



10 big differences between Ukrainian and English

1. Alphabet

One difference between English and Ukrainian is the alphabet. English uses the Latin alphabet while Ukrainian uses the Cyrillic alphabet. Ukrainian is a phonetic language, so everything is pronounced as it is written. That is why students frequently struggle with English pronunciation.

2. Inflections

Unlike English, Ukrainian is an “inflected” language, which means the endings of words change depending on their function in the sentence (subject, object etc.)

3. Word order

Ukrainian has a flexible word order in contrast to English. In English, there is a fixed word order (Subject-Verb-Object) that is not often violated. In Ukrainian, words in sentences can be arranged in any order depending on the speaker's intention. That is why you may observe that students use the wrong word order when creating sentences in English. This happens because of their reliance on their native language.

4. Articles

The Ukrainian language does not have articles. This can be challenging for Ukrainian English language learners as the concept of articles is foreign to them. Learners often omit articles, and it usually takes time to master them.

5. Gender

Ukrainian nouns are one of three genders: masculine, feminine and neuter. Every word has its definite gender. For example, in Ukrainian “a computer” is considered to be masculine, “a pen” feminine, and “a window” neuter. Thus, you will often hear Ukrainian English language learners speaking of inanimate objects as ‘*him*’ or ‘*her*’.

6. “To be”

The verb “to be” is never used in the present tense in Ukrainian. That’s a problem for students who don’t understand why there needs to be an additional verb. The phrase “I’m a teacher” sounds like “I - teacher” in Ukrainian.

7. Verbs

Ukrainian verbs agree with their subjects in person and number in the present and future and in gender and number in the past. The Ukrainian verbal system is based on the concept of aspect:

actions may be completed or not completed, which is demonstrated by appending suffixes to the verb stem. There are only a few auxiliary verbs in Ukrainian. On the contrary, the English verbal system has progressive and perfect tense forms and uses auxiliaries to form them.

8. Questions

In Ukrainian the sentence structure does not change when asking a question. There is just an intonation which would indicate an interrogative sentence. In English there's a difference between "You work here" and "Do you work here?"

9. Adjectives

All Ukrainian adjectives must agree with nouns in number, gender, and case. For example, if you have "a film" and want to say that it is "interesting," you must know that the noun is in the nominative-masculine-singular form. That's why English learners may make mistakes like "interestings films".

10. Stress

In English, word stress is almost always fixed whereas in Ukrainian, stress can occur on any syllable of a word.