

## COMMON GRAMMAR MISTAKES

### Misuse of the definite article:

**Abstract nouns do not normally take the definite article when used in generalisations:**

Right	Wrong
'The gang cannot distinguish Good from Evil'	'The gang cannot distinguish <b>the</b> Good from <b>the</b> Evil'
'She is afraid to enter/of entering the house to face reality'	'She is afraid to enter the house, to face <b>the</b> reality'
'He prefers to live close to nature because he is afraid of death'	'He prefers to live close to <b>the</b> nature because he is afraid of <b>the</b> death'

### Prepositions:

#### **'at' after 'come':**

'They come home'	'They come <b>at</b> home'
'We can follow the evolution of her state of mind <b>through</b> the description of the house'	'We can follow the evolution of her state of mind <b>by</b> the description of the house'

#### **'with' instead of 'to':**

'Daisy is married <b>to</b> Tom'	'Daisy is married <b>with</b> Tom'
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#### **'to' instead of 'with'**

'The problem I am confronted <b>with</b> '	'The problem I am confronted <b>to</b> '
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#### **'during' instead of 'for':**

'She has not seen her son <b>for</b> eight years'	'She has not seen her son <b>during</b> eight years'
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#### **'since' instead of 'for':**

'They have known each other <b>for</b> eight years'	'They have known each other <b>since</b> eight years'
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#### **'in the whole of' instead of 'throughout':**

' <b>throughout</b> the story...'	' <b>In the whole</b> story...'
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#### **'in' instead of 'inside' :**

'She is unaware of the conflict happening <b>inside</b> her'	'She is unaware of the conflict happening <b>in</b> her'
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### 'in' instead of 'into':

'She only wants to get <b>into</b> her son's room'	'She only wants to get <b>in</b> her son's room'
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### 'as' instead of 'like':

'She felt <b>like</b> a stranger'	'She felt <b>as</b> a stranger'
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### 'of' instead of 'with':

'They cause Mrs Carnavon to be disgusted <b>with</b> herself'	'They cause Mrs Carnavon to be disgusted <b>of</b> herself'
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### 'of' instead of 'by':

'In this story <b>by</b> Doris Lessing...'	'In this story <b>of</b> Doris Lessing...'
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### 'of' instead of 'for':

'I think there are two reasons <b>for</b> the fact that she decides to clear the room'	'I think there are two reasons <b>of</b> the fact that she decides to clear the room'
'She feels confused, and the reason <b>for</b> this is to be found in...'	'She feels confused, and the reason <b>of</b> this is to be found in...'

### 'that' instead of 'as':

'The second waiter feels the same <b>as</b> the old man'	'The second waiter feels the same <b>that</b> the old man'
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### 'to' instead of 'with' after 'confront':

'They are confronted <b>with</b> an inextricable situation'	'They are confronted <b>to</b> an inextricable situation'
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### 'to' instead of 'at' after 'arrive':

'She must arrive <b>at</b> a decision'	'She must arrive <b>to</b> a decision'
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### 'explain' without 'to':

'This story <b>explains to</b> us how we must look beyond the appearance of things'	'This story <b>explains us</b> how we must look beyond the appearance of things'
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### 'say' without 'to':

'He <b>said to him/told him</b> that he liked the house'	'He <b>said him</b> that he liked the house'
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### 'present' without 'with':

'John O'Hara <b>presents us with</b> the evolution of a mother's state of mind'	'John O'Hara <b>presents us</b> the evolution of a mother's state of mind'
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### Pronouns:

**'him/her' instead of 'himself/herself' (when the object and the subject are the same person):**

'She sees <b>herself</b> from a certain distance'	'She sees <b>her</b> from a certain distance'
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**'who' (personal pronoun) instead of 'which' (impersonal pronoun):**

'The wolf, <b>which</b> is a wild animal...'	'The wolf, <b>who</b> is a wild animal...'
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### 'the one of' instead of 'that of':

'Mrs Carnavon's behaviour is <b>that of</b> a depressed person'	'Mrs Carnavon's behaviour is <b>the one</b> of a depressed person'
'The third image is <b>that of</b> the magazine'	'The third image is <b>the one of</b> the magazine'

### Negation:

#### 'also not' instead of 'nor':

'He felt no qualm of conscience, <b>nor</b> any regret'	'He felt no qualm of conscience, and <b>also not</b> any regret'
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#### 'not anymore' instead of 'no longer':

'She must go back home because it is <b>no longer</b> possible to stay in France'	'She must go back home because it is <b>not</b> possible <b>anymore</b> to stay in France'
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### Verb forms

#### **Inconsistent tenses:**

'Her stepfather often comes to see her. One day he <b>asks</b> her..'	'Her stepfather often comes to see her. One day he <b>asked</b> her...'
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### Use of the present continuous instead of the present simple:

'The atmosphere is tense and the author <b>intensifies</b> it further with words like...'	'The atmosphere is tense and the author is still <b>intensifying</b> it with words like...'
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### Use of the infinitive instead of the present participle:

'This is a way to protect herself and to avoid <b>showing</b> what she really feels'	'This is a way to protect herself and to avoid <b>to show</b> what she really feels'
'This shows that she is not used <b>to going</b> into her son's room'	'This shows that she is not used <b>to go</b> into her son's room'

### Use of the present participle instead of the infinitive:

'This scene explains her decision <b>to get rid</b> of Harry's belongings'	'This scene explains her decision <b>of getting rid</b> of Harry's belongings'
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### Use of a 'that' subclause instead of the infinitive:

'He would like the old man <b>to leave</b> '	'He would like <b>that</b> the old man <b>leaves</b> '
'She wants them <b>to know</b> '	'She wants <b>that</b> they <b>know</b> '

### 'can' instead of 'may':

'When we watch movies we <b>may</b> or <b>may not</b> identify with the characters'	'When we watch movies we <b>can</b> or <b>cannot</b> identify with the characters'
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### Use of the present tense instead of the present perfect:

'Jim and Crystal Styan <b>have lived/have been living</b> in a log cabin by a river for five years'	'Jim and Crystal Styan <b>live</b> in a log cabin by a river for five years'
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### Possessive forms

#### 'who's' instead of 'whose':

'The story is about a woman <b>whose</b> son has died'	'The story is about a woman <b>who's</b> son has died'
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#### 'it's' instead of 'its':

'This is an intriguing story, <b>its</b> setting is significant'	'This is an intriguing story, <b>it's</b> setting is significant'
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### use of the definite article in possessive forms:

' <b>The Spielberg</b> film / <b>Spielberg's</b> film'	' <b>The</b> Spielberg's film'
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### Countable and uncountable nouns

#### 'informations' instead of 'information':

We are given <b>much information</b> about the characters' thoughts'	We are given <b>many informations</b> about the characters' thoughts'
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#### 'evidences' instead of 'evidence':

'We have <b>little evidence</b> that the author is being ironic'	'We have <b>few evidences</b> that the author is being ironic'
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### Vocabulary

#### 'admit' instead of 'accept':

'Her son is dead and she can't <b>accept</b> it'	'Her son is dead and she can't <b>admit</b> it'
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#### 'accept' instead of 'agree':

'He <b>agreed</b> to come to the cinema'	'He <b>accepted</b> to come to the cinema'
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#### 'actual' instead of 'current':

'The article is in the <b>current</b> edition of <i>Le Monde Diplomatique</i> '	'The article is in the <b>actual</b> edition of <i>Le Monde Diplomatique</i> '
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#### 'current' instead of 'common':

'The story offers a metaphor for a <b>common</b> misunderstanding between generations'	'The story offers a metaphor for a <b>current</b> misunderstanding between generations'
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#### 'good' instead of 'right/correct':

'Mrs Carnavon tries to take the <b>right/correct</b> decision'	'Mrs Carnavon tries to take the <b>good</b> decision'
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#### 'good' instead of 'well':

'They knew each other really <b>well</b> '	'They knew each other really <b>good</b> '
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### 'good' instead of 'effective':

'The description of the place is most <b>effective</b> '	'The description of the place is most <b>good</b> '
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### 'loose' instead of 'lose':

'She does not want to <b>lose</b> her memories of him'	'She does not want to <b>loose</b> her memories of him'
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### 'remember' instead of 'remind':

'She decides to remove all the things which could <b>remind</b> her of her son'	'She decides to remove all the things which could <b>remember</b> her of her son'
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### 'support' instead of 'bear' or 'stand':

'She does this because she can't <b>bear/stand</b> seeing the door locked'	'She does this because she can't <b>support</b> seeing the door locked'
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### 'this' instead of 'it is' (as a translation of 'c'est') at the beginning of sentences:

' <b>It is</b> here that the story really begins'	' <b>This is</b> here that the story really begins'
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### 'according to me' instead of 'in my opinion' ('in my view', 'as I see it', etc.):

' <b>In my opinion</b> , the title of the story reflects Mrs Carnavon's state of mind'	' <b>According to me</b> , the title of the story reflects Mrs Carnavon's state of mind'
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### 'tell' instead of 'speak':

'In this story Kate Chopin <b>speaks</b> about social class'	'In this story Kate Chopin <b>tells</b> about social class'
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### 'make' instead of 'do':

'But we don't know what her husband <b>does to</b> her'	'But we don't know what her husband <b>makes</b> her'
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### 'develop' instead of 'analyse':

'I will now <b>analyse</b> the symbolism of the house'	'I will now <b>develop</b> the house's symbolism'
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**'remark' instead of 'notice':**

'He wants to talk to her but then <b>notices</b> that...'	'He wants to talk to her but then <b>remarks</b> that...'
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**'find again' instead of 'rediscover':**

'She want to <b>rediscover</b> the traces of his existence'	'She wants to <b>find again</b> the traces of his existence'
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**'project' instead of 'plan':**

'She has to do what she <b>planned</b> '	'She has to do what she <b>projected</b> '
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**'decease' instead of 'die':**

'Time stopped when Harry <b>died</b> '	'Time stopped when Harry <b>deceased</b> '
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**'get in' instead of 'enter':**

'As soon as she <b>enters</b> the house'	'As soon as she <b>gets in</b> the house'
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**'critic' instead of 'review'**

'I have read a very good <b>review</b> of that book'	'I have read a very good <b>critic</b> of that book'
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**Miscellaneous:**

**Always use full forms in formal essays:**

'cannot', 'will not', 'who would', 'we are', etc.	'can't', 'won't', 'who'd', 'we're', etc.
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**Confusion of noun with adjectival form, e.g. 'ironic' instead of 'irony':**

'The last sentence of the story is <b>ironic</b> '	'The last sentence of the story is <b>irony</b> '
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**Confusion of the noun form with the infinitive, e.g. 'apologies' with 'apologize':**

'I must <b>apologize</b> for being late'	'I must <b>apologies</b> for being late'
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**'News' with 'are' instead of 'is':**

'What <b>is</b> the latest news?'	'What <b>are</b> the latest news?'
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**Failure to capitalise days of the week and adjectives of nationality:**

‘See you on <b>Wednesday</b> ’	‘See you on <b>wednesday</b> ’
‘His behaviour is classically <b>British</b> ’	‘His behaviour is classically <b>british</b> ’

Homophones

**Beside and Besides**

Take a close look at these words and notice that one has a "s" on the end which changes the meaning.

**Beside:** *preposition*, near, next to, at the side of

I will stand beside you through good times or bad.  
She stood beside the fence gate.

**Besides:** in addition to, apart from, except  
It was the most popular book ever written, besides the Bible.  
Everyone besides Anna wanted to go swimming.

**pore and pour**

I recently read in a newspaper that "The police poured over the data of a crime looking for clues". We all know you can't pour over something, unless you are pouring a liquid over it. What they meant was pored which means to read or study.

**Pore:** *intransitive verb*; : to gaze intently, to read or study attentively —usually used with over, to reflect or meditate steadily.



She will pore over the book to get ready for the test.

**Pour:** *transitive verb*; to cause to flow in a stream, to dispense from a container  
to supply or produce freely or copiously  
to give full expression to : vent

*intransitive verb*; to move with a continuous flow , to rain hard, to move or come continuously, stream  
to score easily or freely (as in basketball) —used with in

The waiter will pour drinks for the guest while we serve the food.

Did the rain pour down hard in your area?

### **elicit and illicit**

Elicit and Illicit may sound the same when spoken but they have different spelling and meaning. Be careful when writing these words.

**elicit:** *verb*; to obtain, coax out, draw out, prompt

I could not elicit a response from her.

**illicit:** *adjective*; unlawful, forbidden, illegal

He is in jail for smuggling illicit drugs into the country.