

Top ten mistakes in English writing

We have edited thousands of English documents at bridger-jones.com. Our editors have noticed some common errors made by writers with English as a second language. They have kindly compiled this list to make the process of writing in English easier for you. Follow these simple rules and you will be ten steps closer to writing perfect English.

1. Spelling mistakes

Many spelling mistakes occur when homophones are used in a sentence. Homophones are words that are pronounced the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings. Don't always trust your spell checker. Here are a few examples:

Break/brake

Flour/flower

Bare/bear

Air/heir

2. Sentence fragments

Always include a subject and a verb in a sentence.

Incorrect: A story with deep meaning.

Correct: He wrote a story with deep meaning.

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3. Too many words

Aim for concise sentences. Too many words can blur your meaning. Clarity is important when your reader is also not a native English speaker.

Undesirable: The boys were running late due to the fact that there were no longer any trains leaving the station.

Desirable: The boys were late because no trains were running.

4. Introductory phrase and comma

The introductory phrase introduces a longer sentence. The introductory phrase should be followed by a comma (,).

Incorrect: While our editors improve your English they do not change your formatting.

Correct: While our editors improve your English, they do not change your formatting.

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5. Run-on sentences (missing comma before the conjunction)

Can each clause after the introductory clause in your sentence be a sentence on its own? Yes? Then you must insert the comma.

Incorrect: While I am writing my thesis, my sister goes to work and my brother goes to school.

Correct: While I am writing my thesis, my sister goes to work, and my brother goes to school.

6. Modifiers

When modifiers are misused, it is not clear which word they modify.

Incorrect: Writers who study writing **rarely** write bad papers

Correct: Writers who **rarely** study writing write bad papers **or** Writers who study writing write bad papers **rarely**.

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7. Subject-verb agreement

Incorrect: Sally play football.

Correct: Sally plays football.

Incorrect: They studies English.

Correct: They study English.

Incorrect: John and Sally studies English.

Correct: John and Sally study English.

8. Misuse of articles

Use **'a'** before a consonant sound.

Use **'an'** before a vowel sound.

'The' is used for specific singular or plural nouns.

Incorrect: I had dog.

Correct: I had **a** dog.

Incorrect: I went to cinema last week.

Correct: I went to **the** cinema last week.

Incorrect: I had a MMR injection.

Correct: I had **an** MMR injection. (vowel sound)

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9. Irregular plural nouns

There are no rules for irregular plural nouns. You have to learn them or look them up in a dictionary.

Child/children

Foot/ feet

Loaf/loaves

Crisis/crises

Man/men

10. Order of adjectives

Opinion - Age - Shape/size - Colour - Origin - Material

Have you seen my **amazing new black French leather** handbag?

So there you have the top ten most common mistakes made when writing English. If you perfect these features of written English, you are well on your way to producing perfect English texts.