**Is English grammar really important for a second language learner?**

**Answer by** [**Eric Lauritzen**](https://www.quora.com/profile/Eric-Lauritzen)**, Lifelong English speaker**

My personal opinion is that grammar should not be important so long the grammar deviations do not interfere with communication and meaning. Unfortunately, in a lot of contexts where it matters such as academia and business, grammar "errors" are too often treated as an inferiority marker. For example, an American reader may forget (or not know) that she or he is reading the writing of someone who learned English as a second language, and conclude that the [**grammar**](http://engtuto.com/grammar/) errors are evidence that the writer is dumb or lazy. That's not fair, but it is the reality.  
  
The problem with spending all of your time on grammar exercises is that it takes away from time that could be spent learning to arrange and organize a piece of writing as a whole. A piece of writing can be grammatically perfect while at the same time being miserable to read because it lacks coherence, logic, and organization. There is so much more to writing effectively than sentence level issues like grammar, punctuation, and spelling.  
  
My guess is that in China and elsewhere, those who are studying English as a second language are going to be adept at writing in their own first language, and they'll have no problem knowing what they want to say and how they want to arrange what they are saying at the product level. They will be proficient with all but the sentence level issues of writing in English. If that is not the case, then I would invest some time working at the paragraph and product level.   
  
If you will tell me what kind of specific concerns you or your students have, I or someone else might be able to offer some ideas about other ways to approach them.

**Answer by :**[**Chetan Mishra**](https://www.quora.com/profile/Chetan-Mishra-8)**, Learnt English for 15 years at school/college.**

Learning the grammar for English is important, regardless of whether it is your first language or your second language.

The reason is simple. If you don't get the grammar right, you tend to use words in some order that you seem is fine, but at time it's not. I have experienced this with my first language (English is my second language). I myself know four languages (including English of course) and have found grammar very important in all four of them. In many circumstances, grammar is far more important than vocabulary.

Consider this: since I've adhered to [**English grammar**](http://engtuto.com/grammar/), anyone who reads English and knows the words I've used knows what I'm saying. If I had not learnt English grammar, and used the grammar of one of the other three languages that I know, most people would fail to understand everything that I've said.

So, learning grammar of any language is as important as learning the language itself. Even if it's the 2nd language.

**Answer by:** [**Manuel Aicart**](https://www.quora.com/profile/Manuel-Aicart)**, Linguist**

It's not really a question of whether it's important or not, because you have to learn it anyway. The question is **how**.

**Inductive**methods (e.g. immersion) have a great appeal because people think that in that way you can "skip" having to learn grammar.

However, the more inductive the approach the more you have to turn to your verbal analytical abilities, which vary from person to person.

In other words, the less you understand, the more you have to figure out what it means.

If the "direct method" was the "key", everybody would be using that method and most language learning materials (textbooks, etc) would be worthless.