

## like and as: similarity, function

We can use *like* or *as* to say that things are similar. We can also use *as* to talk about function – the jobs that people or things do.

### 1. *like* (similarity): *like me*

*Like* can be a preposition. We use *like*, not *as*, before a noun or pronoun to talk about similarity.

*like* + noun/pronoun

*My sister looks like me.* (NOT ...~~as me.~~)

*He ran like the wind.* (NOT ...~~as the wind.~~)

*Like his parents, he is a vegetarian.*

We can use *very*, *quite* and other adverbs of degree before *like*.

*He's very like his father.*

*She looks a bit like Queen Victoria.*

We can use *like* to give examples.

*She's good at scientific subjects, like mathematics.* (NOT ...~~as mathematics.~~)

*In mountainous countries, like Peru, ...*

### 2. *as* (similarity): *as I do*

*As* is a conjunction. We use it before a clause, and before an expression beginning with a preposition.

*as* + clause

*as* + prepositional clause

*Nobody knows her as I do.*

*We often drink tea with the meal, as they do in China.*

*In 1939, as in 1914, everybody seemed to want war.*

*On Friday, as on Tuesday, the meeting will be at 8.30.*

### 3. *like I do* (informal)

In modern English, *like* is often used as a conjunction instead of *as*. This is most common in an informal style.

*Nobody loves you like I do.*

*You look exactly like your mother did when she was 20.*

### 4. inverted word order: *as did all his family*

In a very formal style, *as* is sometimes followed by **auxiliary verb + subject** (note the inverted word order)

*She was a Catholic, as were most of her friends.*

*He believed, as did all his family, that the king was their supreme lord.*

## 5. *as you know etc*

Some expressions beginning with *as* are used to introduce facts which are 'common ground' – known to both speaker/writer and listener/reader.

Examples are *as you know, as we agreed, as you suggested.*

*As you know, next Tuesday's meeting has been cancelled.*

*I am sending you the bill for the repairs, as we agreed.*

There are some passive expressions of this kind – for example, *as is well known, as was agreed.* Note that there is no subject it after *as* in these expressions.

*As is well known, more people get colds in wet weather.* (NOT ~~*As it is well known...*~~)

*I am sending you the bill, as was agreed.* (NOT ... ~~*as it was agreed*~~)

## 6. *comparison with as and like after negatives*

After a negative clause, a comparison with *as* or *like* usually refers only to the positive part of what comes before.

*I don't smoke, like Jane.* (Jane smokes.)

*I am not a Conservative, like Joe.* (Joe is a conservative.)

Before a negative clause, the comparison refers to the whole clause.

*Like Mary, I don't smoke.* (Mary doesn't smoke.)

*Like Bill, I am not a Conservative.* (Bill is not a Conservative.)

## 7. *function or role: He worked as a waiter*

Another use of *as* is to say what function or role a person or thing has – what jobs people do, what purposes things are used for, what category they belong to, etc. In this case, *as* is a preposition, used before a noun.

*He worked as a waiter for two years.* (NOT ... ~~*like a waiter*~~)

*Please don't use that knife as a screwdriver.*

*A crocodile starts life as an egg.*

Compare this use of *as* with *like*.

*As your brother, I must warn you to be careful.* (I am your brother.)

*Like your brother, I must warn you to be careful.* (I am not your brother, but he and I have similar attitudes.)