemoj + infinitive	Nemojte + infinitive	Nemoj + da + present tense	Nemojte + da + present tense
čitati 'read'	nemoj čitati	nemojte čitati	nemoj da čitaš	nemojte da čitate
radi 'give'	nemoj raditi	nemojte raditi	nemoj da radiš	nemojte da radite
ići 'go'	nemoj ići	nemojte ići	nemoj da ideš	nemojte da idete