

GOLDEN GRAMMAR RULES

By Michael Swan

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1. Don't use *an* with *own*.

Sue needs **her own** room. (NOT ~~Sue needs an own room.~~)

I'd like **a** phone line **of my own**. (NOT ... ~~an own phone line.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 405.

2. Use *or rather* to correct yourself.

She's German – **or rather**, Austrian. (NOT ~~She's German – or better, Austrian.~~)

I'll see you on Friday – **or rather**, Saturday.

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 157.

3. Use the simple present – *play(s)*, *rain(s)* etc – to talk about habits and repeated actions.

I **play** tennis every Saturday. (NOT ~~I am playing tennis every Saturday.~~)

It usually **rains** a lot in November.

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition sections 461–4.

4. Use *will* ..., not the present, for offers and promises.

I'll **cook** you supper this evening. (NOT ~~I cook you supper this evening.~~)

I promise I'll **phone** you tomorrow. (NOT ~~I promise I phone you tomorrow.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 217.

5. Don't drop prepositions with passive verbs.

I don't like to be shouted **at**. (NOT ~~I don't like to be shouted.~~)

This needs to be thought **about** some more. (NOT ~~This needs to be thought some more.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition page section 416.

6. Don't use a present tense after *It's time*.

It's time you **went** home. (NOT ~~It's time you go home.~~)

It's time we **invited** Bill and Sonia. (NOT ~~It's time we invite Bill and Sonia.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 306.

7. Use *was/were born* to give dates of birth.

I **was born** in 1975. (NOT ~~I am born in 1975.~~)

Shakespeare **was born** in 1564.

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 108.

8. *Police* is a plural noun.

The police **are** looking for him. (NOT ~~The police is looking for him.~~)
I called the police, but **they were** too busy to come.

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 524.

9. Don't use *the* to talk about things in general.

Books are expensive. (NOT ~~The books are expensive.~~)
I love **music**. (NOT ~~I love the music.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 68.

10. Use *had better*, not *have better*.

I think you'd **better** see the doctor. (NOT ~~I think you have better see the doctor.~~)
We'd **better** ask John to help us.

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 230.

11. Use the present progressive - *am playing, is raining* etc - to talk about things that are continuing at the time of speaking.

I'm **playing** very badly today. (NOT ~~I play very badly today.~~)
Look! It's **raining**! (NOT ~~Look! It rains!~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition sections 461–4.

12. Use *for* with a period of time. Use *since* with the beginning of the period.

for the last two hours = since 9 o'clock
for three days = since Monday
for five years = since I left school
I've been learning English **for** five years. (NOT ~~I've been learning English since three years.~~)
We've been waiting **for** ages, since eight o'clock.

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 208.

13. Don't separate the verb from the object.

VERB OBJECT

She **speaks English** very well. (NOT ~~She speaks very well English.~~)
Andy **likes skiing** very much. (NOT ~~Andy likes very much skiing.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 611.

14. Don't use the present perfect - *have/has seen, have/has gone* etc - with words that name a finished time.

I **saw** him yesterday. (NOT ~~I have seen him yesterday.~~)
They **went** to Greece last summer. (NOT ~~They have gone ... last summer.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 456.

15. English (the language) normally has no article.

You speak **very good English**. (NOT ~~You speak a very good English.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 149.

16. After *look forward to*, we use *-ing*, not an infinitive.

I look forward to **seeing** you. (NOT ~~Look forward to see you.~~)

We're looking forward to **going** on holiday. (NOT ~~... to go on holiday.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 298.

17. Information is an uncountable noun.

Can you give me **some** information? (NOT ~~Can you give me an information?~~)

I got a lot of **information** from the Internet. (NOT ~~I got a lot of informations from the Internet.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 148.

18. Use *-ing* forms after prepositions.

I drove there without **stopping**. (NOT ~~I drove there without to stop.~~)

Wash your hands before **eating**. (NOT ~~Wash your hands before to eat.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 298.

19. Use *this*, not *that*, for things that are close.

Come here and look at **this** paper. (NOT ~~Come here and look at that paper.~~)

How long have you been in **this** country? (NOT ~~How long have you been in that country?~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 148.

20. Use a plural noun after *one and a half*.

We waited one and a half **hours**. (NOT ~~We waited one and a half hour.~~)

A mile is about one and a half **kilometres**. (NOT ~~A mile is about one and a half kilometre.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 231.

21. Use the present perfect, not the present, to say how long things have been going on.

I've **been waiting** since 10 o'clock. (NOT ~~I'm waiting since 10 o'clock.~~)

We've **lived** here for nine years. (NOT ~~We live here for nine years.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 460.

22. The majority is normally plural.

Some people are interested, but the majority **don't care**. (NOT ~~... but the majority doesn't care.~~)

The majority of these people **are** very poor. (NOT ~~The majority of these people is very poor.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 526.

23. Use *too much/many* before (adjective +) noun; use *too* before an adjective with no noun.

There's **too much** noise.
I bought **too much** red paint.
Those shoes are **too expensive**. (NOT ~~Those shoes are too much expensive.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 595.

24. Use *that*, not *what*, after *all*.

I've told you **all that** I know. (NOT ~~I've told you all what I know.~~)
He gave her **all that** he had.

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 494.

25. Don't say *according to me* to give your opinion.

I think it's a good film. (NOT ~~According to me, it's a good film.~~)
In my opinion, you're making a serious mistake. (NOT ~~According to me, you're making a serious mistake.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 8.

26. Don't ask about possibilities with *May you ...?* etc.

Do you think you'll go camping this summer? (NOT ~~May you go camping this summer?!~~)
Is Joan likely to be here tomorrow? (NOT ~~May Joan be here tomorrow?!~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 339.

27. Use *who*, not *which*, for people in relative structures.

The woman **who** lives upstairs is from Thailand. (NOT ~~The woman which lives upstairs is from Thailand.~~)
I don't like people **who** shout all the time. (NOT ~~I don't like people which shout all the time.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 494.

28. Use *for*, not *during*, to say 'how long'.

We waited **for** six hours. (NOT ~~We waited during six hours.~~)
He was ill **for** three weeks. (NOT ~~He was ill during three weeks.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 167.

29. Use *to ...*, not *for ...*, to say why you do something.

I came here **to** study English. (NOT ~~I came here for study English.~~)
She telephoned me **to** explain the problem. (NOT ~~She telephoned me for explain the problem.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 289.

30. Use reflexives (*myself* etc) when the object is the same as the subject.

I looked at **myself** in the mirror. (NOT ~~Hooked at me in the mirror.~~)
Why are you talking to **yourself**? (NOT ~~Why are you talking to you?!~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 493.

31. Use a present tense to talk about the future after *when*, *until*, *as soon as*, *after*, *before* etc.

I'll phone you when I **arrive**. (NOT ~~I'll phone you when I will arrive.~~)
Let's wait until it **gets** dark. (NOT ~~Let's wait until it will get dark.~~)
We'll start as soon as Mary **arrives**. (NOT ~~We'll start as soon as Mary will arrive.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 202.

32. Before most abstract nouns, we use *great*, not *big*.

I have **great** respect for her ideas. (NOT ~~I have big respect for her ideas.~~)
We had **great** difficulty in understanding him. (NOT ~~We had big difficulty in understanding him.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 106.

33. Don't use *the* with a superlative when you are not comparing one person or thing with another.

Compare:

- She's **the nicest** of the three teachers.
- She's **nicest** when she's working with small children.
- This is **the best** wine I've got.
- This wine is **best** when it's three or four years old.

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 141.

34. Put *enough* after, not before, adjectives.

This soup isn't hot **enough**. (NOT ~~This soup isn't enough hot.~~)
She's old **enough** to walk to school by herself.

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 187.

35. Don't use a structure with *that ...* after *want* or *would like*.

My parents want **me to go** to university. (NOT ~~My parents want that I go to university.~~)
I'd like **everybody to leave**. (NOT ~~I'd like that everybody leaves.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 283.

36. After link verbs like *be, seem, feel, look, smell, sound, taste*, we use adjectives, not adverbs.

I feel **happy** today. (NOT ~~I feel happily today.~~)
This soup tastes **strange**. (NOT ~~This soup tastes strangely.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 328.

37. Use *than* after comparatives.

My mother is three years older **than** my father. (NOT ~~My mother is three years older that/as my father.~~)
Petrol is more expensive **than** diesel.

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 139.

38. In questions, put the subject immediately after the auxiliary verb.

Where **are the President and his family** staying? (NOT ~~Where are staying the President and his family?~~)
Have all the guests arrived? (NOT ~~Have arrived all the guests?~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 480.

39. *Used to* has no present.

I **play** tennis at weekends. (NOT ~~I use to play tennis at weekends.~~)
Where **do** you usually **have** lunch? (NOT ~~Where do you use to have lunch?~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 604.

40. Use *through*, not *along*, for periods of time.

All **through** the centuries, there have been wars. (NOT ~~All along the centuries, there have been wars.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 45.

41. Use *can't*, not *mustn't*, to say that something is logically impossible.

It **can't** be the postman at the door. It's only 7 o'clock. (NOT ~~It mustn't be the postman at the door. It's only 7 o'clock.~~)

If A is bigger than B, and B is bigger than C, then C **can't** be bigger than A. (NOT ~~... then C mustn't be bigger than A.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 359.

42. Use the present perfect with *This is the first time ... etc.*

This is the first time I've **been** here. (NOT ~~This is the first time I'm here.~~)

This is the fifth cup of coffee I've **drunk** today. (NOT ~~This is the fifth cup of coffee I drink today.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 591.

43. Use *be*, not *have*, to give people's ages.

My sister **is** 15 (years old). (NOT ~~My sister has 15 years.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 32.

44. Use *between*, not *among*, to talk about position in relation to several clearly separate people or things.

Switzerland is **between** France, Austria, Germany and Italy. (NOT ~~Switzerland is among France, Austria, Germany and Italy.~~)

The bottle rolled **between** the wheels of the car.

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 105.

45. We don't normally use *the* before abbreviations that are pronounced like words ('acronyms').

My cousin works for **NATO**. (NOT ~~My cousin works for the NATO.~~)

The money was given by **UNESCO**. (NOT ~~... by the UNESCO.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 2.

46. *Everybody* is a singular word.

Everybody **was** late. (NOT ~~Everybody were late.~~)

Is everybody ready? (NOT ~~Are everybody ready?~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 548.

47. Use *any*, not *some*, in negative sentences.

She hasn't got **any** money. (NOT ~~She hasn't got some money.~~)

I didn't see **anybody**. (NOT ~~I didn't see somebody.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 547.

48. Use *interested* for feelings; use *interesting* for the things that interest people. The same goes for *bored/boring*, *excited/exciting* etc.

I'm **interested** in history. (NOT ~~I'm interesting in history.~~)

History is **interesting**.

I'm **bored** in the maths lessons. (NOT ~~I'm boring in the maths lessons.~~)

I think maths is **boring**.

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 409.

49. Use *by*, not *until/till*, to mean 'not later than'.

Can you mend this **by** Tuesday? (NOT ~~Can you mend this until Tuesday?~~)
I'll finish the book **by** tonight. (NOT ~~I'll finish the book till tonight.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 602.

50. Use *like*, not *as*, to give examples.

I prefer warm countries, **like** Spain. (NOT ~~I prefer warm countries, as Spain.~~)
I eat a lot of meat, **like** beef or lamb.

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 326.

51. Use *whether*, not *if*, after prepositions.

We talked about **whether** it was ready. (NOT ~~We talked about if it was ready.~~)
It's a question of **whether** we have enough time. (NOT ~~It's a question of if we have enough time.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 453.

52. Use the present progressive passive, not the simple present passive, to talk about things that are going on just around now.

Our flat is being decorated this week. (NOT ~~Our flat is decorated this week.~~)
Your bill is just being prepared, sir. (NOT ~~Your bill is just prepared, sir.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 412.

53. We don't normally use *must* to talk about the past.

I had to see the dentist yesterday. (NOT ~~I must see the dentist yesterday.~~)
When I left school, young men had to do military service. (NOT ~~When I left school, young men must do military service.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 358.

54. When you put two nouns together, be careful to get the right order.

I like eating milk chocolate. (NOT ~~I like eating chocolate milk.~~)
What's your phone number? (NOT ~~What's your number phone?~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 385.

55. Use the *whole of*, not *whole*, before the name of a place.

The **whole of** Paris was celebrating. (NOT ~~Whole Paris was celebrating.~~)
He knows the **whole of** South America very well. (NOT ~~He knows whole South America very well.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 40.

56. We don't normally use progressive forms of *believe*.

I don't believe him. (NOT ~~I'm not believing him.~~)
Do you believe what she says? (NOT ~~Are you believing what she says?~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 471.

57. Don't use *in front of* to mean 'facing' or 'opposite'.

She sat down **facing** me and looked into my eyes. (NOT ~~She sat down in front of me and looked into my eyes.~~)
There's a hotel **opposite** our house. (NOT ~~There's a hotel in front of our house.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 402.

58. Use *it*, not *I*, *he*, *she* etc to identify people.

(on the phone): Hello. It's Alan Williams speaking. ((NOT ~~Hello. I'm Alan Williams.~~)
'Who's that?' 'It's John.' (NOT ~~Who's that?' 'He's John.'~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 428.

59. People (meaning ‘persons’) is a plural word.

The people in this town are very friendly. (NOT ~~The people in this town is very friendly.~~)
Who are those people? (NOT ~~Who is that people?~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 524.

60. Use *although* or *but*, but not both together.

Although it was late, she went out.
It was late, but she went out.
(BUT NOT ~~Although it was late, but she went out.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 511.

61. With *if*, we normally use the present to talk about the future.

If I **have** time, I’ll phone you. (NOT ~~If I’ll have time, I’ll phone you.~~)
I’ll be surprised if she **answers** my letter. (NOT ~~I’ll be surprised if she’ll answer my letter.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 257.

62. Use *almost*, not *nearly*, to say that one thing is very like another.

She is **almost** a sister to me. (NOT ~~She is nearly a sister to me.~~)
I **almost** wish I had stayed at home. (NOT ~~I nearly wish I had stayed at home.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 43.

63. If you don’t do something any more, you *stop doing* it.

The doctor told me to **stop smoking**. (NOT ~~The doctor told me to stop to smoke.~~)
I’m going to **stop working** so hard. (NOT ~~I’m going to stop to work so hard.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 299.

64. A singular countable noun must normally have a determiner (e.g. *a/an, the, my, that*).

She broke **a/the/that/my** window. (NOT ~~She broke window.~~)
Where is **the** station? (NOT ~~Where is station?~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 62.

65. We don’t often use *would* in subordinate clauses; instead, we use past tenses.

Would you follow me wherever I **went**? (NOT ~~Would you follow me wherever I would go?~~)
I would tell you if I **knew**. (NOT ~~I would tell you if I would know.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 580.

66. With *when*, use the past perfect to make it clear that one thing finished before another started.

When I **had written** my letters, I did some gardening. (NOT ~~When I wrote my letters, I did some gardening.~~)
When he **had cleaned** the windows, he stopped for a cup of tea. (NOT ~~When he cleaned the windows, he stopped for a cup of tea.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 424.

67. Don't use *can* to talk about the chance that something will happen.

It **may/might/could** rain this evening. (NOT ~~It can rain this evening.~~)

I think Jane **may/might/could** come tomorrow. (NOT ~~I think Jane can come tomorrow.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 345.

68. Don't use an infinitive after *think*.

I'm thinking **of changing** my job. (NOT ~~I'm thinking to change my job.~~)

Are you thinking **of going** home this weekend? (NOT ~~Are you thinking to go home this weekend?~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 588.

69. Use a singular noun after *every*.

I play tennis every **Wednesday**. (NOT ~~I play tennis every Wednesdays.~~)

He wrote to every **child** in the village. (NOT ~~He wrote to every children ...~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 193.

70. When you say what somebody's job is, use *a/an*.

My sister is **a** photographer. (NOT ~~My sister is photographer.~~)

I'm studying to be **an** engineer. (NOT ~~I'm studying to be engineer.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 62.

71. Use *at last*, not *finally*, as an exclamation.

At last! Where have you been? (NOT ~~Finally! Where have you been?~~)

She's written to me. *At last!*

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 204.

72. *Get* can mean 'become', but not before nouns.

It's getting *cold*.

It's getting *to be* winter.

(BUT NOT ~~It's getting winter.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 223.

73. Don't use negative questions in polite requests or enquiries.

Could you help me, please? (NOT ~~Couldn't you help me, please?~~)

You haven't seen John, have you? (NOT ~~Haven't you seen John?~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 368.

74. One negative word is usually enough.

She looked, but she didn't see *anything*. (NOT ~~She looked, but she didn't see nothing.~~)

I *have never* heard of him. (NOT ~~I haven't never heard of him.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 370.

75. *Much* and *many* are unusual in affirmative sentences (except in a very formal style).

He has *a lot / plenty* of money. (NOT ~~He has much money.~~)

My father has travelled to lots of countries. (More natural than *My father has travelled to many countries.*)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 357.

76. Don't use *since* to talk about the future.

I'll be home *from* three o'clock. (NOT ~~I'll be home since three o'clock.~~)

The shop will be closed for two weeks *from* Monday. (NOT ~~The shop will be closed for two weeks since Monday.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 308.

77. Singular fraction + plural noun: use a plural verb.

A third of the students *are* from abroad. (NOT ~~A third of the students is from abroad.~~)

A quarter of the trees *have* been cut down.

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 389.

78. You *listen to* something.

She never *listens to* me. (NOT ~~She never listens me.~~)

Listen to this! (NOT ~~Listen this!~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 449.

79. Don't use the past progressive for past habits.

When I was 20 I *smoked* / I *used to smoke*. (NOT ~~When I was 20 I was smoking.~~)

I *played* / I *used to play* a lot of football at school. (NOT ~~I was playing a lot of football at school.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 422.

80. Don't use *most of* directly before a noun.

Most of these people agree with me.

Most people agree with me.

(BUT NOT ~~Most of people agree with me.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 356.

81. In 'unreal' conditions with *if*, use *would*, not *will*.

If I knew the price, I *would* tell you. (NOT ~~If I knew the price, I will tell you.~~)

It *would* be better if he told the truth. (NOT ~~It will be better if he told the truth.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 258.

82. Don't use *later* with an expression of time to talk about the future.

I'll see you *later*.

I'll see you *in a few days*.

(BUT NOT ~~I'll see you a few days later.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 315.

83. Don't use *in case* to mean 'if'.

Compare:

I'll take an umbrella *in case* it rains. (= '... because it might rain.')

I'll open the umbrella *if* it rains. (NOT ~~I'll open the umbrella in case it rains.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 271.

84. Use *so* before an adjective, but not before adjective + noun.

I love this country – it's *so beautiful*. (NOT ~~I love this so beautiful country.~~)
Thanks for your help. That was *so kind* of you. (NOT ~~Thanks for your so kind help.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 538.

85. Only use *unless* to mean 'except if'.

Compare:

I'll see you tomorrow *unless* I have to work.

I'll be really upset *if* I don't pass the exam. (NOT ~~I'll be really upset unless I pass the exam.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 601.

86. Use *be* with adjectives, not *have* with nouns, to talk about physical sensations like cold, hunger, thirst etc.

I *am* thirsty. (NOT ~~I have thirst.~~)

We *are* cold in this house. (NOT ~~We have cold in this house.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 92.

87. Don't use *to*-infinitives after *can, could, will, would, may, might, shall, should* or *must*.

I *can swim*. (NOT ~~I can to swim.~~)

Must you *make* so much noise? (NOT ~~Must you to make so much noise?~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 353.

88. Use *not*, not *no*, to make sentences negative.

I'm *not* asleep. (NOT ~~I'm no asleep.~~)

We are open on Saturdays, but *not* on Sundays. (NOT ~~... but no on Sundays.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 382.

89. We don't usually use present tenses after past reporting verbs.

She told me she *had* a headache. (NOT ~~She told me she has a headache.~~)

I asked him what he *wanted*. (NOT ~~I asked him what he wants.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 275.

90. Use *to* after *married, engaged*.

He's married *to* a doctor. (NOT ~~He's married with a doctor.~~)

My sister is engaged *to* a computer engineer. (NOT ~~My sister is engaged with a computer engineer.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 449.

91. Use *which*, not *what*, to refer back to a whole sentence.

She passed her exam, *which* surprised everybody. (NOT ~~She passed her exam, what surprised everybody.~~)

My father has just climbed Mont Blanc, *which* is pretty good for a man of 75. (NOT ~~... what is pretty good for a man of 75.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 494.

92. Don't use *the* with *society* when it has a general meaning.

We all have to live in *society*. (NOT ~~We all have to live in the society.~~)

Rousseau said that *society* makes people evil. (NOT ~~Rousseau said that the society makes people evil.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 68.

93. Use a *to*-infinitive after *want*.

I want *to go* home. (NOT ~~I want go home.~~)
The children want *to stay* up late. (NOT ~~The children want stay up late.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 613.

94. Use *make*, not *do*, with *mistake*.

I have *made* a mistake. (NOT ~~I have done a mistake.~~)
You can't speak a language without *making* mistakes. (NOT ~~... without doing mistakes.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 160.

95. Don't repeat a relative pronoun with another pronoun.

There's the man *that* I work for. (NOT ~~There's the man that I work for him.~~)
She saw a doctor *who* sent her to hospital. (NOT ~~She saw a doctor who he sent her to hospital.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 494.

96. After a superlative, use *in* with a place expression.

Which is the biggest city *in* the world? (NOT ~~Which is the biggest city of the world?~~)
This is the best restaurant *in* the city. (NOT ~~This is the best restaurant of the city.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 139.

97. You *explain* and *suggest* something *to* somebody.

Please explain *to* me what you want. (NOT ~~Please explain me what you want.~~)
Can you suggest a good restaurant *to* us? (NOT ~~Can you suggest us a good restaurant?~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition sections 198 and 570.

98. *Work* is an uncountable noun.

I'm looking for *work*. (NOT ~~I'm looking for a work.~~)
My brother has found *a new job*. (NOT ~~My brother has found a new work.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 148.

99. Be careful of the word order in negative infinitives.

It's important *not to work* too hard. (NOT ~~It's important to not work too hard.~~)
I asked her *not to make* so much noise.

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 280.

100. Possessives replace articles.

We stayed in *John's* house at the weekend. (NOT ~~We stayed in the John's house at the weekend.~~)
She's been studying *Britain's* foreign policy since 1980. (NOT ~~She's been studying the Britain's foreign policy since 1980.~~)

For more details, see *Practical English Usage* 3rd Edition section 70.