

VOLITIVES

Cohortatives, Jussives, and Imperatives

[see Waltke, § 34.1 - 34.7]

A. COHORTATIVES (1st person) [Waltke, § 34.5]

Note: The cohortative is ordinarily marked with a ׀ suffix on the imperfect form. However, this ending is missing from III-׀ verbs, III-א verbs, and verb forms with a pronominal suffix. The cohortative is sometimes followed by the particle וְ (cf. Waltke, § 34.7). If the cohortative is used for a negative situation, the negative אֵל is used. In addition to the categories listed below, cohortatives may also be used in dependent purpose clauses and conditional clauses (see notes on clauses).

1. **Resolve** - manifesting the will or desire of the speaker (independent of another).

- a. Desire [may supply a word like "desire" or "wish"]

Deut 12:20 "and you say, 'I desire to eat meat.'"

בָּשָׂר	אֶכְלֶה	וְאָמַרְתָּ	[√ אכל = eat]
meat	I-would-eat	and-you-say	

- b. Intention [may supply a word like "will"]

Gen 45:28 "I will go down that I may see him before I die."

Impf	Cohort		
אָמַרְתִּי:	בְּטָרִם	וְאֶרְאֶה	אֵלָּךְ
I-die	before	and-I-will-see-him	I-will-go
			[√ הלך = go]

2. **Request**

- a. Wish (not directly invoking another)

2 Sam 24:14 "May I not fall into the hands of men."

אֶפְלֶה:	אֶל-	אָדָם	וּבְיַד-	[√ נפל = fall]
let-me-fall	not	man	but-into-hand-of	

- b. Request (for another's permission)

Deut 2:27 "Let me pass through your land."

בְּאֶרְצְךָ	אֶעְבֶּרָה	[√ עבר = pass]
through-land-of-you	let-me-pass	

3. **Hortatory** (exhorting others to participate)

Gen 37:17 "I heard them saying, 'Let us go to Dothan.'"

שָׁמַעְתִּי אֲמָרִים נִלְכָּה וְדָתִינָה [√ הלך = go]
 I-heard ones-saying let-us-go to-Dothan

Note: these may be heightened by a preceding verb of motion in the imperative.

Ps 95:1 "Come, let us sing to YHWH."

לְכוּ נִרְנְנָה לַיהוָה Cohort Impv
 come! let-us-sing to-Yahweh

4. **Optative** (expressing some degree of uncertainty)

Exod 32:30 "Perhaps I can make atonement for your sin"

אֲוִלִי אֶכַּפֶּרָה בְּעַד חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם:
 perhaps I-can-atone for sin-of-you

B. **JUSSIVES** (3rd person) [Waltke, § 34.3]

Note: This is the volitive mood of the third person (positive and negative) and the second person when a prohibition is expressed. It is also employed with the negative לֹא for the negative imperative (the imperative form does not admit the negative). Jussives often are the same in form as the "imperfect," but sometimes will have a unique shortened form (cf. Waltke, § 34.2.1). The jussive may be followed by the particle אֵל, especially in demands of permission.

1. **Command** (the subject may be either human or divine)

Gen 1:3 "Let there be light." (divine utterance)

יְהִי אֹר [√ היה = be]
 let-him-be light

2. **Prohibition** (negative command - preceded by לֹא)

Note that this is a jussive of the 2nd person!

1 Kg 13:22 "Do not eat food or drink water."

אַל-תֹּאכַל לֶחֶם וְאַל-תִּשְׁתֶּן מַיִם [√ אכל = eat]
 you-eat not bread and-not you-drink waters [√ שתה = drink]

3. **Counsel** (from a superior to an inferior / or between equals)

1 Kg 22:13 "Let your words be like the words of one of them."

4. **Advice** (from an inferior to a superior)

Gen 41:33 "Let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man."

5. **Request for Permission**

Gen 44:33 "Please let your servant remain instead of the young man."

6. **Desire / Request** (this can also occur in negative situations; cf. 1 Kgs 2:20)

Gen 33:14 "Let my lord please pass on before his servant."

7. **Invitation**

2 Sam 13:24 "Let the king and his servants go with your servant."

8. **Prayer** (in positive or negative situations)

Deut 9:26 "Do not destroy your people."

9. **Blessing / Benediction**

Num 6:24 "May the LORD bless you and keep you."

10. **Wish**

1 Sam 1:23 "May the LORD fulfill His word." (cf. Gen 30:34)

11. **Promise or Assurance (?)**

Ps 50:3 "Our God will come and He will not be silent."

^{juss} יִחַר־שׁ וְאֵלֹהֵינוּ וְיָבֵן ^{juss} [√ בוא = come; √ חרש = be silent]
 he-will-be-silent and-not God-of-us he-comes

12. **Malediction**

Jer 20:14 "May the day my mother bore me not be blessed."

יוֹם אֲשֶׁר־ יִלְדַתֵּנִי אִמִּי אֵלֹהֵי בְרוּךְ:
 being-blessed may-he-be not mother-of-me she-bore-me that day

13. **Poetic Effect** - usually involves an element of nature with some form of personification or metonymy.

Ps 98:8 "Let the rivers clap (their) hands."

C. **IMPERATIVES** (2nd person) [Waltke, § 34.4]

Note: The imperative is used only in the second person and only in positive commands. That is, the imperative does not occur with לֹא; rather, a negative command in the 2nd person is formed by לֹא with the jussive. The imperative can sometimes have a long form with הָ suffix (e.g., Jud 9:8).

1. **Command**

Gen 12:1 "Get out of your country." מֵאַרְצְךָ לְךָ לֵךְ [√ הֵלֵךְ = go]
from-country-of-you for-you leave!

2. **Warning**

Hos 10:12 "Sow with righteousness."

3. **Request**

2 Kg 5:22 "Please give them a talent of silver."

4. **Permission** (granted)

Gen 50:6 "Go up and bury your father" (after a cohortative of request).

5. **Ironical Challenge** (or sarcasm)

Jud 10:14 "Go and cry to the gods you have chosen."

6. **Concession**

Nah 3:14 "Even though you strengthen your fortifications
 ... the fire will consume you"

אֵשׁ תַּחֲכָלֶנְךָ ... מִבְּצֻרֶיךָ חֲזַק [√ חזק = be strong]
fire she-will-devour-you ... defenses-of-you strengthen!

7. **Assurance/Promise**

Deut 32:50 "You will die on the mountain ... and be gathered to your people."
[√ מוֹת = die]

עַמֶּיךָ אֶל-וְהִאָסַף ... בְּהָרַי וּמָת [√ אָסַף = gather]
people-of-you to and-be-gathered! on-the-mountain and-die!

8. **Interjectional** (exclamation)

Gen 11:3 "Come on! Let's make bricks."

9. **Wish**

Gen 24:60 "And they blessed Rebekah ... , May you increase to vast multitudes."