

# Sensory Verbs & Inference: Drawing Conclusions INTERMEDIATE

**Focus:** Look/Sound/Feel + Clause, Subject + Verb structures, Comparison with 'Look + Adjective', It looks like / It looks as if, It sounds like / It sounds as if, Drawing conclusions from evidence, It looked like it was going to rain, Future probability based on appearance, Past narrative use of manner clauses

## 1. The Basics: Adjectives vs. Nouns vs. Clauses

We use sensory verbs (**look, sound, feel**) to describe our impressions or draw conclusions from evidence. The structure changes depending on what follows the verb.

### A. Verb + Adjective

Use this when describing a quality directly. Do **not** use *like* or *as if*.

- **Structure:** Subject + Verb + Adjective
- "You **look tired**." (Visual impression)
- "That idea **sounds interesting**." (Auditory impression)
- "This sweater **feels soft**." (Tactile impression)

### B. Verb + LIKE + Noun

Use this when comparing the subject to a noun (thing/person).

- **Structure:** Subject + Verb + **like** + Noun
- "He **looks like his father**."
- "That cloud **looks like a dragon**."
- "It **sounds like a violin**."

### C. Verb + LIKE / AS IF + Clause (Subject + Verb)

Use this when describing a situation or making a prediction based on evidence. You are connecting the sensory verb to a full sentence (clause).

- **Structure:** Subject + Verb + **like / as if** + Subject + Verb
- "It **looks like it is going to rain**." (Evidence: Dark clouds)
- "She **sounds as if she has a cold**." (Evidence: Her voice is hoarse)
- "I **felt like I was flying**." (Past experience)

*Note: Like is very common in spoken English. As if (or as though) is slightly more formal but they are often interchangeable in this context.*

## 2. Impersonal Inference: "It looks like..." / "It sounds like..."

We often use the "dummy subject" **It** to talk about a general situation or atmosphere.

Context	Example	Evidence
Visual Evidence	"It <b>looks like</b> the party is over."	The lights are off, people are leaving.
Auditory Evidence	"It <b>sounds like</b> they are arguing."	I can hear shouting.
Predictions	"It <b>looks like</b> it's going to snow."	The sky is grey and heavy.

## 3. Past Narrative & Predictions

We can use these structures in the past tense to describe how a situation appeared at that moment.

- **Past Appearance:** "He **looked like** he hadn't slept in days."
- **Past Prediction:** "It **looked like** it was going to crash, but the pilot saved the plane."

## Practice

**Instructions:** Complete the sentences using the correct form of the sensory verb (**look, sound, feel**) combined with **like** or **as if** ONLY where necessary.

- *Hint: Check if the word after the gap is an Adjective, a Noun, or a Clause (Subject + Verb).*

### Examples:

- (Affirmative) You look pale. Are you okay? (Adjective -> no 'like')
- (Affirmative) It looks like it is going to rain. (Clause -> add 'like')
- (Negative) He doesn't look happy. (Adjective -> no 'like')

1. The sky is very dark. It \_\_\_\_\_ (look) it is going to storm soon.
2. I spoke to Sarah on the phone. She \_\_\_\_\_ (not/sound) very happy about the news.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ that noise \_\_\_\_\_ (sound) a helicopter to you?
4. This material is very strange. It \_\_\_\_\_ (feel) wet sand, but it's actually plastic.
5. Why is everyone wearing costumes? It \_\_\_\_\_ (look) they are going to a fancy dress party.
6. You are shivering! You \_\_\_\_\_ (look) you have a fever.
7. The band played terribly last night. They \_\_\_\_\_ (not/sound) they had practiced at all.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_\_ (look) ridiculous in this hat? Be honest.
9. This soup is delicious, but it \_\_\_\_\_ (taste) it has too much salt.
10. The house is completely dark. It \_\_\_\_\_ (not/look) anyone is home.
11. When I walked into the room, the atmosphere was tense. It \_\_\_\_\_ (feel) something bad had just happened.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ the exam \_\_\_\_\_ (look) difficult when you saw the paper?
13. That car is making a strange noise. It \_\_\_\_\_ (sound) the engine is broken.
14. He is very confident. He \_\_\_\_\_ (not/look) nervous at all.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ it \_\_\_\_\_ (feel) strange to be back in your hometown after ten years?

## Answer Key

1. **looks like / looks as if** (Followed by clause: "it is going to storm")
2. **didn't sound** (Followed by adjective phrase: "very happy" - *Note: "doesn't sound" is acceptable if the call was recent, but past tense is standard for narrative.*)
3. **Does ... sound like** (Followed by noun: "a helicopter")
4. **feels like** (Followed by noun phrase: "wet sand")
5. **looks like / looks as if** (Followed by clause: "they are going")
6. **look like / look as if** (Followed by clause: "you have a fever")
7. **didn't sound like / didn't sound as if** (Followed by clause: "they had practiced")
8. **Do ... look** (Followed by adjective: "ridiculous")
9. **tastes like / tastes as if** (Followed by clause: "it has too much salt")
10. **doesn't look like / doesn't look as if** (Followed by clause: "anyone is home")
11. **felt like / felt as if** (Followed by clause: "something bad had just happened")
12. **Did ... look** (Followed by adjective: "difficult")
13. **sounds like / sounds as if** (Followed by clause: "the engine is broken")
14. **doesn't look** (Followed by adjective: "nervous")
15. **Does ... feel** (Followed by adjective: "strange")