

# How to Avoid Common Mistakes in English

1. English has no article before abstract nouns! *That's life! = Das ist das Leben!*
2. Singular -y > plural -ies!  
Infinitive -y > 3rd person singular > -ies! *baby – babies  
try > tries*
3. (1) subject (2) ADVERB (3) verb  
Or: (1) ADVERB with -ly, (2) subject (3) verb!  
*He never speaks French.  
Usually, he speaks French. .*
4. Nouns followed by *of* usually need the definite article! *The introduction of new methods...*
5. Some nouns are not countable!  
*knowledge, information, progress,  
advice, news IS*
6. Some singular nouns have a plural verb with them!  
*The police ARE trying to find the  
mass murderer.*
7. He / she / it > s / -es!  
*He does, she loves, it rains*
8. With *did* and *do*, use the infinitive!  
*He didn't give me a chance.  
She doesn't love you.*
9. Think carefully about the prepositions in your text!  
*in the sky / in the picture / in the  
road / on foot / by bike*
10. If the introductory verb is in the past tense, remember  
that all verbs step back one step in time!  
*Lisa: I'm German.  
> She said she was German.  
Lisa: I've lived here for six years.  
> She said she had lived here...*
11. Keep in mind that adverbial expressions of time and  
possessive pronouns will change in reported speech!  
*today > that day, yesterday > the  
day before, tomorrow > the next  
day, the following day, a year ago  
> the previous year*
12. In English, there are no capital letters after colons!  
*Most kids do it: after all, ...*
13. There are no commas before *that*-clauses!  
*I know that you felt bad but...*
14. There is no comma after *please* in a request!  
*Please give me some time!*
15. Capital letters; months, days of the week, nationalities!  
*Elderly English ladies never have  
tea on Wednesdays in November.*
16. Inversion is obligatory with certain adverbs placed at  
the beginning of sentences!  
*NEVER had I thought of...  
SELDOM did he come over...  
SCARCELY had she opened the  
door...  
NO SOONER had he noticed...  
IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES would  
he agree...*  
  
Those adverbial phrases include: *not only, neither, nor,  
on no account*