

15 Common Errors in English

1. SAY Vs TELL

One of the most common mistakes is the difference between Say and Tell. People often get confused about where to use say and tell. It sounds bad when you use it incorrectly.

Say- “ Say” is used when someone says something. If not mentioning anyone else you can use " say"

Tell- If someone says that same thing to someone else, we use the verb "to tell".

Example

- She said that she wants to go to the theatre
- She told me that she wants to go to the theatre
- I told my friend let's go to college.
- She said goodbye!
- I will tell you a secret!

Phrases with Tell

You cannot use 'say' with certain sentences, for instance,

- tell (someone) a story
- Tell (someone) a lie
- Tell (someone) the truth
- Tell the future(to know what the future will bring)
- Tell the time (know how to read a clock)
- Tell a secret!

2. THEIR, THERE OR THEY'RE

Their- 'Their' is a possessive pronoun. It signifies ownership of something by one or more people.

Example

- I visited my grandparents over the weekend. Their house is beautiful.
- Their car is expensive
- Their pets are scary

They're- "They're" is a contraction of "they are"

Example

- My friends didn't bring umbrellas. They're going to get wet
- They're getting married.
- They're getting ready

There- "There" can be used as an adverb, noun, pronoun, or adjective. However, it is NOT a possessive pronoun or a contraction.

Example

- I traveled there during my vacation. (adverb)
- I will always be there for you. (adjective)
- We can go there. (noun)
- There is someone at the door. (pronoun)

3. IT'S Vs ITS

It's- "It's" is a contraction of " it is". People often get confused because an apostrophe combined with the letter "s" is usually associated with the possession of something.

Example

- Have you read this book? It's one of my favorites.
- It's almost six o'clock.
- It's about the quality

Its- "Its" is a possessive pronoun that signifies ownership by a non-human thing.

Example

- Look at that tree! Its leaves are so beautiful!
- The cat licked its tail.
- This basket is new Its patterns are unique

4. YOUR Vs YOU'RE

Your- "Your" indicates a possession, that something belongs to you.

Example

- Can I use your pencil?
- Can I read your book?
- Is this your lunch box?

You're- "You're" is the contraction of the words "You and are".

Example

- You're beautiful.
- You're not listening to me.
- Do you know where you're going?

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5. MEET Vs SEE

Meet - "Meet" is only used for people that you meet for the first time.

Example: What's your name? Nice to meet you.

See- "See" is used when talking to people you already know.

Example

- It's nice to see you.
- It's nice to see you again.

6. COMPARATIVES (THAN)

When using the word "than" while comparing two things, you need to say how they compare.

Example

- Bigger than
- Smaller than
- Sweeter than
- Taller than
- Shorter than
- Spicier than

OR

- Less productive than
- More productive than

"She is tall than her" is a wrong sentence. You need to switch to "she is taller than her". Use the "-er" form or the comparative form to make comparisons.

The second major mistake that people usually commit while dealing with the English language is the use of more/most with the 'er' and 'est' words. To make you sound more authentic and proficient, don't use "more/most" along with "er and est" words.

Example:

- The apple is sweeter than the tomatoes
- The apple is More sweeter than the tomatoes.

Let's look at another sentence, "I want a better life" which is an example of the correct usage of a sentence which shows your yearning to live a life in a better way. The sentence " I want a more better life" is wrong in all its sense as the word " 'more' is not suitable to go along with 'better'.

7. WRONG USE OF MYSELF AND AM

While you introduce yourself, don't use sentences like "Myself(name)" or "Am (name)" to introduce yourself to someone. Instead, say " I am (name)" or "My name is (name)".

Example

- I am Harsha
- My name is Diya

8. PROPER USE OF THE 'Y' SOUND

Sometimes, you tend to add 'y' in front of English words starting with 'e'.

To make it more clear, here is a demonstration of how people often tend to add 'y' in front of certain words starting with 'e'

Example

- It's not Yegg but egg
- It's not Yelephant but an elephant
- It's not Yempire but an empire.

Also, you may tend to remove the 'Y' sound from certain words that start with 'Ye'.

Example

- It's Yellow and not Elow
- It's Yes and not Es
- It's 'yearn' and not Eearn

9. UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

Uncountable nouns do not have plural forms and they cannot be used with numbers or article a/an.

Example

- Advice
- Information
- Luggage
- Furniture
- Research
- Work
- Content
- Failure
- Motivation
- Pollution
- Youth

10. NOUNS WITH IDENTICAL SINGULAR AND PLURAL FORMS

There are many nouns in the English language whose plural is not formed by "-s or -es". The learners should note the fact that there are many words in the English language that do not change to form the plural.

Some everyday life examples are given below for a better understanding

- Deer
- Aircraft
- Fish
- Sheep
- Shrimp
- Moose
- News

Also, note that the adjectives used to describe a nation or cultural group can be used as plural nouns only.

Example: British, French, German, Italian, etc.

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11. EVERY WITH SINGULAR NOUN/PLURAL NOUN

"Every" is used as a determiner. 'Every' is used to denote each member of a group. Never use 'every' with a plural noun. As per the rule, "every" should be used along with the singular noun to refer to all the members of a group. Learners should also note that whenever 'every' is used as a reference to the subject of a clause, you have to use a singular verb.

Example

- Every player wants to be noticed.
- Every student needs a good lecturer.
- Every student is smart in the class

Note that, a singular noun is always used with every. This is a very common mistake that we commit in our everyday language use.

12. DISINTERESTED Vs UNINTERESTED

People often get confused with the words disinterested and uninterested. Both words are seemingly similar but carry altogether different meanings. They are often used as if they have the same meaning. To avoid confusion, you need to know the difference between both.

When someone doesn't show any vested interest in any matter, such a person is disinterested. It can also suggest being impartial, not influenced by the deliberation of personal gains. "Uninterested on the other hand shows a lack of interest in something.

Example

- He is uninterested in Biology.

- Many students are uninterested in swimming.
- The judge is disinterested in the case.
- She seemed disinterested in what was going on at home

13. FALL Vs FALL DOWN

We often get confused between "fall and fall down". Fall can be used as a noun or a verb. Whereas "fall down" is a phrasal verb.

To "fall down" means to "fall into the ground from standing position". To "fall" means to "come down from a much higher position".

Tears do not 'fall down' from your eyes but they just fall from your eyes. Leaves, rain, snow, apple, etc do not fall down but fall. As per the prescribed rule, you should use 'fall' and not 'fall down' to show the natural downward movement of many things.

Example

- Ten trees fell in the storm
- Elizabeth had a terrible fall yesterday.
- The picture keeps falling down
- Rent has fallen down.

14. JEWELLERY Vs JEWELLERS

The words like jewellery and jewellers are often wrongly understood by people. The word "jewellery" denotes the ornaments like bangles, necklaces, rings, chains, etc. This word is often taken for granted as a word that denotes the place where ornaments are sold. Please keep in mind that you buy your jewellery from a jeweller's. The jeweller is the word used to denote the place where ornaments are sold to customers. There are different types of jewellery, for instance, expensive-looking jewellery made of inexpensive materials is known as "costume jewellery whereas "rolled gold" is gold plated.

15. EACH OTHER Vs ONE ANOTHER

People often wrongly understood the meaning of both these words.

One another is more formal when compared to each other. We use "each other" while talking about only two people. Whereas "one another" can be used when we mention about three or more people.

Example

- They both love each other.
- Her team members trust one another
- Miya and Rohan hate each other
- We have to help one another.