



# COMMON ENGLISH ERRORS

## when a learner's first language is French

Common language errors can vary a lot according to the first language of the learner. When teaching English as a second language to French students, it is common to spot the following mistakes in a learner's grammar and vocabulary.

### Words learners most typically spell incorrectly

- **which** (for example, spelled **wich**)
- **company** (for example, spelled **compagny**)
- **advertisement** (for example, spelled **advertisment**)
- **future** (for example, spelled **futur**)
- **tomorrow** (for example, spelled **tomorow**)
- **comfortable** (for example, spelled **confortable**)
- **interesting** (for example, spelled **interresting**)
- **beginning** (for example, spelled **begining**)
- **very** (for example, spelled **verry**)
- **address** (for example, spelled **adress**)

French learners are comparatively very good at English spelling, perhaps because of the large number of borrowed French words in English.

### Learners tend to confuse verbs and collocations

The biggest error for French learners of English is using the wrong verb. *Make* and *do* are used when other verbs are more suitable, while *have*, *get*, *go* and *do* are most often missed out. *Come* and *go* are commonly confused.

- Finally, could you **make do** me a favour?
- I managed to **do go** scuba diving and windsurfing for only £30.
- It took three hours to **go get** to Woolsey Castle.

Key: errors in **red**, corrections in **blue**.



## Learners tend to make mistakes with prepositions

Preposition errors may depend on verbs, nouns or adjectives either before or after the preposition (shown in bold), so there are a lot of patterns to learn.

- We decided to go to the south of **France** **in to** a small village called Le Grau-du-Roi.
- At first, they were **in on** good **terms** with each other.
- To be **successful** **in at** something is to have a passion.

## Modal verbs and the present tense are problematic

There are often problems with modal verbs like *can* and *would*, and also overuse of present tense.

- It **will would** be better to ask for their prices before accepting the proposal.
- You **could can** buy bus tickets at the airport.
- I liked this competition because it **is was** exciting.

## Commonly confused nouns

- |                        |                    |                    |                   |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| • <b>travel</b>        | <b>trip</b>        | • <b>job</b>       | <b>work</b>       |
| • <b>advertisement</b> | <b>advertising</b> | • <b>travel</b>    | <b>journey</b>    |
| • <b>home</b>          | <b>house</b>       | • <b>education</b> | <b>upbringing</b> |
| • <b>possibility</b>   | <b>opportunity</b> | • <b>amount</b>    | <b>number</b>     |
| • <b>parking</b>       | <b>car park</b>    | • <b>work</b>      | <b>job</b>        |

- If we compare the cost of **advertisement advertising** it is nearly the same.
- You can come to my **home house** at 5pm.
- My father added his own personal ideas to my **education upbringing**.

Finally, a prominent French error is use of **be interesting in** for **be interested in** and **last** for **latest**.

Key: errors in red, corrections in blue.