

# 35

## COMMON MISTAKES ENGLISH LEARNERS MAKE

– AND HOW TO FIX THEM –



Understand why you make these mistakes, learn the correct structures and never look back.



## CORRECT 35 OF THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES ENGLISH LEARNERS MAKE

Here's the truth: you're probably making the same 35 mistakes that most English learners make, regardless of their level. And you know what? That's completely normal! Your brain naturally tries to apply patterns from other English structures or from your native language, which is often why these errors keep appearing in your speaking and writing.

But here's the exciting part: once you understand why these mistakes happen and learn the correct structures, you can eliminate them forever. This ebook gives you the story behind mistakes so the corrections actually stick in your brain for good.

### What You'll Learn

Inside these pages, you'll discover:

- ✓ 35 incredibly common mistakes that native speakers notice immediately
- ✓ Clear explanations of why your brain makes these errors (it's not your fault!)
- ✓ The correct structures with plenty of natural examples
- ✓ Bonus information, including pronunciation tips, cultural notes, related phrases and insights into tone and formality
- ✓ Quizzes after each lesson to test your new knowledge
- ✓ Extra grammar breakdowns for the tricky bits that need more attention

Every mistake you correct brings you closer to the confident, natural English you've been working towards. These 35 corrections might seem small individually, but together? They'll transform your English entirely!

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## Part 1

Part 1 of this ebook explores five incredibly common mistakes that students at all levels make constantly, like '**I think yes**', '**How is it called?**' and '**I'm married with...**' Once you understand why these mistakes happen (often due to direct translation) and learn the correct structures, your English will sound much more natural and grammatically accurate!

### 1 I think yes.

- I think yes. ✗
- I think **so**. ✓

#### Why does this happen?

It's usually the result of a direct translation from other languages but it's just not right in English! Instead, we usually say, '**I think so**'.

A: Is Katherine coming today?

B: **I think so**. ✓

You can also say '**Yes, I think she is**' or '**I think she is, yes**'.

'**Yes**' is optional in those sentences. But never: I think yes! Erase that phrase from the English-speaking section of your brain.



#### An extra note:

We don't say '**I think no**' in English either! We usually say '**I don't think so**'.

Does Mark eat meat?

- **I don't think so**. ✓
- (No,) I don't think he does. ✓
- I don't think he does(, no). ✓

We often add **should** for emphasis. We can also use other verbs, like **hope**:

- I **should hope** so/not.
- I **should think** so/not.

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A more formal phrase you can use is **I think not**. This expresses a negative opinion about a question someone just asked.

- Are you going to paint the living room blue?
- **I think not.**

## 2 How is it called?

- How is it called? **X**

### Why does this happen?

Again, this is most likely a direct translation from other languages, but we don't say it in English. We also don't say '**how do you call it?**' There are more common errors I often hear, like:

- How's it like? **X**
- I don't know how it is in English. **X**

Instead, we replace '**how**' with '**what**' in questions to ask for specific information about something or somebody.

- **What** is it called? **✓**
- **What** do you call it? **✓**
- **What's** it like? **✓**
- I don't know **what** it is in English. **✓**

Examples:

- **What's** that called?
- **What's** it called when you wake up but can't move your body for a short time?

We use **how** to ask in what way or in what manner.

- **How** does this machine work?
- **How** did they get here?

We can also use **how** to ask after someone's health.

- **How** are you?

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We have a fantastic word with 'what': **whatchamacallit**. Yes, it's in the dictionaries! We use this word when we can't think of the name of something or even someone.

**whatchamacallit** /'wɒtʃəmækəlit/

used when we can't think of the name of sth. or sb.

"I need a **whatchamacallit**... a whisk!"

## Names

Remember, when asking about someone or something's name, we also use '**what**'?

- **What's** she called?
- **What's** your car called?

## 3 Married with

- I'm married with Will. X
- I'm married **to** Will. ✓

To identify our husband or wife, we use the structure '**married to**'.

Examples:

- He's been **married to** Alice for 50 years.
- She got **married to** her long-term partner last week.

I hear a really common pronunciation mistake with 'married'. Lots of my students say MARR-ee-id with 3 syllables, but it should be MARR-id, with 2:

→ **married** /'mærid/

We can also say we're **married to something** figuratively. This means someone is extremely committed to something and so involved with it that they don't have time for anything else.

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- Ellie's **married to** her job. (She works all the time.)

## Married with

Now, '**married with**' isn't always incorrect. You'll see '**married with children**' as a phrase. This means a person is married and has children.

- Ken's **married with** 3 children. (He is married to someone and he has 3 children.)

It's very important not to mix up 'married to' and 'married with' in this case.

## ④ Explain me

- She explained me the rules. ✗
- Can you explain him how this works? ✗

'Explain me' or 'him' isn't right. Explain is not generally followed directly by a person, whether that's an object pronoun, like 'me' or 'him' or a noun referring to a person. We'd never say:

- She explained John the rules. ✗
- He explains people the history of the building. ✗

## Explain + noun

You can explain something, so explain can be followed by a noun that is not a person.

- She **explained the rules**. ('The rules' is the direct object.)
- Pete **explains difficult concepts** clearly. (We can use adjectives before the noun, like in 'difficult concepts'.)

## Explain to

If you want to mention a person, you can '**explain to somebody**'.

- It's hard to **explain to** people who aren't in the industry.

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Often, there's a noun after 'explain'. For example:

- She **explained** the situation to us.
- Will you **explain** it to me? ('It' is an object pronoun, but it refers to a thing, not a person.)

## Explain: no object

Explain can be intransitive, meaning it doesn't always require an object.

- Please, let me **explain!** (Not, let me explain you! ✗)

## Explain + clause

We can follow 'explain' with a clause beginning with the words '**how**', '**who**', '**where**', '**what**', '**when**' or '**why**'.

- The boss **explained** who each person is and what they do.
- Please **explain** why you haven't finished yet.

## Explain + to

We also have the structure '**explain to somebody what, who, how**', and so on.

- Ian **explained** to us what he was doing.

## Explain + that clause

And we can use **explain + that clause**.

- He **explained** that he hadn't been feeling well.

## 5 I don't know where is it.

- I don't know where is Diego. ✗
- I don't know where Diego is. ✓

The problem is with the word order. It should be '**I don't know where Diego is**'. Most of my students see 'where' or another similar wh-question word and immediately switch the subject-verb order of the words after it from a statement to a question.

- Where is Diego?

But, with '**I don't know**' at the beginning, the sentence becomes an indirect or embedded question and we should have a statement word order, subject + verb:

- I don't know where Diego is.

## Indirect Questions: Examples

- I don't know who **she was**.
- I wonder who's **coming**.

We don't use a question mark when the introductory phrase has a subject-verb word order. This is the case with '**I don't know**' and '**I wonder**'.

We can also use introductory phrases like '**Do you know**' or '**Could you tell me**' to create indirect questions. We use a question mark because the introductory phrases have a question word order: verb + subject.

Here are a couple of examples:

- **Do you know where** **Helena is?** (not **where is Helena**)
- **Could you tell me what time** **it is?** (not **what time is it**)



## Quiz

For each question, choose the correct answer from the options provided.

### 1. Which sentence is correct?

- a) How is this device called?
- b) What do you call this device?
- c) How do you call this device?

### 2. Which of these sentences uses the correct structure?

- a) I think yes, she'll be there.
- b) I don't think no.
- c) I don't think so.

### 3. Which sentence uses "explain" correctly?

- a) Can you explain me the process?
- b) She explained to me why it happened.
- c) He explained us everything.

### 4. Which sentence has the correct word order?

- a) I don't know what time is it.
- b) Do you know where is the station?
- c) Could you tell me where the library is?

### 5. Which of these sentences is incorrect?

- a) I'm married to a doctor.
- b) She's married with two children.
- c) They're married with each other.

### 6. Which answer uses correct grammar?

"Is Sam joining us for dinner?"

- a) Yes, I think he is.
- b) I think yes.
- c) I think no, he isn't.

### 7. Which sentence uses the correct preposition?

- a) Mark has been married with Sarah for ten years.
- b) They got married to each other last summer.
- c) She's married with her career.

### 8. What's wrong with this sentence?

"Please explain me how this works."

- a) "Works" should be "work".
- b) It should be "explain to me", not "explain me".
- c) "How" should be replaced with "what".

### Answers:

1. b, 2. c, 3. b, 4. c, 5. c, 6. a, 7. b, 8. b

## Part 2

In Part 2 of this ebook, we're continuing our journey through the most common English mistakes with five errors I hear constantly: **depend vs depend on**, **fun vs funny**, **British English greetings**, **listen vs listen to** and the tricky difference between **lose**, **miss**, and **waste**. Your brain naturally tries to apply patterns from your native language or gets similar English words tangled up, and that's completely normal! Once you understand why these mistakes happen and learn the correct structures, you'll eliminate them forever.

### 1 depend

- It depend of the weather. ✗
- It depends on the weather. ✓

First, we have a problem with the verb. Remember, with **he**, **she** and **it** we usually add **-s** to the verb. So, we should have '**depends'** /dɪ'pendz/.

And the preposition 'of' is also incorrect. We need to use the preposition '**on**' - It depends on.

I strongly recommend learning this as a chunk, so learn all 3 words together: **it depends on**.

This phrase can be followed by a **noun**, like **weather**, or a clause starting with a word like '**how**', '**who**' or '**where**'.

- **It depends on** who is coming.

In informal English, it's common to drop '**on**' before **wh-words** and '**how**'.

- **It depends** where you're going.

In formal English, you should always use '**on**' or '**upon**' - that's another option, though it's less common and more formal.

- **It depends upon** how much funding the project receives.

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In answers to questions, we can simply say '**It depends**' or even just '**depends**' in casual conversation, missing the subject altogether.

- Are you coming tonight?
  - **It depends.** I'll see how I feel.  
or
    - Hmm, **depends.** I'm pretty tired.

We can also say '**Something depends on...**'

- **The success of the project depends on** who'll be managing it.
- **Whether we go hiking tomorrow depends on** the weather.

The adjective form is '**dependent**' and it also takes the preposition 'on':

- **The price of the tour is dependent on** how many people sign up.

Be careful! Don't say 'The price of the tour is depend on...'.  
The correct form is 'dependent'.

## 2 Fun vs Funny

**Which of these sentences is more likely?**

- My holiday in Greece was really funny and I didn't want it to end.
- We watched a comedy show yesterday. It was really funny.

The second one, of course! '**Funny**' /'fʌni/ means making you laugh, like a comedy show. Another example:

- Stephen's so **funny!** He's always making us laugh.

**Funny** also means strange, unexpected or difficult to explain.



- That's **funny**, he was here a moment ago and now he's disappeared!
- The **funny** thing is, she didn't even want to move there and now she loves it!

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In informal English, 'fun' is used as an adjective to describe something that you enjoy, so you could say:

- My holiday in Greece was really fun.

'Fun' /fʌn/ is more often used as an uncountable noun, meaning that something or someone is entertaining or enjoyable. You might say:

- My holiday in Greece was so much fun!
- We had great fun together at the fair.

You'll often hear,

- Have fun! → meaning 'Enjoy yourself!'

But we never say, 'Have funny!'.

## 3 Fine

- Are you fine? ✗

Grammatically, this question is ok, but it's **not something British English speakers say** when asking how someone is or how they feel. In other varieties of English, it might be more common, so listen out for it!

But in British English, we usually say:

- How are you?
- How are you doing?
- How's it going?

### Why does this happen?

People often say 'Are you fine?' because the common answer to 'How are you?' is '**I'm fine, thanks**'. We tend to use 'fine' in positive answers rather than questions. Here's a correct example:

- How's your wrist? I heard you sprained it.
  - It's **fine** now, thanks.

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- I hope you're fine.

'I hope your fine' is another common mistake. I see it a lot in emails. People usually want to say, 'I hope you're **well**.' As in,

- Hi Lucy,  
I hope you're **well**. I'm writing...

## 4 Listen

- You have to listen your teacher!
- You have to listen **to** your teacher!

I often see students leave out the preposition '**to**' in this kind of sentence. But – whether you like it or not – you have to **listen to** your teacher. We listen to somebody or something. We can't just listen somebody.

- I love **listening to** music while I'm exercising. → 'listening music'
- Sorry, I wasn't **listening to** you. → 'listening you'   
[ Also correct = Sorry, I wasn't **listening**. ]

Make sure you don't forget to add **to** after adverbs too:

- Now, **listen** very carefully. **to** what your mother's saying.

### Why the confusion?

Some of the confusion might come from the fact that we do 'hear something or someone'. We don't use '**to**' there.

- I can't **hear** you.
- Can you **hear** the birdsong?



**hear + someone or something**

**listen + to + someone or something**

## 5 Lose / Miss / Waste

Use each of these verbs once to complete the gaps [lost, wastes, missed]:

- I can't believe we \_\_\_\_\_ our flight yesterday.
- We were late because we \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of time scraping ice off the car.
- Every day, she \_\_\_\_\_ so much time scrolling on social media.

The first one should be '**missed**'.

- I can't believe we **missed** our flight yesterday.

The second should be '**lost**'.

- We were late because we **lost** a lot of time scraping ice off the car.

The third should be '**wastes**'.

- Every day, she **wastes** so much time scrolling on social media.

## Lose vs Miss

Let's look at '**lose**' /lu:z/ and '**miss**' /mɪs/ as a pair first.

So many of my students tell me they 'lost their flight' when they mean the flight took off or left without them; **this is a mistake**.

We use '**miss**' when we are or we arrive too late for something.

We **miss** -

- trains
- buses
- planes
- the start of films
- deadlines

- We **missed** the beginning of the film because we **missed** the bus!

'**Lose**' isn't used with this meaning.

## Lose Time vs Waste Time

But '**lose time**' and '**waste time**' can both be correct. And if you look in learner's dictionaries, you'll often see 'waste' defined as 'lose' and vice versa! There is a lot of crossover, but sometimes, one is more appropriate than the other.

Here's something I hear a lot:

- She **loses a lot of time** on social media.

What they really mean is:

- She **wastes a lot of time** on social media.

If you waste time, you use your time badly. There's a sense that you are in control of how you spend your time and you choose to do something unproductive. Another example:

- Don't **waste time** arguing with him; he's already made up his mind.  
(Don't spend your time doing something unproductive.)

You can also say it's **a waste of time**.

We'll look at our example sentence with '**lose**' again.

- We were late because we **lost a lot of time** scraping ice off the car.

Were they using their time badly when they were scraping ice off their car? No, it was a productive thing to do! You can't see if your car's covered in ice.

If you lose time, time is taken away from you, perhaps because of delays, problems or accidents. The situation is often out of your control. Here's another example:

- We **lost time** when the computer system crashed and had to be restarted.

Let's see a couple of pairs of sentences to cement the difference:

- They **lost time** during the meeting because the video link kept cutting out. (This was out of their control.)

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- They **wasted time** discussing things that weren't on the agenda. (This was within someone's control.)
- We **lost half an hour** during the flight due to turbulence.
- The passengers **wasted 10 minutes** complaining instead of trying to rebook their missed flight.



## Quiz

For each question, choose the correct answer from the options provided.

### 1. Which sentence is correct?

- a) It depend of her mood.
- b) It depends on her mood.
- c) It depending from her mood.

### 2. Which sentence uses "funny" correctly?

- a) That comedian is really funny. Everyone laughed the whole evening.
- b) Our trip to the beach was funny. We swam and ate ice cream.
- c) The board game was funny to play with friends.

### 3. Which question sounds natural in British English?

- a) Are you fine or still angry?
- b) Are you fine?
- c) How are you?

### 4. Which sentence uses the verb "listen" correctly?

- a) He listens carefully to instructions in class.
- b) He listens the instructions in class.
- c) He's listening music at the moment.

### 5. Which of these sentences is correct?

- a) We lost the train because we arrived late.
- b) We missed the train because we arrived late.
- c) We wasted the train because we arrived late.

### 6. Which answer is correct?

"Was the party fun?"

- a) Yes, it was really funny!
- b) Yes, it was so much fun!
- c) Yes, it was much funny!

### 7. Which sentence uses "lose" correctly?

- a) They lost time when the printer stopped working.
- b) They wasted time when the printer stopped working.
- c) They missed time when the printer stopped working.

### 8. Which sentence is correct?

- a) It depends of who calls first.
- b) It depend on who calls first.
- c) It depends on who calls first.

### Answers:

1. b, 2. a, 3. c, 4. a, 5. b, 6. b, 7. a, 8. c

## Part 3

In Part 3, we're tackling five sneaky errors that trip up even confident English speakers! You'll master **compound adjectives** (no more "two hours drive"!), finally understand **despite vs in spite of**, learn the crucial difference between **say and tell**, stop confusing **win and earn** and discover when to use **meet, get to know and know**. These mistakes are so common, sometimes because this specific type of nuance doesn't exist in other languages, but once you correct them, your English will sound much more natural and polished!

### 1 Compound Adjectives

- It's a two hours drive.
- It's a **two-hour** drive.

This first one is a bit tricky because there are actually two mistakes! 'Two hours' describes the drive - it's an **adjective**.

**Do we pluralise adjectives in English?**  
No!

We remove the **-s**. I know the number two (or anything higher) tricks your brain into adding an **-s**, but resist!

And in writing, we should have a hyphen between two and hour.

- It's a **two-hour** drive.

You can say, "**The drive takes two hours.**" Two hours is a noun phrase here, not an adjective.

Here are some similar mistakes my students have made in the past:

- That's a five minutes walk away.
- That's a **five-minute** walk away.
- We had a three weeks holiday in Spain.
- We had a **three-week** holiday in Spain.

- I've got a fifty pounds note. ✗
- I've got a **fifty-pound** note. ✓

We don't pluralise an adjective when we describe things like duration, distance or amount, no matter how high the number goes!

## 2 In Spite / Despite

- Kyle enjoyed the holiday despite of the rainy weather. ✗
- Kyle enjoyed the holiday **in spite of** the rainy weather. ✓

The expressions '**in spite of**' and '**despite**' are used to say that something surprising happens or is true. In the example above, we need 'in spite of' but just 'despite' - no of. We could change that first sentence to:

- Kyle enjoyed the holiday **despite** the rainy weather. ✓

'In spite of' is slightly more informal than 'despite'. Another example:

- **Despite** being afraid of heights, Ravi still went skydiving.
- **In spite of** being afraid of heights, Ravi still went skydiving.

We tend to use these 3 patterns after in spite of and despite:

in spite of / despite + noun	in spite of / despite + -ing verb	in spite of / despite + the fact that + clause
"We slept well despite the noise from the street below."	"He enjoyed the party in spite of not knowing many people."	"She passed the exam despite the fact that she hadn't studied much."

## 3 Say

- She said me she was tired. ✗
- She **said she was** tired. ✓

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The very common mistake we have here is using '**say me**'. We don't say somebody something. We can easily correct this sentence by removing 'me'.

Or, we could change 'said' to 'told' and keep 'me'.

- She **told me she was** tired.

We tend to '**say something**' but '**tell somebody something**'.

So, now I think you can correct this sentence:

- He **didn't say me** where he was going.

- He **didn't say** where he was going.

- He **didn't tell me** where he was going.

But if you want to talk about a person with 'say', use the preposition '**to**':

- We **said** goodbye **to everyone** before we left.
- What **did** you just **say to me**?

So, some of the most common structures are:

**say something**

**say who, what, where, etc.**

**say something to somebody**

## 4 Win vs Earn

- She **wins** a good salary.
- She **earns** a good salary.

So many students confuse these words, often because there's only one word in their first language. My students tend to use 'win' too often and seem to forget about 'earn'.

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We generally use **win** /wɪn/ when we get something because of luck or in a competition.

- Heather **won** £10 on the lottery.
- We **won** first prize in the baking competition.

We use **earn** /ɜːn/ when we get money from a job.

- Heather **earns** £30,000 a year as a teacher.

Or to say we make a profit from a business or investment.

- The company **earned** \$4 million last year.

'**Win**' and '**earn**' have more closely related meanings, too.

## to win

to get sth. you want, particularly because of the effort you put in.

- Kelly **won** a lot of support by promising lower taxes.
- We **won** the contract despite stiff competition.

## to earn

to get sth., you deserve

- After running 20 kilometres, she'd definitely **earned** a rest.
- The team **earned** the right to play in the final.

Sometimes, we can use '**win**' and '**earn**' with little or no difference in meaning, particularly with words like '**trust**', '**respect**' or '**reputation**'. A couple of examples:

- He **won** the respect of his colleagues with his brave speech.
- Alex **has earned** a reputation for being reliable.

## 5 Meet vs Get To Know vs Know

### to meet

to see or be introduced to sb. for the first time

### to get to know

to gradually become familiar with sb. / sth.

### to know

to be familiar with sb. / sth.

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• I <b>met</b> my husband at a party.	• I <b>got to know</b> him over the next few months.	• I already <b>knew</b> his brother because he was in my class at school.
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A common mistake I hear from my students when they're going or have been on holiday is this:

- I **met** the culture.
- I **knew** the culture.

We don't **meet** 'something' in this context. And '**know'** is simply the wrong word choice, as it sounds like you had complete knowledge of the culture.

My students usually mean to say this:

- I **got to know** the culture.   
(I gradually became more familiar with it.)

We could say:

- I **met** lots of new people and **got to know** the culture.

I also hear my students saying things like this:

- I **know** him more and more.

We would usually use '**get to know**' again here:

- I'm **getting to know** him.
- I'm **getting to know** him better.

Those are the most natural ways to say that you're becoming more familiar with someone.



## Quiz

For each question, choose the correct answer from the options provided.

**1. Which sentence is correct?**

- a) It's a three hours drive to the coast.
- b) It's a three-hour drive to the coast.
- c) It's a three-hours drive to the coast.

**2. Which sentence uses 'earn' correctly?**

- a) He earns a good salary as an engineer.
- b) He earned first prize in the competition.
- c) She earned the lottery last week.

**3. Complete the gap with the best option:**

Did you say something \_\_\_\_\_ me?

- a) at
- b) --
- c) to

**4. Which sentence uses 'waste' correctly?**

- a) They wasted a lot of time arguing instead of working.
- b) They wasted the train because they arrived late.
- c) They wasted time when the computer crashed.

**5. Which sentence is correct?**

- a) She won the respect of her team.
- b) He wins £50,000 a year as a doctor.
- c) I win my salary every month.

**6. Complete the gap with the best option:**

"Over the next year, I \_\_\_\_\_ the city and all its hidden gems."

- a) met
- b) got to know
- c) knew

**7. Which of these sentences is incorrect?**

- a) I met her at university in 2019.
- b) I got to know her over the following months.
- c) I knew the local culture during my trip.

**8. Which sentence is correct?**

- a) Despite of the poor service, we had a great time.
- b) In spite the poor service, we had a great time.
- c) Despite the poor service, we had a great time.

**Answers:**

1. b, 2. a, 3. c, 4. a, 5. a, 6. b, 7. c, 8. c

## Part 4

In Part 4, we're tackling five mistakes I hear constantly from students at all levels: **confusing '-ing' and '-ed' adjectives**, using **unnecessary prepositions** with time expressions and verbs and getting **comparatives** wrong. These simple corrections will make your English sound significantly more natural and accurate!

### 1 Boring vs Bored

- I'm so boring.
- I'm so **bored**.

This is by far one of the most common mistakes English learners make! The confusion comes from not clearly understanding the difference between **-ing** and **-ed adjectives** (participle adjectives).

**-ed adjectives** describe how a person feels:

- I'm **bored**. (I feel boredom.)
- She's **interested**. (She feels interest.)
- They're **excited**. (They feel excitement.)

**-ing adjectives** describe what **causes** the feeling:

- This film is **boring**. (The film causes boredom.)
- The lesson was **interesting**. (The lesson creates interest.)
- The news is **exciting**. (The news causes excitement.)

Examples:

- I'm **bored** because this meeting is so **boring**.
- The students were **confused** by the **confusing** instructions.
- We're **tired** after that **tiring** journey.



**Important:** Unless you're describing your personality as dull and uninteresting, don't say "I'm **boring**!"

## Bored with vs Bored by vs Bored of

All three are acceptable, but there are some differences:

**Bored with** - common structure

- I'm **bored with** this book.
- She's **bored with** her job.

**Bored by** - slightly more formal, emphasises what causes the boredom

- I was **bored by** the lecture.
- They're **bored by** repetitive tasks.

**Bored of** - very common (though some consider it grammatically incorrect)

- I'm **bored of** doing the same thing every day.
- He's **bored of** that game already.

## 2 On next Monday

- I'll see you on next Monday. X
- I'll see you **next Monday**. ✓

### Why does this happen?

This mistake happens because students are so used to using '**on**' with days of the week! After all, we say '**on Monday**', '**on Tuesday**', '**on Friday**', so it feels natural to add '**on**' before '**next Monday**' too, right?

Well, here's the thing: words like **next**, **last**, **this**, **every** and **each** already tell us when something happens, so they replace the preposition. The preposition becomes unnecessary.

Examples:

- I'm visiting my parents **next weekend**. (not **on next weekend** X)
- She started her new job **last month**. (not **in last month** X)
- Are you free **this Friday**? (not **on this Friday** X)
- We have meetings **every Monday**. (not **on every Monday** X)

## Prepositions of Time: Overview

Here is an overview of how we use three prepositions of time:

<b>on</b> = days, dates, special days	<b>at</b> = times, holiday periods, specific moments	<b>in</b> = months, years, decades, centuries, seasons, longer periods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on Monday</li> <li>• on the 15th of March</li> <li>• on my birthday</li> <li>• on Christmas Day</li> <li>• on Christmas Eve</li> <li>• on New Year's Eve</li> <li>• on the weekend (NAmE)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at 3 o'clock</li> <li>• at midnight</li> <li>• at sunrise</li> <li>• at lunchtime</li> <li>• at Christmas (the holiday period)</li> <li>• at Easter</li> <li>• at the weekend (BrE)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in January</li> <li>• in 2025</li> <li>• in the 1990s</li> <li>• in the 21st century</li> <li>• in summer / in the summer</li> <li>• in the morning / in the afternoon</li> </ul>

⚠ at night (not **in** the night)

One key difference:



**British English:** I'll see you **at the weekend.** ✓

**North American English:** I'll see you **on the weekend.** ✓

Both are correct in their respective regions!

## 3 Discuss about

- We need to discuss about the proposal. ✗
- We need to **discuss the proposal.** ✓

It can be tempting to add 'about' after the verb 'discuss' but it is not necessary. '**Discuss**' is a transitive verb - it already includes the meaning of 'talk about'.

This mistake often happens because in many languages, you need an extra word (like 'about') after a verb like 'discuss'. And students transfer 'about' from the verb 'to talk'.

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Examples:

- Let's **discuss your ideas.** ✓
- They **discussed the budget** in the meeting. ✓
- We need to **discuss what happened.** ✓
- Can we **discuss this** later? ✓

## Compare with similar verbs:

<b>to discuss</b> + direct object (no preposition)	<b>to talk about</b> + object	<b>to speak about</b> + object
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We <b>discussed</b> the problem.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We <b>talked about</b> the problem.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• She <b>spoke about</b> her experience.</li></ul>

## 4 More better

- This phone is more better than my old one. ✗
- This phone **is better than** my old one. ✓

This mistake is so common because students are applying the regular comparative rule to an irregular adjective.

Here's what's happening in your brain: you've learnt that for many long regular adjectives, you add '**more**' to make comparatives:

- beautiful → **more** beautiful
- expensive → **more** expensive

But, when we have an **irregular comparative adjective** (better, worse, less), we cannot use 'more'. Like in our example sentence, 'better' is already the comparative form of 'good', so adding 'more' is redundant (and incorrect!) - it's like saying 'more more good'.

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## Irregular Comparatives and Superlatives:

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
far	farther/further	farthest/furthest

### Examples:

- Your English is getting **better** every day.
- This loaf of bread is **worse** than the last one I made.
- Manchester is **further** from London than Oxford is.

## Regular Comparatives Review:

For most adjectives:

### Short adjectives (1 syllable): add -er / -est

- cheap → cheaper → cheapest
- fast → faster → fastest

### Long adjectives (2+ syllables): use more / most

- expensive → more expensive → most expensive
- beautiful → more beautiful → most beautiful

### Two-syllable adjectives ending in -y: change -y to -ier / -iest

- happy → happier → happiest
- easy → easier → easiest

### Never combine both forms:

- more easier, more happier, most fastest

## 5 I hadn't got time

- I hadn't got time to finish the report. X
- I **didn't have time** to finish the report. ✓

**'Have got'** is common in British English. It's only used in the present tense.  
**'Had got'** is not correct.

The past forms are '**had**' or '**didn't have**'.

### Present vs Past:

#### Present - Both forms are acceptable (British English):

- I **don't have** time right now. ✓
- I **haven't got** time right now. ✓ (more informal, BrE)

Both mean the same and are interchangeable in British English.

**\*Note:** In North American English, "have got" is rarely used and sounds odd. Americans would almost always say: "I don't have time."

#### Past tense:

- I **didn't have** time yesterday. ✓
- I hadn't got time yesterday. X

#### Why?

'Have got' is a present tense form used for possession, relationships, necessity, etc. and it does not have a past tense equivalent.

Present Forms (British English):	Correct Past Forms:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I <b>haven't got</b> a pen. Can I borrow yours?</li> <li>She's <b>got</b> a black car.</li> <li>We've <b>got to</b> go.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I <b>didn't have</b> a pen with me yesterday.</li> <li>She <b>had</b> a black car.</li> <li>We <b>had to</b> go.</li> </ul>



## Quiz

For each question, choose the correct answer from the options provided.

### 1. Which sentence is correct?

- a) I'm boring when I have nothing to do.
- b) I'm bored when I have nothing to do.
- c) I'm boring of having nothing to do.

### 2. Which sentence is correct?

- a) I'll see you on next Friday.
- b) I'll see you next Friday.
- c) I'll see you in next Friday.

### 3. Complete the sentence correctly:

"We always have a meeting \_\_\_\_\_ Monday morning."

- a) on
- b) at
- c) in

### 4. Which sentence uses the correct superlative form?

- a) That was the most bad experience ever.
- b) That was the more worse experience ever.
- c) That was the worst experience ever.

### 5. Which answer is correct?

"Do you like cats?"

- a) No, I don't like.
- b) No, I not.
- c) No, I don't.

### 6. Which sentence are you most likely to hear in British English?

- a) I'll see you at the weekend.
- b) I'll see you in the weekend.
- c) I'll see you on the weekend.

### 7. Which sentence is correct?

- a) I didn't have time to finish this yesterday.
- b) I hadn't got time to finish this yesterday.
- c) I haven't got time to finish this yesterday.

### 8. Complete the sentence correctly:

"We're having dinner at Fred's house \_\_\_\_\_ Christmas Day this year."

- a) at
- b) in
- c) on

### Answers:

1. b, 2. b, 3. a, 4. c, 5. c, 6. a, 7. a, 8. c

## Part 5

In Part 5, we're fixing five errors that can make even advanced learners sound less fluent than they really are! You'll learn why '**according to me**' doesn't work (and what to say instead), how to **talk about parties** correctly, why '**I'm agree'** is wrong, when **NOT to use prepositions** with 'home' and the tricky rule about '**one of the best**'. Master these corrections and you'll sound more natural immediately!

### 1 According to me

- According to me, this is the best solution. ✗
- **In my opinion**, this is the best solution. ✓
- **I think** this is the best solution. ✓

Let's talk about this first mistake. It's one I hear all the time! So if you have been saying 'according to me', I don't blame you.

'**According to**' is used to cite other people or sources of information, not yourself. It's a way of referencing what someone else said or what's written somewhere.

When you want to express your own opinion, use phrases like:

- In my opinion...
- I think / We believe...
- From my perspective...
- To me (often at the end)...
- As far as I'm / we're concerned...

#### Correct usage of "According to":

According to + someone else / a source:

- **According to the weather forecast**, it'll rain tomorrow.
- **According to my doctor**, I need more exercise.
- **According to recent studies**, sleep is crucial for learning.

## Expressing your opinion - Alternatives:

### Informal:

- **I think** it's a great idea.
- **I reckon** we should leave early. (British English)
- **I'd say** that's the best option.

### Neutral:

- **In my opinion**, we need more time.
- **In my view**, this is essential.
- **From my perspective**, both options have merit.
- The design looks outdated **to me**.

### Formal:

- **It is my belief** that this approach will succeed.
- **As far as I'm concerned**, the matter is settled.

## 2 Make a Party

- We're making a party for Sarah's birthday. **✗**
- We're **having a party** for Sarah's birthday. **✓**
- We're **throwing a party** for Sarah's birthday. **✓**

In English, we don't '**make**' parties! This is a direct translation error from many languages. But English uses different verbs. We think of parties as events we **have** or **throw**, not things we construct or create. It's one of those collocations that just doesn't translate directly.

The confusion also comes from the fact that we do use 'make' with lots of other things:

- make dinner **✓**
- make plans **✓**
- make arrangements **✓**
- make preparations **✓**

## Correct collocations with "party":

**have a party** - most common, neutral

- We're **having a party** next Saturday.
- They **had a party** to celebrate their anniversary.
- Are you **having a party** for your graduation?

**throw a party** - more informal, sometimes suggests being done on behalf of someone else

- Let's **throw a party** for her promotion!
- They **threw a huge party** at their new house.
- We should **throw a surprise party** for Mum.

## Other party-related expressions:

- **go to a party** → I'm going to a party tonight.
- **attend a party** → (more formal) Will you be attending the party?
- **host a party** → They're hosting a party at their flat.
- **organise a party** → Who's organising the party?
- **plan a party** → We're planning a party for next month.



Here are some alternative ways to talk about gatherings:

**have a little celebration**

- We're just having a little celebration at home.

**have a get-together**

- We're having a get-together this weekend.

**have people over/round (NAmE: around)**

- We're having some friends round on Friday.

## 3 I'm agree

- I'm agree with you. **✗**
- I **agree** with you. **✓**

# 35 COMMON MISTAKES ENGLISH LEARNERS MAKE

- Are you agree?
- Do you agree?

Unfortunately, you can't 'be agree' because 'agree' is a verb, not an adjective! You cannot use '**to be**' (**am/is/are**) before 'agree'.

This mistake often happens because:

1. Students think 'agree' is an adjective. It's perhaps because it's not used in continuous tenses because it is a state verb.
2. The structure **I am + adjective** is so common that your brain automatically wants to use it!

Think about it:

- I am **happy**. (adjective)
- I **agree**. (verb)
- I am **agree**. (mixing the verb with 'be')

## Correct usage:

### Present Simple:

- She **agrees** that it's expensive.
- We **agree** on most things.

### Past Simple:

- I **agreed** with everything he said.
- We **agreed** to meet at six.

### Past Perfect

- We'd already **agreed** to go to the party before we were invited elsewhere.

## Agreement Structures:

### Agree with + someone/something

- I agree with Sarah.
- Do you agree with this approach?

### Agree on/about + something

- We agree on the main points.
- They can't agree about the budget.

## Agree to + something/do something

- She agreed to help us.
- They agreed to the terms.

## Agree that + clause

- I agree that we need more time.
- Everyone agrees that it's a problem.

## Formal alternative - "In agreement":

If you want to use 'to be', you can say 'in agreement' (more formal):

- We **are in agreement** on this matter.
- They **were in agreement** about the changes.
- **Are you in agreement** with the proposal?

This is much more formal and typically used in business or official contexts.

## 4 Go to home

- I'm going to home now. X
- I'm **going home** now. ✓

Why is 'to' wrong here?

'**Home**' is special. When we use 'home' with verbs of movement, like 'go' and 'come', 'home' is an adverb, not a noun. We don't use a preposition like 'to'.

### Correct:

- go home
- go to school / go to work / go to the park

### Explanation:

- ✓ 'Home' functions like an adverb.
- ✓ These are nouns and need 'to'.

## Correct usage with 'home':

- I'm **going home.**
- Let's **go home.**
- He **came home** late.
- We're **driving home.**

## Compare with school/work:

- I'm **going to school.** ✓
- She's **going to work.** ✓
- We **drove to work.** ✓
- He **came to the office.** ✓

## 5 One of the best place

- This is one of the best place I know. ✗
- This is one of the best places I know. ✓

When you use 'one of', you're talking about one member of a group. **The group must be plural!**

This mistake is super common because students focus on the word 'one' and think: "one = singular, so I need a singular noun!"

You can only refer to **one of** multiple things, so the noun following it has to be plural.

Think about it:

- If I say "**This is one of the best places,**" I'm saying there are several best places and this is one of them. ✓
- I can't say "**This is one of the best place**" (singular) because it doesn't make sense! ✗

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**The rule:**  
one of the + superlative + plural noun

Let's break it down:

- one of = suggests multiple things (you're selecting from a group)
- the best = superlative (comparing within a group)
- places = must be plural (there are many places, and this is one of them)

**Examples:**

- She's **one of the smartest students** in the class.
- This is **one of the most beautiful views** I've ever seen.
- That was **one of the worst flights** I've experienced.



## Quiz

For each question, choose the correct answer from the options provided.

### 1. Complete the sentence correctly:

"\_\_\_\_\_ the weather forecast, it's going to rain tomorrow."

- a) According to
- b) In my opinion
- c) To me

### 2. Which sentence is correct?

- a) We're making a party for Sarah's birthday.
- b) We're having a party for Sarah's birthday.
- c) We're doing a party for Sarah's birthday.

### 3. Complete the sentence correctly:

"I \_\_\_\_\_ with your point about the deadline."

- a) am agree
- b) agree
- c) agreeing

### 4. Which sentence is not correct?

- a) She goes to school from Monday to Friday.
- b) I'm going home now.
- c) They're going to the home now.

### 5. Which sentence uses the correct structure?

- a) We are in agreement on this matter.
- b) We are agree on this matter.
- c) We agreeing on this matter.

### 6. Which sentence is correct?

- a) He's one of the nicest person I know.
- b) He's one of the nicest people I know.
- c) He's one of the nicer person I know.

### 7. Complete the sentence correctly:

"That seems wrong \_\_\_\_\_. "

- a) according to me
- b) to me
- c) in my according

### 8. Which sentence is correct?

- a) I'm going to work and then I'll go home.
- b) I'm going to home and then I'll go work.
- c) I'm going to home to work.

### Answers:

1.a, 2.b, 3.b, 4.c, 5.a, 6.b, 7.b, 8.a

## Part 6

In Part 6, we're tackling five more mistakes that you're probably making! You'll master where to place **adverbs like 'probably'**, understand the surprising word order rules with '**quite**' and '**very**', learn whether to use '**last three**' or '**three last**', discover which relative pronouns work with words like '**everything**' and finally understand the difference between '**I cut my hair**' and '**I had my hair cut**'. These corrections will add real polish to your English!

### ① Probably, I'll go out tonight.

- Probably, I'll go out tonight. **X**
- I'll **probably** go out tonight. **✓**

This first mistake is related to adverb position. Some **adverbs of certainty** (probably, possibly, certainly, definitely, surely) can take the mid-position in a sentence. This means that they should usually be placed before the main verb.

Let's look at this a bit deeper.

#### The Mid-Position Rule

Adverbs of certainty typically go:

##### Before the main verb:

- I **probably** need more time.
- She **definitely** wants to come.

##### After 'to be':

- It's **probably** too late now.
- She **is certainly** the best candidate.

##### After the auxiliary verb:

- I **will probably** see you later.
- He **has definitely** finished the report.

# 35 COMMON MISTAKES ENGLISH LEARNERS MAKE



Other adverbs, like '**maybe**' and '**perhaps**', often appear at the beginning of a sentence or sometimes at the end after a comma:

- **Maybe** I'll go out tonight. ✓
- Do you need some help, **perhaps**? ✓

You can use these words on their own to answer questions:

- A: Are you coming to the party?  
B: **Probably.** ✓ / Yeah, **probably.** ✓
- A: Do you think it'll rain?  
B: **Possibly.** ✓
- A: You promise you'll be there?  
B: **Definitely!** ✓

## 2 It's a quite big house

- It's a quite big house. ✗
- It's **quite a big** house. ✓

Learners often copy the position of '**very**', assuming '**quite**' behaves the same way but it doesn't!

With **very**, we say:

✓ It's a **very big** house.

With **quite**, the word order changes:

✓ It's **quite a big** house.

So '**quite**' goes before the article (a/an), not after it.

quite + a/an + adjective + noun

- She's **quite a talented** musician. ✓
- That was **quite an interesting** lecture. ✓

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'Very', 'really' and 'pretty' follow this more common word order:

a/an + very + adjective + noun

- She's a **very talented** musician. ✓
- That was a **pretty interesting** lecture. ✓

Without articles (no noun):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It's <b>quite big</b>. ✓</li><li>• She's <b>quite talented</b>. ✓</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It's <b>very big</b>. ✓</li><li>• She's <b>really talented</b>. ✓</li></ul> |
|---|---|

## 3 The three last biscuits.

- The three last biscuits are yours. ✗
- The **last three** biscuits are yours. ✓
- The two first chapters are quite slow. ✗
- The **first two** chapters are quite slow. ✓

Many learners simply translate from their first language because in several languages, **last** or **first** follows the number. But in English, the order is usually reversed:

**first, last, next, previous + number + noun**

- The **first two** hours were boring.
- The **last three** biscuits are mine.
- I enjoyed the **first five** minutes.
- The **last ten** years have been incredible.



We also say **the last few months**, not the few last months, and **the next several years**, not the several next years.

- We've been working on this for **the last few months**.

## Why this order?

Think about how you're organising information:

- You're identifying **which** (first/last) → then **how many** (two, three)
- 'Last' or 'first' is the primary qualifier, the number is secondary

### More examples:

- She read the **first twenty** pages last night.
- The **first few** months were the hardest.
- I've been busy for the **last four** weeks.
- The **last several** attempts have failed.

## ④ I saw everything which happened.

- I saw everything which happened. ✗
- I saw everything what happened. ✗
- I saw everything **that** happened. ✓

Learners often mix up **that**, **which** and **what** because they can all introduce clauses but they don't work the same way.

After words like **everything**, **something**, **anything**, **nothing**, **all**, **little**, **much** and **none**, we tend to use the relative pronoun '**that**' to introduce defining relative clauses.

- **What** is not a relative pronoun in English. It already carries the meaning 'the thing(s) that', so saying 'everything what' doesn't work.
- **Which** is usually used to refer to a specific, limited set of things (e.g. the books which are on the table), not for general words like everything or something.

- Is there **anything that** I can do to help? ✓
- There's **nothing that** we can do now. ✓
- That's **all that** matters. ✓

# 35 COMMON MISTAKES ENGLISH LEARNERS MAKE

In many cases, especially in spoken English, you can leave out '**that**':

- I wanted everything **[that]** she had. ✓
- It was all **[that]** I'd ever wanted. ✓
- There's nothing **[that]** you can do. ✓
- She bought everything **[that]** she needed. ✓

**Rare exception with 'which':**



You can use '**which**' after 'something' or 'anything' in formal contexts, but it's uncommon:

- She said **something which** surprised everyone.  
(adds extra info)

In most cases, stick with '**that**' to be safe!

## 5 I cut my hair.

- I cut my hair yesterday. ? (unless you literally did it yourself!)
- I **had** my hair **cut** yesterday. ✓
- I **got** my hair **cut** yesterday. ✓

When you say "I cut my hair", it literally means you did it yourself. You took the scissors and cut your own hair.

In most cases, that's not what you mean! You probably mean that someone else (a hairdresser or barber) did it for you.

That's why we use the causative structure:

**have/get + object + past participle**

- ✓ I **had** my hair **cut** yesterday.
- ✓ I **got** my hair **cut** yesterday.

This structure means you arranged for someone else to do the action, not that you did it yourself.

# 35 COMMON MISTAKES ENGLISH LEARNERS MAKE

## Other common examples for services you arrange:

- I **had** my car **repaired** yesterday.
- We're **having** the house **painted** next month.
- She **got** her nails **done** at the spa.
- They **had** their TV **fixed** by a technician.
- I need to **get** my phone **repaired**.

### Have vs Get:

Both are correct, but there's a slight difference:

'**Have**' is slightly more formal:

- I **had** my car serviced.

'**Get**' is more conversational:

- I **got** my car serviced.

They're interchangeable in most contexts!

## Something not arranged:

You can also use this structure for bad things that happened to you (that you didn't arrange or want):

- I **had** my wallet **stolen** last night. (Someone stole it)
- She **had** her car **broken into**. (Someone broke into it)
- We **had** our flight **cancelled**. (The airline cancelled it)
- He **got** his phone **taken** at school. (The teacher confiscated it)
- They **had** their holiday **ruined** by bad weather.

In these cases, you're the victim of the action, not the person who arranged it.



## Quiz

For each question, choose the correct answer from the options provided.

### 1. Which sentence uses the causative for something bad that happened?

- a) I had my wallet stolen.
- b) I stole my wallet.
- c) I got my wallet to be stolen.

### 2. Complete the sentence correctly.

"There's nothing \_\_\_\_\_ I can do now."

- a) which
- b) that
- c) what

### 3. Which sentence is correct?

- a) The two first chapters were boring.
- b) The first two chapters were boring.
- c) The first chapters two were boring.

### 4. Which sentence uses the correct adverb position?

- a) Probably, I'll go out tonight.
- b) I'll probably go out tonight.
- c) I'll go out probably tonight.

### 5. Which sentence is correct?

- a) It's a quite big house.
- b) It's quite big a house.
- c) It's quite a big house.

### 6. What does "I had my hair cut" mean?

- a) Someone else cut my hair for me.
- b) I cut my own hair.
- c) I decided not to cut my hair.

### 7. Why is what wrong in "I saw everything what happened"?

- a) Because what is not a relative pronoun.
- b) Because what only refers to people.
- c) Because what means "where".

### 8. Which sentence is correct?

- a) She's a quite talented musician.
- b) She's quite a talented musician.
- c) She's quite talented a musician.

### Answers:

1.a, 2.b, 3.b, 4.b, 5.c, 6.a, 7.a, 8.b

## Part 7

In Part 7, we're wrapping up with five final mistakes that can really trip you up! You'll learn the difference between '**in the end**' and '**at the end**', discover where '**again**' should actually go in a sentence, master short answers (**no more 'Yes, I like!'**), understand why '**the reason because**' is wrong and finally crack the code on '**should have**' vs '**should of**'. These might seem like small details, but getting them right is extremely important. Let's finish strong!

### 1 In the end vs At the end

- At the end, we decided to stay at home. X
- **In the end**, we decided to stay at home. ✓
- There's a surprise in the end of the film. X
- There's a surprise **at the end** of the film. ✓

We're starting with a big one! This is such a common mistake because both phrases contain the word '**end**', so students think they're interchangeable. They're not! They have completely different meanings.

The confusion happens for a few reasons. First, in many languages, there's only one expression, so you don't have to choose between two different phrases. Your brain isn't trained to make this distinction.

Second, both phrases seem to refer to conclusions or final moments, so it feels natural to use them the same way. Let's look at these phrases deeper:

#### **In the end (finally, eventually, after everything)**

**'In the end'** means finally or eventually, usually after a period of time, thought or difficulty. It's about the final result or decision.

- **In the end**, we decided to move to London. (after thinking about it)
- It was difficult, but **in the end**, everything worked out. (finally, after problems)

 **Memory tip:** '**In the end**' = 'finally' or 'eventually'

## At the end (the final point of something specific)

'**At the end**' refers to the final point in time or space of something specific. It's usually followed by 'of' + a noun.

- There's a twist **at the end** of the film. (the final part of the film)
- I'm always tired **at the end** of the working day. (the final part of the day)
- The station is **at the end** of this road. (the final point of the road)
- Sign your name **at the end** of the document. (the final part of the document)

 **Memory tip:** '**At the end**' is sometimes followed by 'of' + something

## 2 I'm again unemployed.

- I'm again unemployed. ✗
- I'm unemployed **again**. ✓

This mistake is incredibly common because the placement of '**again**' in English doesn't follow the same rules as many other languages. Plus, English has other adverbs that typically go in the mid-position (before the main verb or after 'be'), like we learnt in Part 6 of this ebook.

But '**again**' is different! In English, '**again**' almost always goes at the end of the clause or phrase, rather than in the middle.

### Why does it go at the end?

Placing '**again**' at the end is the neutral word order. '**Again**' doesn't appear directly before an adjective (like 'unemployed'), and it doesn't normally appear directly before a main verb.

- ✗ I **again** broke my phone.
- ✓ I broke my phone **again**.
- ✓ The room went quiet **again**.

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## More examples:

- She's late **again**. ✓
- They're arguing **again**. ✓
- He forgot his password **again**. ✓
- I called her **again** this morning. ✓
- We watched that film **again**. ✓

'Again' can appear earlier in the sentence, but this is less common:

## For emphasis or contrast:

- **Once again**, I'm asking you to listen. ✓ (a phrase meaning one more time)
- **Again** and **again**, he made the same simple mistake. ✓ (repeated emphasis)

## In formal or literary contexts:

- She **again** attempted to contact him. ✓ (formal writing)

But for everyday conversation and most writing, stick to putting 'again' at the end of the clause.

## 3 Yes, I like.

- Do you like coffee? Yes, I like. ✗
- Do you like coffee? Yes, I **do**. ✓

I think this mistake happens because students are trying to give a quick, affirmative answer but they're cutting it short in the wrong way. In many languages, you can simply say 'yes' plus the main verb to confirm something. So when English learners try to do the same thing in English, they say '**Yes, I like**' because they're translating their natural response pattern.

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However, in English short, answers follow a specific pattern that depends on what type of verb is in the question. If the question uses '**do/does/did**', your answer needs to mirror that structure. If you just say 'Yes, I like,' you're leaving the sentence grammatically incomplete, like stopping halfway through!

## The pattern:

Question structure: **Auxiliary + subject + main verb?**

Answer structure: **Yes/No + subject + auxiliary.**

### Short answers with auxiliary verbs (**do, does, did**)

#### Questions with 'do':

- **Question:**
  - Do you like coffee?
- **Correct answer:**
  - Yes, I **do**. ✓
  - No, I **don't**. ✓
- **Incorrect:**
  - Yes, I **like**. ✗

#### Questions with 'does':

- **Question:**
  - Does she speak French?
- **Correct answer:**
  - Yes, she **does**. ✓
  - No, she **doesn't**. ✓
- **Incorrect:**
  - Yes, she **speaks**. ✗

#### Questions with 'did':

- **Question:**
  - Did they enjoy the party?
- **Correct answer:**
  - Yes, they **did**. ✓
  - No, they **didn't**. ✓
- **Incorrect:**
  - Yes, they **enjoyed**. ✗

## You can give a full answer!

If you want to give a complete answer, that's perfectly fine:

- Do you like coffee?
  - Yes, **I like coffee**. ✓
- Does she speak French?
  - Yes, **she speaks French fluently**. ✓

But if you're giving a short answer, use the auxiliary, not the main verb!

## 4 That's the reason because...

- That's the reason because I left. ✗
- That's **the reason why** I left. ✓

You know that '**because**' introduces a reason (I'm late because of traffic), and '**reason**' is a noun that refers to a cause. So your brain thinks these two words should naturally work together!

In some languages, the equivalent of 'reason' is directly followed by the equivalent of 'because' or 'for which' and it's grammatically correct.

In English, after the noun '**reason**', we often use a relative pronoun ('**why**' or '**that**') to introduce the clause, not the conjunction 'because.'

Also, 'because' already means 'for the reason that,' so you're essentially saying 'the reason for the reason that'.

Let's go through the correct structures:

**Option 1:** The reason why + clause (you can omit 'why' in informal English)

- That's **the reason why** we cancelled the trip.
- The reason why** he moved abroad isn't clear.
- I'd love to know **the reason why** she said no.

**Option 2:** The reason that + clause (you can omit 'that' in informal English)

- That's **the reason** I called you.
- The reason that** we chose this hotel is the location.
- The reason** she left early was to get to her flight.

'**Because**' is a conjunction that introduces a clause explaining a reason. It works on its own:

**Option 3:** Because + clause (separate from 'reason')

- We cancelled the trip **because** of the weather.
- He moved abroad **because** he found a new job.
- She left early **because** she didn't feel well.

## 5 Should of, would of, could of

- I should of studied harder. ✗
- I **should have** studied harder. ✓
- We could of won the match. ✗
- We **could have** won the match. ✓

This is such a classic one! When we speak, '**should have**', '**would have**' and '**could have**' are contracted to 'should've', 'would've,' and 'could've.' These contractions sound almost identical to 'should of,' 'would of,' and 'could of' when spoken quickly.

- should have** → should've /'ʃʊdəv/
- would have** → would've /'wʊdəv/
- could have** → could've /'kʊdəv/

These contractions sound like 'of,' which is why the mistake happens! So you hear what sounds like 'should of,' and when you write it down, you write exactly what you heard. Your brain has stored the spoken sound, not the grammatical structure. It's a spelling mistake based on pronunciation, and even native speakers make this error in informal writing!

The real structure is '**should have**' (**modal verb + auxiliary verb 'have'**) + **past participle**.

**The correct structure:**  
modal + have + past participle

**Should have** (past regret, criticism or unfulfilled expectation)

- I **should have** called her. ✓
- You **should have** told me earlier. ✓
- We **should have** left sooner. ✓

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## Would have (hypothetical past situations)

- I **would have** helped if I'd known. ✓
- She **would have** come if she'd been invited. ✓
- They **would have** bought it if it had been cheaper. ✓

## Could have (past possibility that didn't happen)

- We **could have** won the game. ✓
- You **could have** been hurt! ✓
- I **could have** finished earlier. ✓



## Quiz

For each question, choose the correct answer from the options provided.

**1. Which short answer correctly matches the question?**

"Does she speak French?"

- a) Yes, she speaks.
- b) Yes, she does.
- c) Yes, she is.

**2. Choose the most natural sentence.**

- a) She forgot her password again this morning.
- b) She again forgot her password this morning.
- c) She forgot again her password this morning.

**3. Choose the incorrect sentence.**

- a) Do you know the reason why she said no?
- b) Do you know the reason because she said no?
- c) Do you know the reason she said no?

**4. Is using "should of" ever correct?**

- a) No
- b) Yes
- c) Sometimes

**5. Which sentence shows the correct past-modal structure?**

- a) We could of won the game.
- b) We could have won the game.
- c) We could has won the game.

**6. Choose the correct sentence.**

- a) At the end, we decided to stay at home.
- b) In the end, we decided to stay at home.
- c) In the end of, we decided to stay at home.

**7. What does in the end mean?**

- a) at the final point of something specific
- b) inside the end of a place
- c) finally / after everything

**8. Choose the correct sentence for everyday conversation.**

- a) I'm again going to be late for work.
- b) I'm going to be late for work again.
- c) Again, it appears I shall arrive late to the office.

**Answers:**

1. b, 2. a, 3. b, 4. a, 5. b, 6. b, 7. c, 8. b