

**WONT AND WOULDNT FOR REFUSALS**

Take a look at this statement:

Al **won't** tell me what the problem is no matter how many times I ask him.

In this example, Al refuses to tell the other person what the problem is. We can express the idea that someone *refuses* to do what we ask or tell him or her to do by using **won't**. In this case, **won't** is used to express **refusal in the present**.

Now read this example:

Oh, no! I'm already late for my appointment, and now the car **won't** start.

The idea of refusal can be extended to things. In the statement above, the ideal of refusal is expressed by the fact that the car doesn't do what it is expected to do—to start.

Take a look at one more example in which **won't** is used to express refusal in the present. This one is from the situation *A Watched Pot Never Boils*:

Harry: The water **won't** boil. At this rate, breakfast will never be ready.

Now let's see a statement from the situation *The Benefit of the Doubt*:

Anne: He got quite irritated and **wouldn't** stop yelling.

As you remember, in this situation, Anne talks about the fact that she and Roger had an argument. Roger got quite irritated and *refused* to stop yelling. Roger **wouldn't** stop yelling. In this case, **wouldn't** is used to express **refusal in the past**.

Take a look at other examples with **wouldn't**:

I offered Jane some oatmeal this morning, but she **wouldn't** have it.

It was so hot yesterday, and the air conditioner **wouldn't** work.

Remember this:



- **Won't** is commonly used to express **refusal in the present**.
- **Wouldn't** is commonly used to express **refusal in the past**.