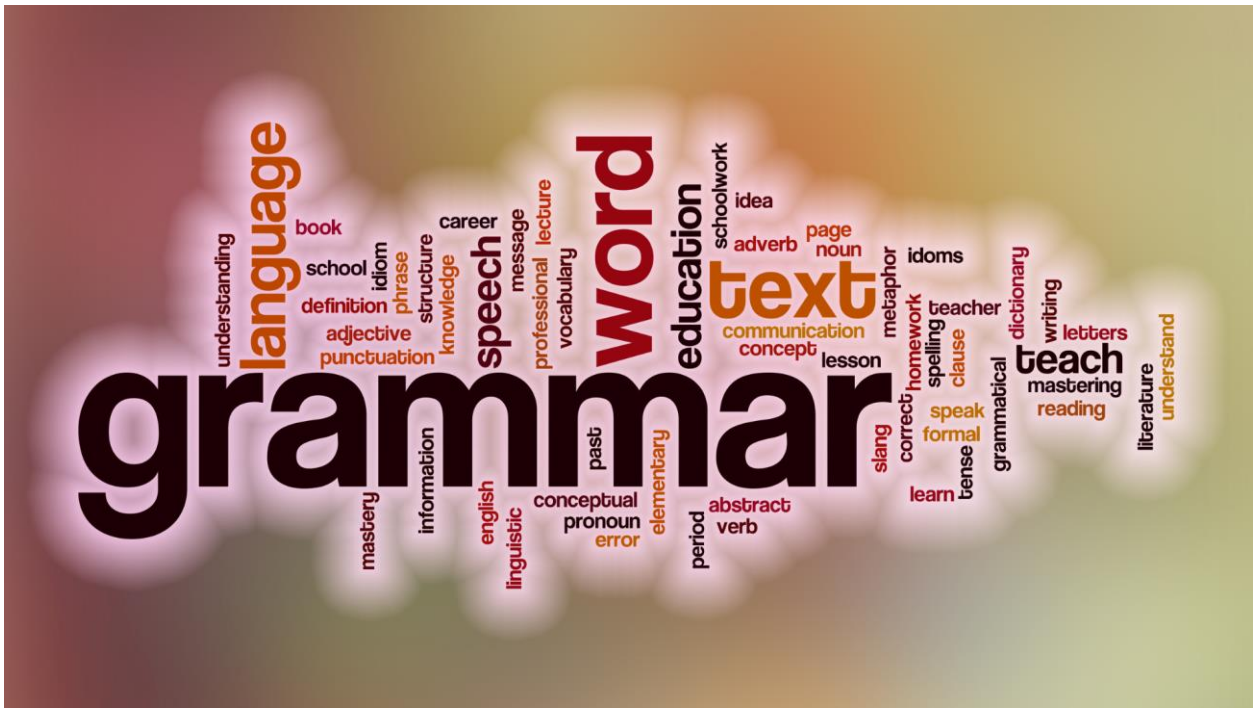
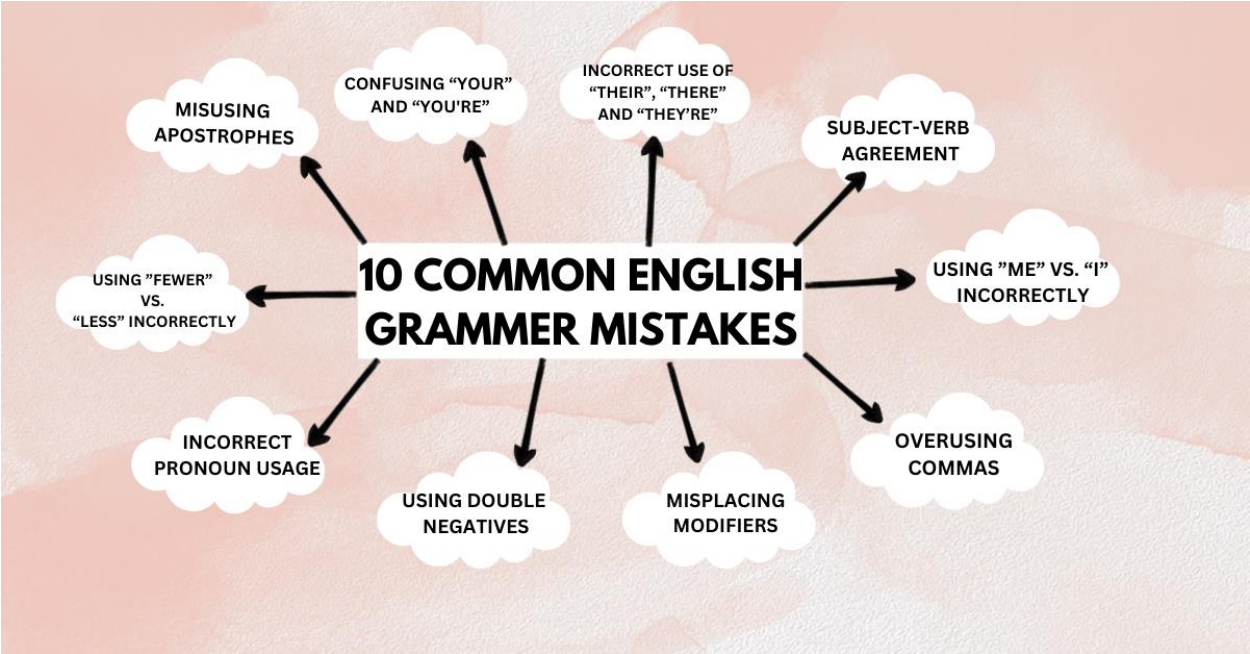
COMMUNICATIVE GRAMMAR
February 2025




# How to improve your English grammar

## 1. Do some grammar exercises

Some people are happy to do grammar exercises. They might even enjoy it, a bit like doing a crossword or sudoku puzzle. If that's you, that's absolutely great! Consider getting a book with explanations, exercises for practice and – very important for self-study – the answers!




# 2. Look it up!

Even if you're not going to do practice exercises, it's really useful to have a grammar book with clear information and explanations.

Our Grammar reference section will also help you whenever you want to know how a particular bit of language works.

Every doubt is an opportunity to learn. And research shows that you remember language better when you need it at that moment. So when you're next writing an email in English and you think *Is that right????*, look it up! The answer is at your fingertips.

# 3. Practise using the grammar you know

OK, I have a question for you. Does studying grammar help you speak English better?

What do you think?

If you're thinking *Yes … Well, sort of*, that's basically what experts think too.

Knowing grammar rules is very helpful. But it doesn't necessarily mean you can remember and apply those rules in a natural conversation. It's as though all your grammar knowledge is in a different part of your brain, and when you're speaking, you don't have time to access it.

Does that sound familiar?

Here's the good news. Every time you use a particular grammar pattern when you're speaking English, you make it more available to your brain in spontaneous conversation.

With practice, your grammar knowledge stops being just theory and becomes more automatic or natural, just like when you learn to drive a car.

So, practise using the grammar you know. Get that knowledge out there! Learn how it feels in your mouth and ears!

That's the challenge. If you can do that regularly, you'll soon be speaking accurate English without even thinking about grammar rules.

# 4. 'Notice' correct grammar

There's another really useful thing you can do to improve your grammar. It's called 'noticing'.

Noticing means paying attention to language patterns when you hear or see them. And it's something you can do in your everyday life.

Imagine you've been going around saying, 'Don't worry for that'. And then one day you hear someone say, 'Don't worry about that'. If you're a good noticer, you'll recognise that what you just heard is the correct version, and you'll make a mental note to say it correctly next time.

When you notice a correct bit of grammar being used, congratulations! That means you're ready to learn it and use it yourself.

The great thing about noticing is that it happens in a communicative situation. That means you're more likely to be able to use it when you're communicating too.

# 5. Learn the grammar of words

We often think of vocabulary and grammar as separate. Vocabulary means words and grammar means the structure of phrases, right?

But words have grammar too.

Let's take the example of *want.* Learners often know the meaning of *want*, but they don't know the grammar that goes with it.

Can you take the following elements and make a sentence?

*She wants / you / learn / whole phrases*

I'll give you a clue: 'wants that you' is not correct.

You need to know the grammar of the word *want.* It's *want someone to do something.*

Now you've got it, right? The correct answer is: *She wants you to learn whole phrases.*

So, when you learn new words, make a note of them in a longer phrase. Pay attention to how we use those words in a sentence. You're studying vocabulary, but you're learning grammar at the same time. Genius!

# 6. Read a lot

Reading in English is brilliant for your vocabulary, speaking, understanding and also … (drum roll … what could it be??) your grammar!

Seeing the correct grammar on a page helps you remember and use grammar that you've already studied. It also shows you new structures in context. The more you see a particular grammar pattern written down, the more likely you are to be able to use it yourself. Reading anything and everything in English helps. And that includes subtitles on your favourite series too.

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