



# COMMON ENGLISH ERRORS

## when a learner's first language is Portuguese

Common language errors can vary a lot according to the first language of the learner. When teaching English as a second language to Portuguese 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**)
- **comfortable** (for example, spelled **confortable**)
- **beautiful** (for example, spelled **beatiful**)
- **beginning** (for example, spelled **begining**)
- **because** (for example, spelled **becouse**)
- **believe** (for example, spelled **belive**)
- **different** (for example, spelled **diferent**)
- **accommodation** (for example, spelled **acomodation**)
- **together** (for example, spelled **togheter**)
- **always** (for example, spelled **allways**)

### Confusion of prepositions in a context or phrase

The most frequently confused prepositions are *in*, *at* and *on*. The top errors are **in** for **at**, **in** for **on** and **on** for **in**.

- She sat in the living room with the letter **on in** her hands.
- I would like to apply **to for** the job.
- A person could expect to have a job **in at** that time.

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



## Use of the wrong verb in a context or phrase

The most commonly confused verbs are **use** for **wear**, **go** for **come** and **forgot** for **left**. The most frequent verbs that Portuguese learners miss out are verbs *have*, *wear* and *is*.

- It's going to be hot so try to **use** **wear** comfortable clothes.
- Can you **go** **come** to my house?
- I **forgot** **left** my passport at your house yesterday evening.

A distinctive error that Portuguese learners make is the use of the wrong form of a non-finite verb, e.g. "You can get a bus or taxi **for going** **to go** to the park". This may also include an incorrect preposition.

## Confusion between verb tenses

Portuguese speakers often use the present instead of the past, often in conditionals...

- It would be reasonable if I **have** **had** at least part of the money refunded.

...or just normal past and present confusion.

- Everybody **like** **liked** to talk about their problems with him.

## Learners often confuse nouns

Some of the most commonly confused nouns include **work** for **job**, **cloth** for **clothes**, or **travel** for **trip**.

- A good person is one who has achieved a good professional level in a **work** **job** which he or she enjoys.
- The **travel** **trip** was already paid for.
- I moved to a new **home** **house** last week.

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