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 tomorrow)
- 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 Woolsery 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

- travel trip
- advertisement advertising
- home house
- possibility opportunity
- parking car park
- job work
- travel journey
- education upbringing
- amount number
- work job

- 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.

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