

Bring and Take

The very common verbs **bring** and **take** are sometimes troublesome for learners of English. One reason this happens is because **bring** and **take** have almost identical meanings but are used for different "directions" in English: **bring** shows movement **toward** the speaker, but **take** shows movement **away from** the speaker.

If **A** needs something and wants **B** to get it and carry it to him or her, **A** says,
"Could you **bring** ____ to me?" (or "Could you **bring** me ____ ?").

If **A** has something and **A** wants **B** to get it and carry it to **C**, **A** says,
"Could you **take** ____ to **C**?" (**B** then **takes** ____ from **A** and **takes** it to **C**.)

More examples:

- Please **take** the baby **from** her bed and **bring** her to me.
- If you want some tea, I'll be happy to **bring** a cup to you.
- If you're finished with your tea, I'll be happy to **take** your cup to the kitchen.
- I'll be happy to **take** the cup from you and **take** it to the kitchen.
- Your father is in his office and his mail just came.
Could you please **take** it to him? He's expecting you to **bring** it to him.

o

Remember

Bring shows movement **toward** the speaker:
bring ----> speaker

Take shows movement **away from** the speaker:
speaker ----> take

*Could you bring your father's mail to him? He's upstairs. WRONG

Could you take your father's mail to him? He's upstairs. RIGHT

*I need my calculator. Could you take it to me, please? WRONG

I need my calculator. Could you bring it to me, please? RIGHT

*Mr. Smith is right over there. Could you bring this to him? WRONG

Mr. Smith is right over there. Could you take this to him? RIGHT

Special Note

In some dialects of American English, people do not make a difference between bring and take.
This seems very strange to people for whom bring and take are different.

Some more information on **bring** and **take**

In general, **bring** shows movement **toward** the speaker and **take** shows movement **away from** the speaker. These two common verbs can be more complicated, however, because both **bring** and **take** can be used with **to** and **from**.

If A has a favorite picture at home and wants to put it on his or her office desk, A brings the picture from home when he / she brings the picture to the office. We can also say that A takes the picture from home when she / he takes the picture to the office. (Bring is used when the reference is the office; take is used when the reference is home.)

If B (a child) sees that her/his baby sister has some matches, B will probably take the matches from the baby and then take the matches to his / her mother or father. If B's mother or father wants the matches, she / he will probably say, "Take those matches from the baby and bring them to me!"

If it is lunchtime and C's (another child's) father is working in his home office, C's mother might say, "Please take this sandwich and tea to your father and when he's finished, please bring the plate and cup back to me."

_____ O _____

More examples:

Father: "The newspaper is outside the door. I'd like to read it. Can you get it?"

Father asked me to take the newspaper from outside the door and bring it to him.

Father: "Here's an interesting article in the newspaper. I think your mother would like to read it. I want to see it again after your mother has finished with it."

First, I took the newspaper to my father. While he was looking at it, he saw an article and asked if I could take the article to my mother and then bring it back to him when she was finished with it.

BRING

carry

(movement towards the speaker)

*to justice
back to life
to senses
to a boil
to a standstill
to a close
to life
to light
to trial
out the best in
together*

TAKE

carry

(movement away from the speaker)

*a bath
breath away
the cake
care of
charge
for granted
notice of
time
place
sides
stock*

