

LIST OF COMMON ERRORS

An asterisk (*) before an example means it's wrong

1. Do not use "to" before a direct object. *call to the police *see to Peter *visit to him
2. people *are*, people *were*, people *cook*, people *don't* --people is the PLURAL of person.
3. **Be consistent** in the use of tenses. Especially, don't forget to use the past where needed.
4. The 3rd person singular of normal verbs takes **-s**: He says, the policeman goes, the box has
5. **after** means 'después de'. 'Después' is after that, then, later. *Two days after -->two days later.
6. Adjectives only have **one form** -never with -s! *different places
7. As a preposition **near** means 'cerca de' (no preposition) *Near of the house --> Near the house. *Near of here --> Near here(As an adverb, **near** means 'cerca': My house is near)
8. Before an adjective, **so** means "tan" -use it only in exclamatory sentences (with ! at the end): *The house was so big!* or in sentences with so... that *The house was so big that I got lost.* In other cases, use **very / really. Too** before an adjective means 'demasiado'. Before a noun, 'demasiado' is **too much** and 'demasiados' is **too many**.
9. **arrive at/in** ("in" with cities and countries)
10. this 'este/a'; these 'estos/as' (Different pronunciation!!); that 'ese/a, aquel/la'; those 'esos/as, aquellos/as'
11. **stay** means 'quedar, quedarse, alojarse', **not** 'estar'
12. In English there is always **a subject**: I gave it up because **it** was impossible. Relative pronouns are subjects: **The people that they were there --> The people that were there*
13. Subject first in English: Habían pasado dos días '*Two days had passed*' Lo que dice María '*What María says*' (not *What says Maria)
14. because **of** 'por (causa de)'; because 'porque'
15. "por eso" is usually **that's why**
16. **can** isn't used in the past and the future. *He was able to close the door. We managed to get there on time They will be able to finish the course*
17. Capital letters: like in Spanish but **also -IMPORTANT-**with languages and nationalities

- 18.** No double negative. There can't be more than one negative word in a clause. The most important negative words are *no, not, without, hardly, nothing, none, no-one, nowhere*.
- 19.** **during** is not used to express duration. Use **for**. **During** means "at some moment in." *He was born during the war* is correct; **The war lasted during 3 years* is **not** correct
- 20.** **even** 'incluso' emphasizes the word that follows: Compare *Even I can do buy* 'Hasta **yo** lo puedo comprar' and *I can even buy it* 'Puedo hasta **comprarlo**'
- 21.** child /ai/ -the plural is **children**
- 22.** **The genitive:** with names, no article: John's house. The genitive is common with words that refer to people and places: Joe's hat, my father's car, Madrid's theatres
- 23.** I was doing (past continuous) does **NOT** usually mean 'Estuve haciendo' but 'estaba haciendo.' *Estuvimos hablando un rato* 'We talked for a while'
- 24.** **-ing** after a preposition: before going, for eating 'por comer', about going, without drinking, instead of writing
- 25.** in/on (see handouts)
- 26.** **into** implies movement Put in(to) 'meter', Go in(to) 'entrar'. **Dentro (de):** "inside" (or "in").
- 27.** **must, can** and other modals **don't** take "to". Cf. try to, want to, need to, have to...
- 28.** 'la mayoría de' is usually simply 'most': *most people, most food*
- 29.** Do not insert anything between verb and direct object (except indirect object pronouns sometimes: I gave you an apple) **I eat quickly the apple, *I like very much your brother, *plan very well the experience, *I eat always rice*
- 30.** **run-on** sentences: clauses with their own verb are **not separated by commas** **You will have fun here, there are many things to do --> here; there / here. There / here, because there*
- 31.** **say and tell:** se usa tell cuando se dice **a quién**. *I said that* but *I told him that*
- 32.** to-inf. (=para + infinitivo) to express intention, purpose. *Para estudiar 'to study'* (not **for to study* or **for study*)
- 33.** so... 'así que' and also 'para que' *I left the light on so she can see when she gets home.*
- 34.** **next** week/month etc 'la semana/mes... que viene'; **the next** week '(a) la semana siguiente. Last week 'la semana pasada'; The previous week 'la semana anterior'
- 35.** **Travel** is not usually a noun; use it as verb. Journey is 'trayecto' and trip is 'excursión'

36. 'lo que ' is what *What the man said 'Lo que dijo el hombre'*
37. lo importante 'the important thing'; Lo más importante 'The most important thing'
38. *writting *studing --> writing, studying
39. comparatives bigger **than...** (nunca *bigger that)
40. -ing/ -ed interesting, 'interesante', que interesa; interested 'interesado'
41. enjoy takes an object or a reflexive pronoun *I enjoyed --> I enjoyed myself, I enjoyed it
42. like, love and hate are usually followed a verb in the **-ing** form. However, after '**d like**, a to-infinitive is used. I like sleeping 'Me gusta dormir'; I'd like to sleep 'Me gustaría dormir'
43. *every days, all days --> every day (pero 'todo el dia' is all day)
44. *all things, all people --> everything, everybody/everyone
45. **No article** when talking about something in general: Tobacco is bad for you
46. Don't forget "it" in sentences like I didn't like **it**
47. Running is good = It's good to run (Only with verbs: *it's good the apple)
48. News is uncountable That's good news Tengo una noticia 'I have (some) news'
49. el mío, el tuyo, el suyo, el nuestro, el vuestro: mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs (**no article**)
50. quite /kwaɪt/ 'bastante' Do not confuse with quiet /kwaɪət/ 'callado'
51. bastante bueno 'quite good'; bastante dinero, bastantes personas 'quite a lot of people/houses'
52. When it's not an auxiliary, use "have" with "do": he hasn't anything --> He doesn't have anything
53. little 'poco'; a little 'un poco (de)' a little time; few 'pocos'; a few 'unos pocos' a few things
54. enough goes before a noun: enough money 'suficiente dinero' and after an adjective or adverb: fast enough 'suficientemente rápido'
55. come 'venir'; go 'ir' Compare: Go in 'Entra (ahí dentro)' Come in 'Entra (aquí dentro)'
56. fun is not the same as funny 'gracioso'
57. Tengo hambre, sed, miedo, 10 años, sueño 'I'm hungry, thirsty, afraid, 10, sleepy'

58. Compare: He works **as a** teacher He acts **like** a teacher
59. **listen** 'escuchar' is not the same as **hear** 'oír'
60. **soon** 'pronto (enseguida)' is not the same as **early** 'temprano.'
61. **with** (pronunciado "uiz"), not "whit"
62. **ask** means 'preguntar'; **ask for**, 'pedir' Ask him that 'Pregúntale eso' Ask him for that 'Pídele eso'
63. **actually** does not mean 'actualmente', but 'en realidad' --> currently, now, nowadays, at present
64. **pay for the meal** but *pay the money* and *pay the waiter*
65. 'esperar algo/a alguien' is **wait for...** *I'm waiting for the bus*
66. **in** the evening, **in** the morning, **in** the afternoon, **at** night
67. **until** 'hasta' (solo temporal); hasta (espacio) 'up to' , 'as far as'; hasta (incluso) 'even'
68. **along** 'a lo largo de' (solo espacial, no de tiempo); *A lo largo the los años* 'over/through the years'
69. **on** the way (to) 'de camino (a)'; **on** the road; **on** the side; **on** the beach; **on** the line; **on** that day
70. **hardly** 'apenas' *I work hard* 'Trabajo duro' *I hardly work* 'Apenas trabajo'
71. *that kind of* 'ese tipo de'; *those kinds of* 'esos tipos de'
72. the same **as** 'lo mismo que'
73. salir de casa 'leave home'; llegar a casa 'get home'; en casa 'at home'
74. **It** doesn't matter (**I** don't mind)
75. *I like it a lot of. --> I like it a lot.
76. "Well, ..." -That's *spoken* English. Do not use in writing.
77. I went walking --> I walked (there); I went driving --> I drove (there)
78. **spend** 'pasar (tiempo)', 'gastar (dinero)' *I spent Christmas at home*
79. **meet** 'conocer (personas; por primera vez), encontrarse con'. *Meet with* is Am E; in Br, meet.
80. **live** /lɪv/ 'vivir'; **life** /laɪf/ 'vida', plural **lives** /laɪvz/
81. We **WERE**, not *we was
82. No "double pasts": We didn't leave, we didn't realize (not *we didn't left, *we didn't realized)
83. *go home* and *get home* (no preposition because "home" is also an adverb that means 'a casa').

- 84.** Remember to use the present perfect continuous (or the present perfect, especially with *be, have*) in sentences with “**since**” or “**for**” that mean 'desde hace x tiempo' or 'llevo x tiempo' or 'desde tal hora/fecha': *We've been trying* to improve that for years, *He's been* here **since** 3 o'clock.
- 85.** “**Nadie**” is 'nobody/no one' (unless there is already a negative word in the sentence): *Nobody saw me, I didn't see anybody*. “Anyone/anybody” in a positive sentence means 'cualquier persona': *Anybody can do that*. “Alguien” is 'somebody/someone.' Lo mismo para nothing, anything, something; nowhere, anywhere, somewhere.
- 86.** Everybody/Everyone take**S**, is, was (3rd person singular)
- 87.** A little (algo de, un poco), a few (algun@**s**); little (poco, poca), few (pocos, pocas).
- 88.** Between 'entre (dos)', among 'entre (más de dos)'
- 89.** “Enamorarse” is '**fall** in love'. The past tense is **FELL** (*felt* is the past tense of *feel*)
- 90.** “Parar de + infinitivo”: stop +ing “Paré de correr” 'I stopped walking'
- 91.** 91. Decidió ir/hacer/parar 'She decided to go/do/stop', not *She decided to went etc
- 92.** Espero aprobar “I hope **to** pass”; Espero que (ella) apruebe “I hope she passes”
- 93.** Dónde colocar el pronombre (pauta general): Si hay adverbio, en medio: *pick him up*; si hay preposición, después: *wait for him*
- 94.** Remember: look like + noun (parecerse a), look + adjective (parecer): Parece algo cansado 'He looks a little tired'; Se parece a mi hermana 'She looks like my sister.'
- 95.** Interrogativas indirectas: las preguntas que van dentro de una oración no tienen inversión ni auxiliar. Pregunta directa “What is the problem?”; indirecta “She asked what the problem was”. Otro ejemplo: What is the problem? (directa); We want to know what the problem is (indirecta).
- 96.** *Want, expect, need, 'd like, tell* and *ask* don't take “that”, but and object + to-inf: I want you to go 'Quiero que vayas'; She told their parents to leave 'Les dijo a sus padres que se fueran'
- 97.** “Tampoco” at the end of a negative sentence is 'either': *I don't know that either*.
- 98.** **although**, not *althought
- 99.** To transcribe dialog, use quotation marks (“”)

100. “otro”, “otra” is **another** (<**an+other**); “otros, otras” is **other**: otra casa 'another house', la otra casa 'the other house', otras casas 'other houses'

NOTAS:

12 relative pronouns are not always subjects: The man that I saw (“that” is a direct object)

16 Could 'podría/podía' but never 'pude' --> was/were able, managed (to)

17 Capital letters also for months and weekdays

Joining main clauses (mistake 30)

In English you **cannot** normally use a comma to join two main clauses (*“clause” es una oración o parte de una oración con su propio verbo*). You must either re-phrase the sentence using a conjunction or separate the two main clauses by using a full stop or semicolon.

Sentences in which main clauses are joined with only a comma, or without any punctuation marks or conjunctions, are sometimes called run-on sentences. Here are a two examples of run-on sentences that use the wrong punctuation (the wrong or corrected punctuation is highlighted in red):

We are left with the same questions we had before, now they are even reinforced.

- ✓ We are left with the same questions we had before, but now they are even reinforced.
- ✗ People don't understand him, he lives apart from them.
- ✓ People don't understand him. He lives apart from them.

There are three ways to avoid run-on sentences:

- use a conjunction such as or, and, as or but. This will make the link between the clauses clearer.
- use a semicolon, especially if the two main clauses are closely related in meaning.
- use a full stop to split the sentence into two parts

Here are some more examples of sentences with missing punctuation, or the wrong punctuation mark.

- ✗ In most popular TV series there are fights in which no-one gets hurt, children do not understand that this does not happen in real life.

101. ...hurt. Children...

- ✗ They took their fate into their own hands, Huck did not care about the rules and the laws, he always followed his instinct.

102. ...hands. Huck... ...laws; he...

- ✗ You watch TV because you must be well-informed, you want to have access to the most powerful source of information.

103. ...well-informed, and you...

- ✗ Both collections are intended to be read by children, however there is a great deal for the adult to grasp in these poems too.

104. ...children. However, there...*

