

ENGLISH GRAMMAR · 2026 EDITION

Common English Grammar Mistakes Handbook

A complete handbook with explanations, examples, and a self-test quiz – organized into six color-coded categories for easy reference.

Even advanced learners make grammar mistakes. This handbook consolidates ninety-five of the most common errors in English grammar – from subject-verb agreement to redundancy – pairing each one with a clear rule, multiple example sentences, and a memorable tip. Use it as a study guide, a quick reference, or a classroom resource.

● Subject-Verb

● Verb Forms

● Word Confusion

● Prepositions

● Quantifiers

● Redundancy

95+

MISTAKES

6

CATEGORIES

20

QUIZ QUESTIONS

1

CHEAT SHEET

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Introduction

Even advanced English learners make grammar mistakes. Understanding the most common errors is the fastest way to improve both your written and spoken English. This handbook brings together over ninety of the most frequently encountered grammar mistakes, organized into six clear categories so you can study systematically or jump directly to the topics that challenge you most. Each mistake is paired with a rule explanation, multiple example sentences, and a memorable tip that helps you internalize the correct usage.

The mistakes in this handbook are sourced from the comprehensive collection at [typogrammar.com](https://www.typogrammar.com), a free online resource for English grammar learners. While the website presents each mistake individually with interactive exercises, this PDF consolidates everything into a single downloadable reference that you can study offline, print for classroom use, or annotate as you work through each chapter. Color-coding by category makes navigation intuitive and helps you quickly identify which type of error you are dealing with when you encounter it in your own writing.

Why Fixing Grammar Mistakes Matters

Grammar accuracy affects every aspect of communication. In professional contexts, correct grammar signals competence and attention to detail, while repeated mistakes can undermine your credibility even when your ideas are sound. In academic settings, grammar directly impacts scores on standardized tests like IELTS, TOEFL, and university entrance exams, where examiners explicitly assess grammatical range and accuracy. In everyday communication, clear grammar helps your reader or listener understand your message without distraction, and knowing the rules builds confidence when speaking in high-stakes situations like job interviews, presentations, or important conversations.

How to Use This Handbook

There is no single correct way to use this handbook, but a few approaches tend to work well. If you are studying systematically, read each chapter in order, complete the practice quiz at the end, and use the answer key to identify patterns in your mistakes. If you are preparing for an exam, focus on the categories that examiners most frequently test, which are typically subject-verb agreement, verb forms, and prepositions. If you are using this as a quick reference, jump directly to the Quick Reference Cheat Sheet at the end, which lists every mistake in a compact two-column format for at-a-glance revision.

Category Overview

#	Category	Focus	Mistakes
1	Subject-Verb Agreement	Matching singular and plural verbs with their subjects	18
2	Verb Form Errors	Avoiding mistakes with auxiliary verbs and conjugations	14
3	Word Confusion	Telling apart commonly confused words	20
4	Preposition Errors	Mastering the correct preposition in common phrases	24
5	Quantifier Errors	Using much, many, few, little, less, and fewer correctly	11
6	Redundancy Errors	Avoiding unnecessary repetition in your writing	8

*Total: **95** mistakes across **6** categories, plus a **20**-question practice quiz.*

Chapter 1: Subject-Verb Agreement

Matching singular and plural verbs with their subjects

Subject-verb agreement is one of the most common sources of grammar mistakes in English. The basic rule is simple: a singular subject takes a singular verb, and a plural subject takes a plural verb. However, complications arise with collective nouns, indefinite pronouns, and phrases that come between the subject and the verb. This chapter walks through seventeen of the most confusing subject-verb agreement patterns that learners encounter in everyday writing and speech.

WRONG *People is*

RIGHT *People are*

RULE

Although 'people' looks singular, it is actually the irregular plural form of 'person'. Therefore it always takes a plural verb. The singular form 'person' takes 'is', but once you refer to more than one, switch to 'are'. Note: 'peoples' exists in rare contexts meaning 'ethnic groups', but for general use 'people' is plural.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *People are naturally curious about new technology.*
- ▶ *Many people are concerned about climate change.*
- ▶ *Three people are waiting outside the office.*

TIP: *If you can replace 'people' with 'they', use 'are'. If you can replace it with 'he/she', use 'is' with 'person' instead.*

WRONG *He go*

RIGHT *He goes*

RULE

In the present simple tense, third-person singular subjects (he, she, it, or a singular noun) require the verb to take an -s or -es ending. This is one of the most fundamental rules of English conjugation, yet it is frequently missed in casual speech. The base form 'go' is used only with I, you, we, they, or plural subjects.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *He goes to the gym every morning.*
- ▶ *She goes to university by bus.*
- ▶ *The train goes to London in two hours.*

TIP: *When in doubt, ask yourself: is the subject 'he', 'she', or 'it'? If yes, add -s or -es to the verb.*

WRONG *Everyone are*

RIGHT *Everyone is*

RULE

Indefinite pronouns like 'everyone', 'everybody', 'someone', 'somebody', 'anyone', 'anybody', 'no one', and 'nobody' are grammatically singular even though they refer to multiple people conceptually. They always take singular verbs. The logic is that the pronoun refers to each individual within the group, not the group as a collective.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Everyone is invited to the party.*
- ▶ *Everyone is responsible for their own luggage.*

- ▶ *Everyone is here except Sarah.*

TIP: Treat 'everyone', 'somebody', 'nobody' etc. as grammatically equivalent to 'he' or 'she' - always singular.

WRONG Each are

RIGHT Each is

RULE

The word 'each' is singular regardless of what follows. Whether it stands alone ('each is') or is followed by 'of' + plural noun ('each of the students is'), the verb must be singular. 'Each' emphasizes individual members of a group one at a time, which is why it requires a singular verb.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Each of the answers is correct.*
- ▶ *Each student is given a textbook.*
- ▶ *Each is responsible for completing the assignment.*

TIP: Whenever you see 'each', your verb should be singular. The same rule applies to 'every' and 'either/neither' when used alone.

WRONG Someone are

RIGHT Someone is

RULE

Like other indefinite pronouns ending in -one or -body, 'someone' is grammatically singular and requires a singular verb. Even though 'someone' refers to an unspecified person among many, the grammar treats it as one individual at a time. This rule also applies to 'anyone', 'no one', and 'everyone'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Someone is knocking at the door.*
- ▶ *Someone is calling your name.*
- ▶ *Someone is waiting for you in the lobby.*

TIP: All pronouns ending in '-one' or '-body' (someone, anyone, everyone, nobody, somebody) take singular verbs.

WRONG Someone have

RIGHT Someone has

RULE

Because 'someone' is singular, it must take the singular form of the verb 'have', which is 'has'. The same applies to 'everyone has', 'nobody has', and 'anybody has'. This mistake often occurs because the speaker is mentally thinking of multiple people, but the grammar requires singular agreement.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Someone has left their umbrella here.*
- ▶ *Someone has to take responsibility.*
- ▶ *Someone has already finished the test.*

TIP: Replace 'someone' with 'he' or 'she' to test: 'he has' sounds right, so 'someone has' is correct.

WRONG Everybody have

RIGHT Everybody has

RULE

'Everybody' is grammatically singular and takes the singular verb 'has'. The confusion arises because 'everybody' refers to all members of a group, which feels plural conceptually. However, English grammar treats it as referring to each individual person one at a time, hence singular agreement.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Everybody has a role to play.*
- ▶ *Everybody has finished their homework.*
- ▶ *Everybody has the right to speak.*

TIP: All compound indefinite pronouns (*everybody, somebody, anybody, nobody*) follow the same rule - always singular.

WRONG *None are*

RIGHT *None is (or None are)*

RULE

Strictly speaking, 'none' is singular and should take 'is', as it derives from 'not one'. However, in modern English, 'none' can be either singular or plural depending on context. When 'none' refers to a countable noun, plural is widely accepted: 'None of the students are here'. When it means 'not any amount', singular is preferred: 'None of the water is left'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *None of the answers is correct. (formal)*
- ▶ *None of the students are present. (acceptable)*
- ▶ *None of this money is mine.*

TIP: In formal writing, prefer 'none is'. In everyday usage, plural is acceptable when referring to countable items.

WRONG *A number of is*

RIGHT *A number of are / The number of is*

RULE

These two phrases look similar but follow different rules. 'A number of' means 'several' or 'many' and takes a plural verb because the subject is conceptually plural. 'The number of' refers to a specific quantity (a single number), so it takes a singular verb. The article 'a' versus 'the' changes the meaning entirely.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *A number of students are absent today.*
- ▶ *The number of tourists is increasing.*
- ▶ *A number of factors are contributing to the problem.*

TIP: 'A number of' = several (plural verb). 'The number of' = the statistic (singular verb).

WRONG *A lot of people is*

RIGHT *A lot of people are*

RULE

'A lot of' does not change the number of the noun that follows. The verb agrees with the noun after 'of', not with 'a lot'. Since 'people' is plural, the verb must be plural. Similarly, 'a lot of water is' (uncountable) takes a singular verb because 'water' is singular.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *A lot of people are attending the concert.*

- ▶ *A lot of time is wasted on social media.*
- ▶ *A lot of books are donated every year.*

TIP: Ignore 'a lot of' and look at the noun after it: if plural, use 'are'; if uncountable, use 'is'.

WRONG *One of the students are*

RIGHT **One of the students is**

RULE

The subject of the sentence is 'one', not 'students'. The phrase 'of the students' is a prepositional phrase that simply describes which group 'one' comes from. Since 'one' is singular, the verb must be singular. Many speakers make this error because the plural noun 'students' sits right next to the verb.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *One of the students is missing.*
- ▶ *She is one of the best players I have ever coached.*
- ▶ *One of my friends is moving to Japan.*

TIP: The verb agrees with the head noun ('one'), not with the noun in the 'of' phrase that follows.

WRONG *Each of the students are*

RIGHT **Each of the students is**

RULE

When 'each' is followed by 'of' + a plural noun, the verb still agrees with 'each', which is singular. The plural noun 'students' is part of a prepositional phrase and does not control the verb. This rule applies consistently regardless of what plural noun follows 'of'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Each of the students is given a unique ID.*
- ▶ *Each of the candidates is interviewed separately.*
- ▶ *Each of the books is catalogued by genre.*

TIP: 'Each' always wins. Whatever follows 'of', the verb remains singular because 'each' is the subject.

WRONG *A group of people is*

RIGHT **A group of people are (informal) / is (formal)**

RULE

Collective nouns like 'group', 'team', 'family', and 'committee' can take either singular or plural verbs depending on whether you are emphasizing the group as a single unit (singular) or the individual members (plural). In American English, singular is preferred. In British English, plural is common when referring to the individuals within the group.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *The team is playing well this season. (as a unit)*
- ▶ *The team are arguing among themselves. (as individuals)*
- ▶ *A group of tourists are taking photos. (informal)*

TIP: In American English, default to singular for collective nouns. In British English, plural is acceptable when individual action is emphasized.

WRONG *Everybody are*

RIGHT **Everybody is**

RULE

Although 'everybody' refers to all members of a group, it is grammatically singular and requires a singular verb. The word 'every' emphasizes each individual member of the group, which is why the grammar treats it as singular. This is one of the most persistent agreement errors in everyday speech.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Everybody is welcome to attend.*
- ▶ *Everybody is tired after the long trip.*
- ▶ *Everybody is going to the meeting.*

TIP: Replace 'everybody' with 'everyone' or 'each person' - all three take singular verbs.

WRONG *Nobody are*

RIGHT *Nobody is*

RULE

'Nobody' is an indefinite pronoun that is grammatically singular, even though it refers to the absence of all people. It always takes a singular verb. The same applies to 'no one', which is always written as two words and always takes a singular verb.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Nobody is perfect.*
- ▶ *Nobody is going to believe that story.*
- ▶ *Nobody is at home right now.*

TIP: All negative indefinite pronouns (*nobody, no one, nothing, neither*) are singular.

WRONG *Everyone have*

RIGHT *Everyone has*

RULE

Because 'everyone' is singular, the auxiliary verb 'have' must be in its singular form 'has'. This error is common because speakers confuse the conceptual plurality of 'everyone' (many people) with the grammatical singularity (treated as one). The same rule applies to 'everybody has' and 'everybody has'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Everyone has a right to their opinion.*
- ▶ *Everyone has received the invitation.*
- ▶ *Everyone has to submit the form by Friday.*

TIP: If you would say 'he has', you should also say 'everyone has' - both are singular subjects.

WRONG *Each of or Every of*

RIGHT *Each of (Every is not used with 'of')*

RULE

'Each of' is correct English, but 'every of' is not a valid construction. If you want to use 'every' before a plural noun with 'of', use 'every one of' instead. The two structures look similar but have different grammatical patterns. 'Each of' emphasizes individuality; 'every one of' emphasizes completeness.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Each of the children received a gift.*
- ▶ *Every one of the children received a gift.*
- ▶ *Each of us has a unique perspective.*

TIP: Use 'each of' for individual focus. Use 'every one of' (two words) when emphasizing 'all without exception'.

WRONG *Either of are / Neither of are*

RIGHT **Either of is / Neither of is**

RULE

Both 'either' and 'neither' are grammatically singular when used as pronouns, even when followed by 'of' + plural noun. They take singular verbs in formal English: 'Either of the options is acceptable'. In informal speech, plural verbs are sometimes heard, but singular is preferred in writing.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Neither of the answers is correct.*
- ▶ *Either of the restaurants is fine with me.*
- ▶ *Neither of my brothers is married.*

TIP: In formal writing, always use singular verbs with 'either of' and 'neither of'.

Chapter 2: Verb Form Errors

Avoiding mistakes with auxiliary verbs and conjugations

English verb forms create confusion because the language distinguishes between base form, past tense, and past participle - and many of the most common verbs are irregular. Mistakes typically occur when learners combine auxiliary verbs (do, have, be) with the wrong main verb form, or when they fail to recognize the difference between simple past and past participle. This chapter addresses fourteen high-frequency verb form errors that even advanced learners continue to make.

WRONG *I am agree*

RIGHT **I agree**

RULE

'Agree' is itself a verb, so adding 'am' before it is grammatically incorrect. Many learners make this mistake because in some languages the equivalent of 'agree' is an adjective that requires 'to be'. In English, however, 'agree' is a regular verb and is conjugated like any other verb (I agree, he agrees, they agreed).

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I agree with your proposal.*
- ▶ *She agrees that the plan needs revision.*
- ▶ *We agreed to meet at noon.*

TIP: *If you can conjugate it (agree/agrees/agreed), it is a verb - no 'am/is/are' needed.*

WRONG *He didn't went*

RIGHT **He didn't go**

RULE

After the auxiliary verb 'did' (or 'didn't'), the main verb must always be in its base form, regardless of tense. 'Did' already carries the past tense meaning, so the main verb cannot also be in the past tense. This rule applies to all combinations: 'did + base verb', 'didn't + base verb', 'does + base verb', 'doesn't + base verb'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *He didn't go to work yesterday.*
- ▶ *Did you eat breakfast this morning?*
- ▶ *She didn't understand the question.*

TIP: *After 'did', 'didn't', 'does', 'doesn't', 'do', or 'don't', always use the base form of the verb.*

WRONG *Did you went*

RIGHT **Did you go**

RULE

This is the same rule as 'He didn't went': after 'did' in questions, the main verb must be in its base form. The auxiliary 'did' already marks the past tense, so adding a past tense verb form would be redundant and ungrammatical. The pattern is always: 'Did + subject + base verb'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Did you go to the meeting?*
- ▶ *Did she finish her homework?*
- ▶ *Did they arrive on time?*

TIP: *In past tense questions, 'did' shows the past - the main verb stays in base form.*

WRONG *I done*

RIGHT **I did / I have done**

RULE

'Done' is the past participle of 'do' and cannot stand alone as a past tense verb. It must be used with an auxiliary verb (have/has/had): 'I have done'. For the simple past tense without an auxiliary, use 'did': 'I did'. The form 'I done' is non-standard English.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I did my homework last night.*
- ▶ *I have done my homework already.*
- ▶ *She did the laundry this morning.*

TIP: *'Did' = simple past (stands alone). 'Done' = past participle (needs have/has/had).*

WRONG *I have saw*

RIGHT **I have seen**

RULE

After 'have', 'has', or 'had', you must use the past participle form of the verb, not the simple past. For the irregular verb 'see', the forms are: see (base), saw (past), seen (past participle). Therefore 'I have seen' is correct, while 'I have saw' mixes the auxiliary 'have' with the wrong verb form.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I have seen that movie three times.*
- ▶ *She has seen the Eiffel Tower before.*
- ▶ *They had already seen the news.*

TIP: *Memorize the three forms of common irregular verbs: see/saw/seen, go/went/gone, take/took/taken.*

WRONG *I have ate*

RIGHT **I have eaten**

RULE

Similar to 'I have saw', this error uses the simple past (ate) instead of the past participle (eaten) after 'have'. The three forms of 'eat' are: eat (base), ate (past), eaten (past participle). Whenever you use 'have/has/had', you must use the past participle form.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I have eaten lunch already.*
- ▶ *She has eaten all the cookies.*
- ▶ *They had eaten dinner before we arrived.*

TIP: *For irregular verbs, 'have/has/had' is always followed by the -en or -n form, not the simple past.*

WRONG *I have wrote*

RIGHT **I have written**

RULE

The three forms of 'write' are: write (base), wrote (past), written (past participle). After 'have', 'has', or 'had', use 'written', not 'wrote'. This is a common error because the past and past participle forms are different for irregular verbs.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I have written three letters today.*
- ▶ *She has written a bestselling novel.*
- ▶ *They had written the report before the deadline.*

TIP: Pattern for irregular verbs: base / past / past participle. After 'have', always use the third form.

WRONG *I have drank*

RIGHT **I have drunk**

RULE

The three forms of 'drink' are: drink (base), drank (past), drunk (past participle). After 'have', 'has', or 'had', you must use 'drunk', not 'drank'. Note that 'drunk' is also used as an adjective meaning intoxicated, which can cause confusion, but the verb form is the same.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I have drunk two cups of coffee today.*
- ▶ *She has drunk all the juice.*
- ▶ *They had drunk the milk before breakfast.*

TIP: Drink/drank/drunk - the third form is used after 'have/has/had'.

WRONG *I have went*

RIGHT **I have gone**

RULE

The three forms of 'go' are: go (base), went (past), gone (past participle). After 'have', 'has', or 'had', you must use 'gone', not 'went'. Note the distinction: 'gone' is used when someone has gone and not returned, while 'been' is used when someone has gone and returned.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She has gone to the store. (still there)*
- ▶ *I have gone to Paris twice. (visited and returned - 'been' also acceptable)*
- ▶ *They had gone home by the time I called.*

TIP: Go/went/gone - after 'have/has/had', always use 'gone'. Use 'been' if the person has returned.

WRONG *He has came*

RIGHT **He has come**

RULE

The three forms of 'come' are: come (base), came (past), come (past participle). Note that the base form and past participle are identical - both are 'come'. After 'have', 'has', or 'had', use 'come', not 'came'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *He has come to the office early.*
- ▶ *She has come a long way since last year.*
- ▶ *They had come to a decision by midnight.*

TIP: Come/came/come - the past participle is the same as the base form, not the simple past.

WRONG *I seen*

RIGHT **I saw / I have seen**

RULE

'Seen' cannot be used alone as a past tense verb - it is the past participle and requires an auxiliary (have/has/had). For the simple past tense, use 'saw'. The choice depends on whether you are using simple past ('I saw the movie yesterday') or present perfect ('I have seen the movie').

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I saw him at the store yesterday.*
- ▶ *I have seen this film before.*
- ▶ *She saw the accident on her way home.*

TIP: Use 'saw' alone for simple past. Use 'seen' only with have/has/had.

WRONG *She has went*

RIGHT *She has gone*

RULE

This is the same error as 'I have went' but with a third-person subject. After 'has', you must use the past participle 'gone', not the simple past 'went'. The pattern is consistent regardless of the subject: 'I/you/he/she/we/they have/has + gone'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She has gone to the bank.*
- ▶ *He has gone home for the day.*
- ▶ *The manager has gone to a conference.*

TIP: After 'have' or 'has', never use 'went'. Always use 'gone'.

WRONG *Should of*

RIGHT *Should have*

RULE

This error comes from pronunciation: in fast speech, 'should have' sounds like 'should of'. However, the correct form is always 'should have', followed by a past participle: 'should have gone', 'should have done'. The same applies to 'could have', 'would have', 'must have', and 'might have'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I should have studied harder for the test.*
- ▶ *She could have won the race.*
- ▶ *They would have arrived by now if they had left on time.*

TIP: If you can replace it with 'should've' (the contraction), the original is 'should have' - never 'should of'.

WRONG *Used to + be used to (confused)*

RIGHT *Used to (past habit) / Be used to (accustom...)*

RULE

These two structures look similar but have different meanings and grammar. 'Used to + base verb' describes a past habit that no longer happens: 'I used to play tennis'. 'Be used to + noun/-ing' means being accustomed to something: 'I am used to working late'. The verb forms after each structure are different.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I used to live in London. (past habit)*
- ▶ *I am used to the cold weather. (accustomed)*
- ▶ *She is used to getting up early. (accustomed, note the -ing form)*

TIP: *'Used to + base verb' = past habit. 'Be used to + noun/-ing' = accustomed to.*

Chapter 3: Word Confusion

Telling apart commonly confused words

English contains dozens of word pairs that sound similar or look alike but have completely different meanings and grammatical roles. These confusions arise from spelling similarity (advice/advise), overlapping semantics (speak/talk), or partial phonetic overlap (borrow/lend). Mastering these distinctions matters because using the wrong word can change your meaning entirely or signal carelessness to the reader. This chapter covers twenty of the most commonly confused word pairs and groups in English.

WRONG Advice vs Advise (confused)

RIGHT Advice (noun) / Advise (verb)

RULE

These two words are related but have different grammatical roles. 'Advice' (/əd'vaɪs/, with an /s/ sound) is a noun meaning a recommendation or suggestion. 'Advise' (/əd'vaɪz/, with a /z/ sound) is the verb form meaning to give advice. Mixing them up creates grammatically incorrect sentences like 'He gave me a good advise' (should be 'advice').

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She gave me excellent advice. (noun)*
- ▶ *I advise you to study harder. (verb)*
- ▶ *The doctor advised bed rest. (verb)*

TIP: Pronounce them differently: ad-VISE (verb, z sound) vs ad-VICE (noun, s sound). Like practice/practise in British English.

WRONG Do vs Make (confused)

RIGHT Do (action/activity) / Make (creation/result)

RULE

'Do' is used for actions, duties, and activities that do not produce a physical object: 'do homework', 'do business', 'do the dishes'. 'Make' is used when something is created, produced, or constructed: 'make a cake', 'make a mistake', 'make money'. Some collocations must be memorized because the distinction is not always logical.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I need to do my homework. (activity)*
- ▶ *She made a delicious cake. (creation)*
- ▶ *We do business with several countries. (activity)*

TIP: If a physical object or new thing is created, use 'make'. If it is an activity or task, use 'do'.

WRONG Speak vs Talk (confused)

RIGHT Speak (formal/one-way) / Talk (conversat...)

RULE

These verbs are largely interchangeable, but 'speak' tends to be more formal and one-way (a lecture, an announcement), while 'talk' is more conversational and two-way. 'Speak' is also used for languages: 'She speaks French'. 'Talk' is used for casual conversations: 'We talked for hours'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *The professor will speak at the conference. (formal)*
- ▶ *We talked about our plans for the weekend. (casual)*

▶ *He speaks three languages fluently. (language ability)*

TIP: Use 'speak' for formal contexts and language ability. Use 'talk' for casual, two-way conversations.

WRONG Bring vs Take (confused)

RIGHT Bring (toward speaker) / Take (away from ...)

RULE

'Bring' indicates movement toward the speaker or the speaker's location: 'Bring the book here'. 'Take' indicates movement away from the speaker or toward a different location: 'Take the book to the library'. The perspective of the speaker determines which verb to use.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Please bring your laptop to the meeting. (toward speaker)*
- ▶ *I will take the files to the archive. (away from speaker)*
- ▶ *Don't forget to bring a gift to the party. (toward the speaker, who will be at the party)*

TIP: Ask yourself: is the item moving toward me (bring) or away from me (take)?

WRONG Listen vs Hear (confused)

RIGHT Listen (intentional) / Hear (involuntary)

RULE

'Hear' refers to the physical ability to perceive sound - it happens automatically. 'Listen' refers to paying attention to sound - it is intentional and deliberate. You can hear without listening (background noise), but you cannot listen without hearing. 'Listen' is usually followed by 'to': 'listen to music'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I can hear a strange noise. (involuntary)*
- ▶ *She listens to podcasts every morning. (intentional)*
- ▶ *Did you hear the thunder last night? (perception)*

TIP: Hearing is passive (your ears do it). Listening is active (your brain focuses on it).

WRONG Say vs Tell (confused)

RIGHT Say (no indirect object) / Tell (with indirect...)

RULE

'Say' is used without an indirect object (the person being addressed): 'She said hello'. 'Tell' is used with an indirect object: 'She told me hello'. The pattern is 'say something' or 'say something to someone', but 'tell someone something'. You cannot say 'She said me hello' - this is incorrect.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *He said he was tired. (no indirect object)*
- ▶ *He told me he was tired. (with indirect object 'me')*
- ▶ *She said goodbye to everyone. (note 'to' before the person)*

TIP: If you can put 'to + person' after, use 'say'. If the person comes right after, use 'tell'.

WRONG Look vs See vs Watch (confused)

RIGHT Look (intentional, brief) / See (involuntary)...

RULE

'See' is the involuntary act of perceiving with your eyes - it happens naturally. 'Look' is intentional but brief - you direct your eyes at something. 'Watch' is intentional and sustained - you observe something over time, often because it

is moving or changing. Each verb has a different nuance of attention and duration.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I see a bird in the tree. (involuntary perception)*
- ▶ *Look at that sunset! (intentional, brief)*
- ▶ *We watched the movie for two hours. (sustained attention)*

TIP: See = eyes perceive. Look = direct eyes briefly. Watch = observe over time.

WRONG Learn vs Study (confused)

RIGHT Learn (acquire knowledge) / Study (effort/...

RULE

'Study' refers to the activity of trying to learn - reading, reviewing, practicing. 'Learn' refers to actually acquiring knowledge or skill as a result. You can study for hours without learning anything if the material is too difficult. The two verbs emphasize different aspects of the educational process.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I am studying for the exam. (the activity)*
- ▶ *I learned how to swim last summer. (acquired the skill)*
- ▶ *She studies chemistry at university. (the process)*

TIP: Study = the effort you put in. Learn = the result you achieve.

WRONG Borrow vs Lend (confused)

RIGHT Borrow (take temporarily) / Lend (give te...

RULE

These two verbs describe the same action from opposite perspectives. 'Borrow' means to take something temporarily with the intention of returning it: 'I borrowed a book from the library'. 'Lend' means to give something temporarily: 'The library lent me a book'. The subject of 'borrow' is the receiver; the subject of 'lend' is the giver.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Can I borrow your pen? (I want to take it)*
- ▶ *Can you lend me your pen? (I want you to give it)*
- ▶ *She borrowed money from the bank. (she received)*

TIP: Borrow = take (with permission). Lend = give (temporarily). Same transaction, different viewpoint.

WRONG Remember vs Remind (confused)

RIGHT Remember (recall yourself) / Remind (caus...

RULE

'Remember' means to recall something from memory by yourself: 'I remember her name'. 'Remind' means to cause someone else to remember something: 'Please remind me to call her'. The subject of 'remember' is the person recalling; the subject of 'remind' is the thing or person causing the recall.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I remember my first day at school. (I recall it)*
- ▶ *Please remind me to buy milk. (cause me to remember)*
- ▶ *This song reminds me of my childhood. (causes me to remember)*

TIP: Remember = you do the recalling. Remind = you (or something) causes someone else to recall.

WRONG *Win vs Beat (confused)***RIGHT** **Win (the event/thing) / Beat (the opponent)****RULE**

'Win' takes as its object the event, prize, or game: 'win the match', 'win the lottery', 'win an award'. 'Beat' takes as its object the opponent you defeat: 'beat the opposing team', 'beat my brother at chess'. You cannot 'win someone' - you can only 'beat' them. Mixing these up creates ungrammatical sentences.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *We won the championship. (the event)*
- ▶ *We beat our rivals. (the opponent)*
- ▶ *She won the gold medal. (the prize)*

TIP: *Win the game. Beat the player. Win the prize. Beat the opponent.*

WRONG *Alot***RIGHT** **A lot (two words)****RULE**

'A lot' is always written as two words. The single word 'alot' does not exist in standard English - it is a common spelling error. 'A lot' functions as an adverbial phrase meaning 'much' or 'many': 'I like it a lot', 'A lot of people came'. Note that 'a lot of' is followed by a noun.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I learned a lot from the workshop.*
- ▶ *A lot of students struggle with this topic.*
- ▶ *Thanks a lot for your help.*

TIP: *If you would write 'a little' as two words, write 'a lot' as two words too.*

WRONG *Everyday (adjective) vs Every day (adverb)***RIGHT** **Everyday (ordinary) / Every day (each day)****RULE**

'Everyday' (one word) is an adjective meaning ordinary, common, or usual: 'everyday life', 'everyday problems'. 'Every day' (two words) is an adverbial phrase meaning 'each day' or 'daily': 'I study every day'. The two forms have completely different meanings and uses.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *These are my everyday shoes. (ordinary)*
- ▶ *I practice piano every day. (each day)*
- ▶ *Stress is an everyday problem. (common)*

TIP: *If you can replace it with 'each day' or 'daily' and it still makes sense, use two words: 'every day'.*

WRONG *Sometime vs Sometimes (confused)***RIGHT** **Sometime (at some time) / Sometimes (occ...)****RULE**

'Sometime' (one word) refers to an unspecified point in time, either past or future: 'Let's meet sometime next week'. 'Sometimes' (one word, with an 's') is an adverb meaning occasionally or now and then: 'Sometimes I go for a run in the morning'. The two words have distinct meanings.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Let's have coffee sometime. (an unspecified time)*
- ▶ *Sometimes I prefer to work in silence. (occasionally)*

▶ *I will finish the project sometime this week. (at some point)*

TIP: *Sometime = a single unspecified time. Sometimes = occasionally, more than once.*

WRONG *Into vs In To (confused)*

RIGHT **Into (movement inward) / In to (two separ...**

RULE

'Into' (one word) indicates movement from outside to inside: 'She walked into the room'. 'In to' (two words) appears when 'in' is part of a phrasal verb and 'to' is a preposition or infinitive marker: 'He came in to eat'. If you can replace 'into' with 'in' and the sentence still makes sense, use two words.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She poured the milk into the glass. (movement)*
- ▶ *He came in to check the mail. (in = adverb, to = infinitive)*
- ▶ *I logged in to my account. (in = part of phrasal verb 'log in')*

TIP: *Movement into something = 'into' (one word). Phrasal verb + infinitive/preposition = 'in to' (two words).*

WRONG *Sensible vs Sensitive (confused)*

RIGHT **Sensible (practical/reasonable) / Sensitive (...)**

RULE

'Sensible' describes someone or something that is practical, reasonable, or showing good judgment: 'a sensible decision', 'a sensible person'. 'Sensitive' describes someone or something that is easily affected emotionally or physically: 'a sensitive topic', 'sensitive skin'. These words are sometimes confused due to similar spelling but have quite different meanings.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *That is a sensible plan. (practical)*
- ▶ *She is sensitive to criticism. (easily affected)*
- ▶ *Be careful - it is a sensitive issue. (delicate)*

TIP: *Sensible = practical and reasonable. Sensitive = easily affected or emotional.*

WRONG *Efficient vs Effective (confused)*

RIGHT **Efficient (doing things well) / Effective (a...**

RULE

'Efficient' describes doing something with minimal waste of time or effort: 'an efficient process'. 'Effective' describes something that successfully achieves its intended goal: 'an effective solution'. You can be efficient without being effective (doing the wrong thing quickly), and effective without being efficient (achieving the goal but wasting resources).

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *The new software is efficient. (saves time)*
- ▶ *The marketing campaign was effective. (achieved its goal)*
- ▶ *She is an efficient worker. (productive)*

TIP: *Efficient = doing things right. Effective = doing the right things.*

WRONG *Very vs Too vs So (confused)*

RIGHT **Very (high degree) / Too (excessive) / So ...**

RULE

'Very' intensifies an adjective or adverb: 'very tired', 'very quickly'. 'Too' indicates excess, more than is desirable or acceptable: 'too tired to work'. 'So' is emphatic, often used to show surprise or strong emotion: 'so tired!'. The nuance differs: 'very' is neutral, 'too' is negative, 'so' is emotional.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *The movie was very long. (high degree, neutral)*
- ▶ *The movie was too long. (excessive, negative)*
- ▶ *The movie was so long! (emphatic, surprised)*

TIP: *Very = neutral intensifier. Too = excessive (negative). So = emotional emphasis.*

WRONG *So vs Such (confused)*

RIGHT *So + adjective/adverb / Such + (a/an) + ad...*

RULE

'So' is used with adjectives or adverbs without nouns: 'so beautiful', 'so fast'. 'Such' is used with noun phrases: 'such a beautiful day', 'such good food'. The grammatical structure differs: 'so + adj/adverb' versus 'such + (a/an) + adjective + noun'. Mixing them creates ungrammatical sentences like 'such beautiful' or 'so a beautiful day'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She is so talented. (so + adjective, no noun)*
- ▶ *She is such a talented musician. (such + a + adjective + noun)*
- ▶ *It was so cold yesterday. (so + adjective)*

TIP: *So goes with adjectives/adverbs alone. Such goes with noun phrases (with 'a/an' for singular countable nouns).*

WRONG *Still vs Yet vs Already (confused)*

RIGHT *Still (continuing) / Yet (expected, not hap...*

RULE

'Still' indicates that an action or state continues: 'She is still working'. 'Yet' is used in negatives and questions to refer to something expected: 'Have you finished yet?' 'Already' indicates that something happened sooner than expected: 'I have already eaten'. All three are time adverbs but with different implications.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *He is still asleep. (continuing)*
- ▶ *Has he woken up yet? (expected, not happened)*
- ▶ *He has already left. (happened, sooner than expected)*

TIP: *Still = continuing. Yet = expected but not done. Already = done, sooner than expected.*

Chapter 4: Preposition Errors

Mastering the correct preposition in common phrases

Prepositions are short words, but they cause disproportionate difficulty for English learners because their usage is often idiomatic rather than logical. There is rarely a clear reason why we say 'interested in' but 'good at' - the combinations simply have to be memorized. Many learners transfer preposition patterns from their native language, producing errors like 'discuss about' or 'married with'. This chapter tackles twenty-three of the most error-prone preposition patterns in English.

WRONG Discuss about

RIGHT Discuss (no preposition)

RULE

'Discuss' is a transitive verb that takes its object directly, without 'about'. The confusion likely comes from the noun form 'discussion', which does take 'about': 'a discussion about politics'. But as a verb, 'discuss' stands alone: 'discuss politics', not 'discuss about politics'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *We will discuss the proposal at the meeting.*
- ▶ *They discussed the issue for hours.*
- ▶ *Let's discuss your future plans.*

TIP: 'Discuss + object' (no preposition). 'Have a discussion about + object' (with 'about').

WRONG Married with

RIGHT Married to

RULE

When describing the person someone is married to, use the preposition 'to': 'married to John', not 'married with John'. The confusion likely comes from other languages where the equivalent preposition translates to 'with'. The structure is always 'be married to + person'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She is married to a doctor.*
- ▶ *He has been married to Sarah for ten years.*
- ▶ *They got married to each other in 2020.*

TIP: Always 'married to' someone. 'Married with' is for combining things, not people.

WRONG Different than

RIGHT Different from (preferred) / Different to (...)

RULE

The traditional and most widely accepted preposition after 'different' is 'from': 'This is different from that'. 'Different than' is common in American English but is considered less formal and is criticized by some style guides. 'Different to' is common in British English. In formal writing, prefer 'different from'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *His approach is different from mine. (preferred, formal)*
- ▶ *British English: This is different to what I expected.*
- ▶ *American informal: This is different than I thought.*

TIP: Use 'different from' in formal writing. It is the safest choice internationally.

WRONG Interested on

RIGHT Interested in

RULE

The adjective 'interested' is always followed by the preposition 'in', not 'on'. The structure is 'be interested in + noun or -ing verb': 'interested in music', 'interested in learning'. This is a fixed collocation that must be memorized.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She is interested in photography.*
- ▶ *I am interested in learning Spanish.*
- ▶ *He is not interested in sports.*

TIP: Always 'interested in' + noun or + -ing verb. Never 'interested on' or 'interested about'.

WRONG Good in

RIGHT Good at

RULE

When describing skill or ability, use 'good at' + noun or -ing verb: 'good at math', 'good at swimming'. 'Good in' is used in specific contexts like 'good in a crisis' (meaning good behavior in a situation), but for skills, 'good at' is the correct preposition.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She is good at mathematics.*
- ▶ *He is good at solving puzzles.*
- ▶ *They are good at organizing events.*

TIP: For skills and abilities, always use 'good at' (not 'good in').

WRONG In the weekend

RIGHT On the weekend (American) / At the weeke...

RULE

American English uses 'on the weekend', while British English uses 'at the weekend'. 'In the weekend' is incorrect in both varieties. The choice depends on which variety of English you are using, but consistency matters within a single piece of writing.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *American: We went hiking on the weekend.*
- ▶ *British: We went hiking at the weekend.*
- ▶ *I will see you on the weekend. (US)*

TIP: American English = on the weekend. British English = at the weekend. Never 'in the weekend'.

WRONG Arrive in vs Arrive at (confused)

RIGHT Arrive in (countries/cities) / Arrive at (spec...

RULE

Use 'arrive in' for large geographic areas like countries, states, and cities: 'arrive in London', 'arrive in France'. Use 'arrive at' for specific locations like buildings, events, or addresses: 'arrive at the airport', 'arrive at the party'. The distinction is based on the scale of the destination.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *We arrived in Paris last night. (city)*
- ▶ *We arrived at the hotel at noon. (specific place)*
- ▶ *The train arrived at the station on time. (specific)*

TIP: Large places (countries, cities) = arrive in. Specific places (buildings, addresses) = arrive at.

WRONG Afraid from

RIGHT Afraid of

RULE

The adjective 'afraid' is always followed by the preposition 'of', not 'from'. The structure is 'be afraid of + noun or -ing verb': 'afraid of spiders', 'afraid of flying'. This is a fixed collocation.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She is afraid of spiders.*
- ▶ *He is afraid of heights.*
- ▶ *They are afraid of losing their jobs.*

TIP: Always 'afraid of' + noun or + -ing verb. Never 'afraid from' or 'afraid about'.

WRONG Proud for

RIGHT Proud of

RULE

The adjective 'proud' is always followed by the preposition 'of', not 'for'. The structure is 'be proud of + noun or -ing verb': 'proud of her achievements', 'proud of being part of the team'. This is a fixed collocation.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I am proud of my daughter.*
- ▶ *She is proud of her work.*
- ▶ *They are proud of representing their country.*

TIP: Always 'proud of' + noun or + -ing verb. Never 'proud for' or 'proud about'.

WRONG Responsible of

RIGHT Responsible for

RULE

The adjective 'responsible' is followed by 'for', not 'of'. The structure is 'be responsible for + noun or -ing verb': 'responsible for the project', 'responsible for managing the team'. This is a fixed collocation.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *He is responsible for the marketing department.*
- ▶ *She is responsible for hiring new staff.*
- ▶ *Who is responsible for this mess?*

TIP: Always 'responsible for' + noun or + -ing verb. Never 'responsible of'.

WRONG Explain about

RIGHT Explain (no 'about' needed)

RULE

Like 'discuss', 'explain' is a transitive verb that takes its object directly: 'explain the situation', not 'explain about the situation'. However, you can say 'explain to me about' when 'to me' is the indirect object and 'about' introduces the topic. But in standard usage, 'explain + object' is preferred.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Can you explain this rule to me?*
- ▶ *She explained the procedure step by step.*
- ▶ *The teacher explained why the answer was wrong.*

TIP: 'Explain + object' directly. 'Explain to + person + about + topic' is also acceptable but less common.

WRONG Request for

RIGHT Request (no 'for' as verb) / A request for (...)

RULE

As a verb, 'request' takes its object directly: 'request information', not 'request for information'. As a noun, 'a request for' is correct: 'a request for information'. The verb and noun forms follow different patterns.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I requested an extension. (verb, no 'for')*
- ▶ *She made a request for additional time. (noun, with 'for')*
- ▶ *He requested a refund. (verb, no 'for')*

TIP: Verb: 'request + object' (no 'for'). Noun: 'a request for + object' (with 'for').

WRONG Enter to

RIGHT Enter (no 'to' needed)

RULE

'Enter' is a transitive verb that takes its object directly: 'enter the room', not 'enter to the room'. The confusion may come from the noun 'entrance', which can take 'to': 'the entrance to the building'. But as a verb, 'enter' stands alone.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She entered the room quietly.*
- ▶ *Please enter your password.*
- ▶ *They entered the building through the back door.*

TIP: Verb: 'enter + object' (no 'to'). Noun: 'the entrance to + place' (with 'to').

WRONG Complain of vs Complain about (confused)

RIGHT Complain about (general) / Complain of (...)

RULE

'Complain about' is used for general dissatisfaction: 'complain about the service'. 'Complain of' is used specifically for medical symptoms: 'complain of a headache'. The distinction is nuanced - 'complain of' is more formal and is typically used in medical or legal contexts.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She complained about the slow service. (general)*
- ▶ *The patient complained of chest pain. (medical symptom)*
- ▶ *He complained about his noisy neighbors. (general)*

TIP: For general complaints, use 'complain about'. For medical symptoms, use 'complain of'.

WRONG On accident

RIGHT By accident

RULE

The correct phrase is 'by accident', parallel to 'by mistake' and 'by chance'. 'On accident' is a non-standard variation that has become common in casual American speech but is not accepted in formal English. The preposition 'by' is used for means or method.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I broke the vase by accident.*
- ▶ *She hit me by accident.*
- ▶ *We met by accident at the coffee shop.*

TIP: Always 'by accident' (parallel to 'by mistake'). 'On accident' is non-standard.

WRONG Capable to

RIGHT Capable of

RULE

The adjective 'capable' is always followed by the preposition 'of', not 'to'. The structure is 'capable of + noun or -ing verb': 'capable of great things', 'capable of solving the problem'. This is a fixed collocation.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She is capable of leading the team.*
- ▶ *The machine is capable of processing large amounts of data.*
- ▶ *He is capable of doing better work.*

TIP: Always 'capable of' + noun or + -ing verb. Never 'capable to'.

WRONG Fond for

RIGHT Fond of

RULE

The adjective 'fond' is always followed by the preposition 'of', not 'for'. The structure is 'be fond of + noun or -ing verb': 'fond of chocolate', 'fond of reading'. This is a fixed collocation.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She is fond of classical music.*
- ▶ *He is fond of telling stories about his travels.*
- ▶ *I am not fond of spicy food.*

TIP: Always 'fond of' + noun or + -ing verb. Never 'fond for' or 'fond about'.

WRONG Accused for

RIGHT Accused of

RULE

The verb 'accuse' and the adjective 'accused' are always followed by 'of', not 'for'. The structure is 'accuse someone of + noun or -ing verb': 'accused of theft', 'accused of cheating'. This is a fixed legal collocation.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *He was accused of fraud.*
- ▶ *She accused him of lying.*
- ▶ *They were accused of breaking the rules.*

TIP: Always 'accused of' + noun or + -ing verb. Never 'accused for'.

WRONG Since vs For (confused)

RIGHT Since (specific point in time) / For (duration)

RULE

'Since' is used with a specific point in time when something started: 'since 2020', 'since Monday', 'since I was a child'. 'For' is used with a duration or period of time: 'for three years', 'for two hours', 'for a long time'. The choice depends on whether you are referring to a starting point or a length of time.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I have lived here since 2015. (starting point)*
- ▶ *I have lived here for eight years. (duration)*
- ▶ *She has been studying since morning. (starting point)*

TIP: *Since + a point in time (when it started). For + a period of time (how long).*

WRONG *During vs For vs While (confused)*

RIGHT *During + noun / For + duration / While + c...*

RULE

'During' is a preposition used with nouns: 'during the meeting'. 'For' is a preposition used with durations: 'for two hours'. 'While' is a conjunction used with a full clause (subject + verb): 'while I was sleeping'. Each has a distinct grammatical role.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *During the meeting, we discussed the budget. (during + noun)*
- ▶ *I worked for three hours. (for + duration)*
- ▶ *While I was cooking, the phone rang. (while + clause)*

TIP: *During + noun. For + duration. While + subject + verb (a full clause).*

WRONG *In/On/At (time and place) confused*

RIGHT *In (months, years, cities) / On (days, dates, ...)*

RULE

For time: 'at' for specific times (at 3 pm), 'on' for days and dates (on Monday, on July 4th), 'in' for months, years, seasons (in July, in 2024, in summer). For place: 'at' for specific points (at the door), 'on' for surfaces (on the table), 'in' for enclosed spaces (in the room). The rules differ for time and place.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *The meeting is at 3 pm on Monday in June. (time)*
- ▶ *She lives at 123 Main St, on the second floor, in New York. (place)*
- ▶ *I was born in 1990, on October 15th, at 8 am. (time)*

TIP: *Time: at (specific), on (days/dates), in (months/years). Place: at (point), on (surface), in (enclosed).*

WRONG *To vs For (purpose) confused*

RIGHT *To + verb / For + noun (when expressing ...)*

RULE

When expressing purpose, use 'to + base verb' if you are describing an action: 'I went to the store to buy milk'. Use 'for + noun' if you are describing a thing or purpose: 'I went to the store for milk'. Mixing them creates errors like 'I went for to buy milk' or 'I went to buying milk'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I went to the store to buy bread. (purpose as action)*
- ▶ *I went to the store for bread. (purpose as noun)*
- ▶ *She called to invite me to dinner. (purpose as action)*

TIP: *Action purpose = to + base verb. Noun purpose = for + noun.*

WRONG *By vs With (method) confused*

RIGHT *By (method/process) / With (tool/instrument)*

RULE

'By' is used to describe the method or process: 'travel by train', 'paid by credit card', 'written by hand'. 'With' is used to describe the tool or instrument used: 'cut with a knife', 'written with a pen'. The distinction is between the overall method (by) and the specific tool (with).

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She travels by bus. (method)*
- ▶ *She cut the paper with scissors. (tool)*
- ▶ *The book was written by a famous author. (agent)*

TIP: *By = method or process. With = specific tool or instrument.*

WRONG *About vs Of (after verbs) confused*

RIGHT *About (detailed) / Of (brief mention)*

RULE

After verbs like 'talk', 'think', 'hear', and 'know', 'about' is used when referring to the topic in detail: 'I heard about the accident'. 'Of' is used for brief mention or awareness: 'I have heard of him'. 'Of' suggests knowing that something exists; 'about' suggests knowing details about it.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I have heard of that author. (knows she exists)*
- ▶ *I have heard about her new book. (knows details)*
- ▶ *She spoke about her travels. (in detail)*

TIP: *Of = awareness that something exists. About = detailed knowledge of it.*

Chapter 5: Quantifier Errors

Using much, many, few, little, less, and fewer correctly

Quantifiers allow us to talk about amounts and numbers, but English draws strict grammatical distinctions between countable and uncountable nouns. Using 'much' with countable nouns or 'many' with uncountable nouns is one of the most noticeable errors a learner can make. Subtle distinctions also exist between 'few' and 'a few', 'little' and 'a little', which can completely reverse the meaning of a sentence. This chapter explains eleven essential quantifier patterns and their correct usage.

WRONG *Much people*

RIGHT *Many people*

RULE

'Much' is used only with uncountable nouns (water, time, money). 'Many' is used only with countable plural nouns (people, books, cars). 'People' is countable (one person, two people), so 'many' is correct. This is one of the most fundamental quantifier rules in English.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Many people attended the concert.*
- ▶ *How many people are coming to dinner?*
- ▶ *There were too many people in the room.*

TIP: *Can you count it? Use 'many'. Can't count it? Use 'much'.*

WRONG *Less people*

RIGHT *Fewer people*

RULE

'Less' is used with uncountable nouns: 'less water', 'less time'. 'Fewer' is used with countable plural nouns: 'fewer people', 'fewer cars'. 'People' is countable, so 'fewer' is correct. In casual speech, 'less' is sometimes used for countable nouns, but in formal writing, 'fewer' is required.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *There are fewer people here than yesterday.*
- ▶ *I have less time than I thought.*
- ▶ *We need fewer cars on the road.*

TIP: *Countable = fewer. Uncountable = less. (Think: '10 items or fewer' in the grocery store.)*

WRONG *Little vs Few (confused)*

RIGHT *Little (uncountable) / Few (countable)*

RULE

'Little' is used with uncountable nouns: 'little water', 'little time'. 'Few' is used with countable plural nouns: 'few friends', 'few options'. Both have negative connotations (not enough). Without an article, both imply scarcity: 'I have little money' = not enough money.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *There is little hope for recovery. (uncountable)*
- ▶ *Few students passed the exam. (countable)*
- ▶ *I have little patience for rudeness. (uncountable)*

TIP: *Countable = few. Uncountable = little. Both imply 'not enough'.*

WRONG *Many vs Much (confused)*

RIGHT **Many (countable) / Much (uncountable)**

RULE

'Many' is used with countable plural nouns: 'many books', 'many people'. 'Much' is used with uncountable nouns: 'much water', 'much information'. The rule is the same as for 'fewer/less' - the countability of the noun determines which quantifier to use. In questions and negatives, both are common; in positive statements, 'a lot of' is often preferred over 'much'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *How many books do you have? (countable)*
- ▶ *How much water do you drink? (uncountable)*
- ▶ *There isn't much information available. (uncountable, negative)*

TIP: *Countable = many. Uncountable = much. In positive statements, 'a lot of' often replaces 'much'.*

WRONG *Too much vs Too many (confused)*

RIGHT **Too much (uncountable) / Too many (coun...)**

RULE

'Too much' is used with uncountable nouns: 'too much sugar', 'too much noise'. 'Too many' is used with countable plural nouns: 'too many people', 'too many questions'. Both indicate excess - more than is desirable or acceptable. The countability of the noun determines which to use.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *There is too much traffic today. (uncountable)*
- ▶ *There are too many cars on the road. (countable)*
- ▶ *I ate too much food and got sick. (uncountable)*

TIP: *Too much + uncountable noun. Too many + countable plural noun.*

WRONG *Some vs Any (confused)*

RIGHT **Some (positive statements, offers) / Any (n...)**

RULE

In general, 'some' is used in positive statements: 'I have some friends'. 'Any' is used in negatives and questions: 'I don't have any friends', 'Do you have any friends?'. However, 'some' is used in questions when offering or requesting: 'Would you like some tea?'. And 'any' can be used in positive statements meaning 'it doesn't matter which': 'Any book will do'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I have some money. (positive)*
- ▶ *I don't have any cash. (negative)*
- ▶ *Would you like some coffee? (offer)*

TIP: *Positive = some. Negative/question = any. Offers/requests = some. 'Any' in positive = 'whichever'.*

WRONG *So much vs So many (confused)*

RIGHT **So much (uncountable) / So many (counta...)**

RULE

'So much' is used with uncountable nouns: 'so much love', 'so much work'. 'So many' is used with countable plural nouns: 'so many people', 'so many options'. Both are intensifiers meaning 'a lot of'. The countability rule is the same as

for much/many.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *There was so much noise I couldn't sleep. (uncountable)*
- ▶ *There were so many people at the concert. (countable)*
- ▶ *I have so much work to do. (uncountable)*

TIP: *So much + uncountable. So many + countable plural.*

WRONG *A few vs Few (confused)*

RIGHT *A few (some, positive) / Few (not many, neg...)*

RULE

This is a subtle but important distinction. 'A few' means 'some' or 'a small number' - it has a positive connotation: 'I have a few friends' (I have some). 'Few' without 'a' means 'not many' or 'almost none' - it has a negative connotation: 'I have few friends' (I don't have many). The article 'a' completely changes the meaning.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I have a few good friends. (some, positive)*
- ▶ *Few people understand this concept. (not many, negative)*
- ▶ *She made a few mistakes. (some, but not too many)*

TIP: *A few = some (positive). Few = not enough (negative). Same pattern for 'a little' vs 'little'.*

WRONG *A little vs Little (confused)*

RIGHT *A little (some, positive) / Little (not much,...)*

RULE

Like 'a few' vs 'few', the article 'a' changes the meaning. 'A little' means 'some' or 'a small amount' - positive connotation: 'I have a little money' (I have some). 'Little' without 'a' means 'not much' - negative connotation: 'I have little money' (I don't have much). The distinction is identical to 'a few' vs 'few' but for uncountable nouns.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *I have a little time to help. (some time, positive)*
- ▶ *I have little patience for complainers. (not much, negative)*
- ▶ *There is a little milk left. (some, positive)*

TIP: *A little = some (positive). Little = not much (negative). Same logic as a few/few.*

WRONG *Several vs Some (confused)*

RIGHT *Several (3-7, more specific) / Some (unspeci...)*

RULE

'Several' typically refers to a small number, usually between three and seven: 'several people', 'several options'. 'Some' is more general and can refer to any unspecified amount, from one to many: 'some people', 'some options'. 'Several' is more specific and slightly larger in quantity than 'a few'.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Several students raised their hands. (3-7 students)*
- ▶ *Some students were absent today. (unspecified number)*
- ▶ *I have read several books on this topic. (a few)*

TIP: *Several = a specific small number (3-7). Some = any unspecified amount.*

WRONG *Plenty of vs A lot of (confused)*

RIGHT *Plenty of (more than enough) / A lot of (a l..*

RULE

'Plenty of' means 'more than enough' or 'a sufficient amount': 'plenty of time', 'plenty of food'. 'A lot of' simply means 'a large amount' without implying sufficiency: 'a lot of work'. 'Plenty of' has a positive connotation of sufficiency, while 'a lot of' is neutral.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *We have plenty of time before the flight. (more than enough)*
- ▶ *There is a lot of work to do. (a large amount)*
- ▶ *Don't worry, there is plenty of food for everyone. (more than enough)*

TIP: *Plenty of = more than enough (sufficient). A lot of = a large amount (neutral).*

Chapter 6: Redundancy Errors

Avoiding unnecessary repetition in your writing

Redundancy occurs when a word repeats meaning that is already contained in another word in the same phrase. These errors often sound natural to learners because the redundant phrases are widely used in casual speech, but they are grammatically unnecessary and signal poor writing style. Recognizing redundancy requires understanding the precise meaning of each word so you can identify when two words in a phrase duplicate each other. This chapter examines eight of the most common redundancy errors in English.

WRONG *Return back*

RIGHT **Return**

RULE

'Return' already means 'to go back' or 'to give back', so adding 'back' is redundant - it repeats meaning that is already contained in 'return'. The same applies to 'return back to the office' (just 'return to the office') and 'return the book back' (just 'return the book'). Redundancy is a style error even when the meaning is clear.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She returned to her hometown.*
- ▶ *Please return the book to the library.*
- ▶ *He returned home after a long trip.*

TIP: 'Return' already means 'go back'. Adding 'back' is redundant.

WRONG *Repeat again*

RIGHT **Repeat**

RULE

'Repeat' already means 'to say or do again', so adding 'again' is redundant. The word 'again' is built into the meaning of 'repeat'. You can say 'say it again' (where 'say' is the verb and 'again' is needed), but 'repeat again' is redundant.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Could you repeat the question?*
- ▶ *She repeated the instructions clearly.*
- ▶ *I will not repeat myself.*

TIP: 'Repeat' already means 'do again'. Adding 'again' is redundant. Use 'say again' if you want to emphasize repetition.

WRONG *Advance planning*

RIGHT **Planning**

RULE

By definition, planning is something done in advance - you cannot plan after the fact. Therefore 'advance planning' is redundant. Just 'planning' is sufficient. The same applies to 'advance preparation' (just 'preparation') and 'advance warning' (just 'warning').

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *We need more planning for this project.*
- ▶ *Good planning is essential for success.*
- ▶ *She is in charge of event planning.*

TIP: *Planning is always done in advance. 'Advance planning' is redundant.*

WRONG *Free gift*

RIGHT **Gift**

RULE

A gift is by definition something given without payment - it is inherently free. Adding 'free' to 'gift' is redundant. This phrase is often used in marketing to make offers sound more appealing, but it is grammatically unnecessary. Just 'gift' or 'free [item]' is sufficient.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *Every customer receives a gift with their purchase.*
- ▶ *She received a beautiful gift for her birthday.*
- ▶ *The store is giving away free samples.*

TIP: *A gift is always free. 'Free gift' is a marketing phrase, not good English.*

WRONG *End result*

RIGHT **Result**

RULE

A result is by definition the end or outcome of a process. Adding 'end' to 'result' is redundant. Just 'result' or 'final outcome' is sufficient, but not 'end result'. This phrase is common in business and academic writing but is still considered redundant.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *The result of the experiment was surprising.*
- ▶ *Hard work leads to good results.*
- ▶ *The final outcome was a success.*

TIP: *A result is already an end. 'End result' is redundant. Use 'result' or 'final outcome'.*

WRONG *Final outcome*

RIGHT **Outcome**

RULE

An outcome is by definition the final result of a process or event. Adding 'final' to 'outcome' is redundant - an outcome is always final. Just 'outcome' is sufficient. This phrase is common in academic and medical writing but is still grammatically unnecessary.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *The outcome of the election was uncertain.*
- ▶ *We are waiting for the outcome of the negotiation.*
- ▶ *The patient's outcome was positive.*

TIP: *An outcome is always final. 'Final outcome' is redundant. Just 'outcome'.*

WRONG *Past history*

RIGHT **History**

RULE

History is by definition about the past - there is no 'future history'. Adding 'past' to 'history' is redundant. The phrase 'past history' is sometimes used in medical or legal contexts to distinguish from 'family history', but in general usage, 'history' alone is sufficient.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *She has a history of heart disease.*
- ▶ *The country has a long and complex history.*
- ▶ *We studied ancient history in school.*

TIP: *History is always about the past. 'Past history' is redundant.*

WRONG *Close proximity*

RIGHT **Proximity**

RULE

Proximity already means 'closeness' or 'nearness' - the word 'close' is built into its meaning. Therefore 'close proximity' is redundant. Just 'proximity' or 'in close proximity' without 'close' (e.g., 'in proximity to') is sufficient. The word 'proximity' alone conveys the meaning of closeness.

EXAMPLES

- ▶ *The hotel is in proximity to the airport.*
- ▶ *Their houses are in close proximity to each other. (informal)*
- ▶ *Proximity to good schools increases property values.*

TIP: *Proximity already means 'closeness'. 'Close proximity' is redundant. Use 'proximity' or 'near'.*

Practice Quiz

Test yourself with these twenty questions covering all six categories.

This quiz mixes multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions to test your understanding of the mistakes covered in this handbook. Try to answer all twenty questions without looking back at the chapters. When you finish, check your answers against the Answer Key on the next page, where each answer is accompanied by a brief explanation that reminds you of the underlying rule. Aim for at least sixteen correct answers to feel confident that you have mastered the material. If you score lower, return to the relevant chapter and review the explanations and examples before trying again.

Q1. Choose the correct sentence:

- A. Everyone are happy with the decision.
- B. Everyone is happy with the decision.
- C. Everyone were happy with the decision.
- D. Everyone being happy with the decision.

Q2. Which sentence is grammatically correct?

- A. I have saw that movie before.
- B. I have seen that movie before.
- C. I have see that movie before.
- D. I have sawed that movie before.

Q3. Fill in the blank: 'She has _____ to the store.' (go - past participle)

Your answer: _____

Q4. Choose the correct preposition: 'She is interested ___ photography.'

- A. on
- B. about
- C. in
- D. at

Q5. Which is correct?

- A. There were much people at the concert.
- B. There were many people at the concert.
- C. There was many people at the concert.
- D. There were most people at the concert.

Q6. Fill in the blank: 'I _____ agree with your opinion.' (use 'agree' correctly)

Your answer: _____

Q7. Choose the correct word: 'She gave me excellent _____.'

- A. advice

- B. advise
- C. advises
- D. advising

Q8. Which sentence uses the correct preposition?

- A. She is married with a doctor.
- B. She is married to a doctor.
- C. She is married for a doctor.
- D. She is married on a doctor.

Q9. Fill in the blank: 'I have lived here _____ 2015.' (since or for)

Your answer: _____

Q10. Which is correct?

- A. I should of studied harder.
- B. I should have studied harder.
- C. I should had studied harder.
- D. I should has studied harder.

Q11. Choose the correct sentence:

- A. We will discuss about the proposal tomorrow.
- B. We will discuss the proposal tomorrow.
- C. We will discuss on the proposal tomorrow.
- D. We will discuss for the proposal tomorrow.

Q12. Fill in the blank: 'There were too _____ cars on the road.' (much or many)

Your answer: _____

Q13. Which sentence is grammatically correct?

- A. He didn't went to the party.
- B. He didn't go to the party.
- C. He didn't gone to the party.
- D. He didn't going to the party.

Q14. Choose the correct phrase:

- A. Return back to the office
- B. Return to the office
- C. Return back the office
- D. Return back office

Q15. Fill in the blank: 'She is good _____ mathematics.' (in or at)

Your answer: _____

Q16. Which is correct?

- A. She is capable to solve the problem.
- B. She is capable of solving the problem.
- C. She is capable for solving the problem.
- D. She is capable on solving the problem.

Q17. Choose the correct word: 'I practice piano _____ day.'

- A. everyday
- B. every day
- C. everday
- D. every days

Q18. Fill in the blank: 'I broke the vase _____ accident.' (by or on)

Your answer: _____

Q19. Which sentence is correct?

- A. I have few time to help you.
- B. I have a few time to help you.
- C. I have little time to help you.
- D. I have a little few time to help you.

Q20. Choose the correct word: 'He is _____ to criticism.'

- A. sensible
- B. sensitive
- C. sensing
- D. sensed

Answer Key & Explanations

Check your answers and review the rules behind each one.

Below are the correct answers to all twenty quiz questions, along with a brief explanation of the rule that applies. Read each explanation carefully even if you answered correctly, as reinforcement helps lock in the rule for long-term recall. If you missed any questions, return to the corresponding chapter for more detailed explanations and additional examples. Consider revisiting the quiz in a week to see how much you remember - active recall is one of the most effective study techniques for long-term retention of grammar rules.

Q1. B. Everyone is happy with the decision.

Explanation: 'Everyone' is grammatically singular and takes a singular verb 'is'.

Q2. B. I have seen that movie before.

Explanation: After 'have', use the past participle 'seen', not the simple past 'saw'.

Q3. gone

Explanation: After 'has', use the past participle 'gone', not 'went'.

Q4. C. in

Explanation: The adjective 'interested' is always followed by 'in'.

Q5. B. There were many people at the concert.

Explanation: 'People' is countable, so 'many' is correct. The verb 'were' agrees with the plural 'people'.

Q6. agree

Explanation: 'Agree' is a verb; do not add 'am' before it. The correct form is just 'agree'.

Q7. A. advice

Explanation: 'Advice' is the noun form. 'Advise' is the verb form.

Q8. B. She is married to a doctor.

Explanation: The correct preposition after 'married' is 'to', not 'with'.

Q9. since

Explanation: 'Since' is used with a specific point in time (2015). 'For' is used with a duration.

Q10. B. I should have studied harder.

Explanation: The correct form is 'should have' + past participle. 'Should of' is a spelling error.

Q11. B. We will discuss the proposal tomorrow.

Explanation: 'Discuss' is a transitive verb and takes its object directly without 'about'.

Q12. many

Explanation: 'Cars' is countable, so 'many' is correct. 'Much' is for uncountable nouns.

Q13. B. He didn't go to the party.

Explanation: After 'didn't', use the base form of the verb: 'go', not 'went'.

Q14. B. Return to the office

Explanation: 'Return' already means 'go back'. Adding 'back' is redundant.

Q15. at

Explanation: For skills and abilities, use 'good at', not 'good in'.

Q16. B. She is capable of solving the problem.

Explanation: 'Capable' is always followed by 'of + -ing verb', not 'to + base verb'.

Q17. B. every day

Explanation: 'Every day' (two words) is the adverbial phrase meaning 'each day'. 'Everyday' (one word) is an adjective meaning 'ordinary'.

Q18. by

Explanation: The correct phrase is 'by accident', not 'on accident'.

Q19. C. I have little time to help you.

Explanation: 'Time' is uncountable, so 'little' (not 'few') is correct. Without 'a', 'little' means 'not much' (negative connotation).

Q20. B. sensitive

Explanation: 'Sensitive' means easily affected emotionally. 'Sensible' means practical or reasonable.

Quick Reference Cheat Sheet

All mistakes at a glance, color-coded by category.

This compact reference lists every mistake in the handbook in a single table. Use it for last-minute revision before an exam, as a quick lookup when you are writing, or as a checklist when proofreading your own work. The left column shows the incorrect form, and the right column shows the correct form. The color bar on the left of each row indicates which category the mistake belongs to, matching the chapter colors used throughout this handbook.

Cat	Wrong Form	Correct Form
●	People is	People are
●	He go	He goes
●	Everyone are	Everyone is
●	Each are	Each is
●	Someone are	Someone is
●	Someone have	Someone has
●	Everybody have	Everybody has
●	None are	None is (or None are)
●	A number of is	A number of are / The number of is
●	A lot of people is	A lot of people are
●	One of the students are	One of the students is
●	Each of the students are	Each of the students is
●	A group of people is	A group of people are (informal) / is (formal)
●	Everybody are	Everybody is
●	Nobody are	Nobody is
●	Everyone have	Everyone has
●	Each of or Every of	Each of (Every is not used with 'of')
●	Either of are / Neither of are	Either of is / Neither of is
●	I am agree	I agree
●	He didn't went	He didn't go
●	Did you went	Did you go
●	I done	I did / I have done
●	I have saw	I have seen
●	I have ate	I have eaten
●	I have wrote	I have written
●	I have drank	I have drunk
●	I have went	I have gone
●	He has came	He has come
●	I seen	I saw / I have seen

Cat	Wrong Form	Correct Form
●	She has went	She has gone
●	Should of	Should have
●	Used to + be used to (confused)	Used to (past habit) / Be used to (accustomed to)
●	Advice vs Advise (confused)	Advice (noun) / Advise (verb)
●	Do vs Make (confused)	Do (action/activity) / Make (creation/result)
●	Speak vs Talk (confused)	Speak (formal/one-way) / Talk (conversational/two-way)
●	Bring vs Take (confused)	Bring (toward speaker) / Take (away from speaker)
●	Listen vs Hear (confused)	Listen (intentional) / Hear (involuntary)
●	Say vs Tell (confused)	Say (no indirect object) / Tell (with indirect object)
●	Look vs See vs Watch (confused)	Look (intentional, brief) / See (involuntary) / Watch (sustained attention)
●	Learn vs Study (confused)	Learn (acquire knowledge) / Study (effort/process)
●	Borrow vs Lend (confused)	Borrow (take temporarily) / Lend (give temporarily)
●	Remember vs Remind (confused)	Remember (recall yourself) / Remind (cause someone to remember)
●	Win vs Beat (confused)	Win (the event/thing) / Beat (the opponent)
●	A lot	A lot (two words)
●	Everyday (adjective) vs Every day (adverb)	Everyday (ordinary) / Every day (each day)
●	Sometime vs Sometimes (confused)	Sometime (at some time) / Sometimes (occasionally)
●	Into vs In To (confused)	Into (movement inward) / In to (two separate words)
●	Sensible vs Sensitive (confused)	Sensible (practical/reasonable) / Sensitive (easily affected)
●	Efficient vs Effective (confused)	Efficient (doing things well) / Effective (achieving the goal)
●	Very vs Too vs So (confused)	Very (high degree) / Too (excessive) / So (emphatic)
●	So vs Such (confused)	So + adjective/adverb / Such + (a/an) + adjective + noun
●	Still vs Yet vs Already (confused)	Still (continuing) / Yet (expected, not happened) / Already (happened sooner than expected)
●	Discuss about	Discuss (no preposition)
●	Married with	Married to
●	Different than	Different from (preferred) / Different to (British)
●	Interested on	Interested in
●	Good in	Good at
●	In the weekend	On the weekend (American) / At the weekend (British)
●	Arrive in vs Arrive at (confused)	Arrive in (countries/cities) / Arrive at (specific places)
●	Afraid from	Afraid of
●	Proud for	Proud of

Cat	Wrong Form	Correct Form
●	Responsible of	Responsible for
●	Explain about	Explain (no 'about' needed)
●	Request for	Request (no 'for' as verb) / A request for (as noun)
●	Enter to	Enter (no 'to' needed)
●	Complain of vs Complain about (confused)	Complain about (general) / Complain of (medical symptom)
●	On accident	By accident
●	Capable to	Capable of
●	Fond for	Fond of
●	Accused for	Accused of
●	Since vs For (confused)	Since (specific point in time) / For (duration)
●	During vs For vs While (confused)	During + noun / For + duration / While + clause (subject + verb)
●	In/On/At (time and place) confused	In (months, years, cities) / On (days, dates, surfaces) / At (specific times, addresses)
●	To vs For (purpose) confused	To + verb / For + noun (when expressing purpose)
●	By vs With (method) confused	By (method/process) / With (tool/instrument)
●	About vs Of (after verbs) confused	About (detailed) / Of (brief mention)
●	Much people	Many people
●	Less people	Fewer people
●	Little vs Few (confused)	Little (uncountable) / Few (countable)
●	Many vs Much (confused)	Many (countable) / Much (uncountable)
●	Too much vs Too many (confused)	Too much (uncountable) / Too many (countable)
●	Some vs Any (confused)	Some (positive statements, offers) / Any (negatives, questions)
●	So much vs So many (confused)	So much (uncountable) / So many (countable)
●	A few vs Few (confused)	A few (some, positive) / Few (not many, negative)
●	A little vs Little (confused)	A little (some, positive) / Little (not much, negative)
●	Several vs Some (confused)	Several (3-7, more specific) / Some (unspecified amount)
●	Plenty of vs A lot of (confused)	Plenty of (more than enough) / A lot of (a large amount)
●	Return back	Return
●	Repeat again	Repeat
●	Advance planning	Planning
●	Free gift	Gift
●	End result	Result
●	Final outcome	Outcome
●	Past history	History
●	Close proximity	Proximity

Source: typogrammar.com/grammar-mistakes/ · Compiled June 2026