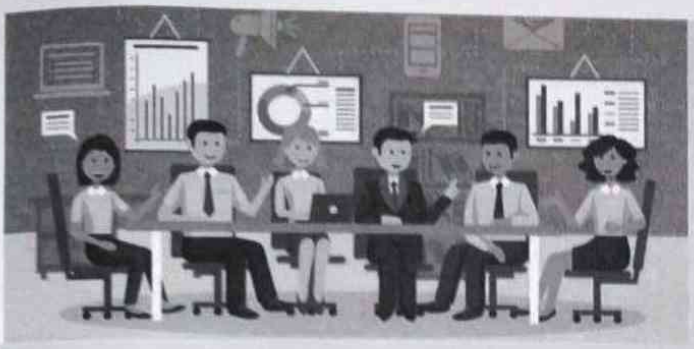


Chapter 26

COMMON ERRORS

"The only man who makes no mistakes is the man who never does anything. Do not be afraid to make mistakes providing you do not make the same one twice." —*Theodore Roosevelt*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completion of this chapter, you will be able to :

- ❒ ***Know the common errors in English related with nouns, verbs, pronouns, etc.***
- ❒ ***Know the way to correct these errors.***
- ❒ ***Know the errors related with confusion of the use of words.***

INTRODUCTION

A writer should know the correct use of the different parts of speech like verbs, nouns, adjectives, articles, etc. It has been found that there are common mistakes that we usually commit because of the lack of knowledge of the grammar and its usages. It creates bad image in the mind of the reader. As various business messages like advertising copies, notices, reports, letters, memos etc act as silent ambassadors of the organization, it is essential that these documents should be error free. The various errors in the English language relate to the following:

A. Errors related with incorrect use of grammar

B. Errors related with confusion of the use of words

A. ERRORS RELATED WITH INCORRECT USE OF GRAMMAR

Incorrect	Correct
Errors of Noun	
✓We have no informations about company's policy.	We have no information about company's policy.
✓Furnitures were purchased.	Furniture was purchased.
✓The views of mountain fascinate tourists.	The view of mountains fascinates the tourists.

Economics are to be studied by students of business and commerce.	Economics is to be studied by students of business and commerce.
The company has 3 thousands rupees as cash in hand.	The company has three thousand rupees as cash in hand.
Finance officer's and marketing manager's office is at first floor.	Finance officer and marketing managers' office is at first floor.
The board is divided on the issue of bonus.	The board are divided on the issue of bonus.
Errors of Pronouns	
Whom do you think won the prize ?	Who do you think, won the prize ?
Each of the workers bring their lunch to the factory.	Each of the workers brings his lunch to the factory.
He is one of the best manager who has served the company.	He is one of the best managers who have served the company.
You must avail this golden opportunity of heavy quantity discount.	You must avail yourself of this opportunity of heavy quantity discount.
The heads of different divisions should not compete each other within the organization.	The heads of different divisions should not compete one another within the organization.
We hope to receive your good report.	We hope to receive a good report of you.
Your's faithfully	Yours faithfully
Sincerely you's	Sincerely yours.
One should keep his promise.	One should keep one's promise.
Errors of Adjectives	
Rohit is the most intelligent of the two management trainees.	Rohit is more intelligent of the two management trainees.
He is more better today.	He is better today.
Bill Gate is the most richest man in the world.	Bill Gate is the richest man in the world.
Few workers are in favour of strike.	A few workers are in favour of strike.
No less than sixty clerks were on strike.	No fewer than sixty clerks were on strike.
He lifted the packet with his both hands.	He lifted the packet with both hands.
Any of these two workers are not paid.	Either of these two workers is not paid.
He is very sick to visit office.	He is too sick to visit office.
Little knowledge is better than none.	A little knowledge is better than none.
This is the last edition of the book in circulation.	This is the latest edition of the book in circulation.

Even bread and water are not available to many people in India.	Even bread and water is not available to several people in India.
Errors of verb	
He was appointed as the sales executive.	He was appointed the sales executive.
Stop to run the computer and listen to me.	Stop running the computer and listen to me.
Customers asked the receptionist where was M.D.	Customers asked the receptionist where M.D. was.
Either he or you has to complete the job.	Either he or you have to complete the job.
Unless the company does not allow night shifts, target can not be accomplished.	Unless the company allows night shifts, target cannot be accomplished.
Errors of Adverbs	
He is rather good in maintaining accounts	He is fairly good in maintaining accounts.
The company has not paid the rental charges still.	The company has not paid the rental charges yet.
He is too lazy that he cannot achieve the target.	He is so lazy that he cannot achieve the target.
Errors of Preposition	
The letter is written by a pen.	The letter is written with a pen.
The factory is working since four years.	The factory is working for four years.
The workers attended their duty to late night.	The workers attended their duty till late night.
Kolkata branch's furniture is inferior than that of Ambala branch.	The furniture of Kolkata branch is inferior to that of Ambala branch.
He listened our complaint with sympathy.	He listened to our complaint with sympathy.
You did not reply our enquiry.	You did not reply to our enquiry.
Errors of Articles	
Hindu is one of best news papers in India.	The Hindu is one of the best newspapers in India.
Company has signed memorandum of understanding with Japanese firm.	The Company has signed the memorandum of understanding with the Japanese firm.
The steel is becoming costlier day by day.	Steel is becoming costlier day by day.
The management is inter disciplinary subject.	Management is inter disciplinary subject.
Mr. Ajay is a honest officer.	Mr. Ajay is an honest officer.
Middle class is main user of their product.	The middle class is the main user of their product.

Errors of Conjunctions	
Both accounting as well as management are related with economics.	Both accounting and management are related with economics.
Though he is poor but he is honest.	Though he is poor, yet he is honest.
The company does not purchase raw material which is of sub-standard quality.	The company does not purchase raw material of sub-standard quality.
The choice is between producing or procuring the product.	The choice is between producing and procuring the product.
Neither Coca-cola or Pepsi are sold in this town.	Neither Coca-cola nor Pepsi is sold in this town.
Supposing if you are not paid, will you grant further credit.	Suppose you are not paid, will you grant further credit.

B ERRORS RELATED WITH CONFUSION OF THE USE OF WORDS

There are some words so frequently mistaken because of their similarity of sound or spellings. In other cases, the forms of the words have little or no resemblance, but the things or concepts signified are similar enough to cause confusion. The following is illustrative list of such words which are commonly confused in their usage and meaning:

Abrogate/arrogate. **Abrogate** means 'to repeal or cancel' and is used with reference to laws, rules and formal agreements. *The new clause abrogates the previous agreement*. **Arrogate** means 'to lay claim to without justification'.

Adjacent/adjoining. **Adjacent** means 'near or close' but does not necessarily imply contact. **Adjoining** invariably denotes contact, and is therefore preferable when this meaning is unambiguously required.

Adopted/adoptive. A child is adopted and its acquired parents are adoptive.

Adverse/averse. **Adverse** means 'unfavorable or harmful' and is usually used of conditions and effects rather than people, e.g. *adverse circumstances*. Adverse is used of people, always with 'to' or 'from' and means 'having a strong dislike or opposition to something' e.g. *I am not averse to providing him my vehicle.*

Affect/effect. **Effect** is noun and means 'a result or consequence' e.g. *Persistent efforts have definite effect upon the performance of an individual*. **Affect** is verb and means 'to have an effect on', e.g. *Drinking adversely affects health and wealth.*

All ready/already. **Already** means *'before* a stated, implied or *expected time'* whereas ***all ready*** means *'all prepared.'*

All together/altogether. All together means 'all at once' or 'all in one place or in one group' e.g. *The adversities come all together*. **Altogether** means 'in total' e.g. *The guest house has ten rooms altogether.*

Allusion/illusion. An **allusion** is an indirect reference to something or someone, e.g. *a veiled allusion in his illegitimacy*. An **illusion** is a deception or misapprehension about the true state of affairs, e.g. *The sense of security is an illusion.*

Alternate/alternative. **Alternate** means 'every other', e.g. *There will be meeting of board of directors on every alternate Monday*. **Alternative** means 'available as another choice or possibility', e.g. *Instead of accusing others and excusing oneself, we should try to find the alternative solutions to problems.*

Amend/emend. To **amend** something is to change it for the better, e.g. *He resolved to amend his behavior*. **Emend** means 'to remove errors or faults from something written', e.g. *The essays have been collected and emended.*

Amoral/immoral. While **immoral** means 'not conforming to accepted standards of morality', **amoral** implies 'not concerned with or ignorant of morality'.

Ante-/anti-. The prefix **ante** means 'before, preceding', e.g. *antenatal and antechamber*. The prefix **anti** means 'opposite, opposed to, against', e.g. *anti-nationalist, anti-aircraft.*

Antisocial/unsociable/unsocial. **Antisocial** is used to describe behavior which is offensive to other people or harmful to society, while **unsociable** refers to a person who dislikes being in the company of others. **Unsocial** is used almost exclusively in the phrase. *Unsocial hours meaning 'hours outside normal working hours.*

Apprehend/comprehend. **Apprehend** means 'to grasp or perceive' and is applied to general ideas, concepts and situations. On the other hand the word **comprehend** means 'to understand' and is applied to arguments or statements. *Knowing of mysticism is more the process of apprehension than comprehension.*

Ascent/assent. The word **ascent** means to 'climb, rise' whereas the word **assent** means to 'agree or comply'. *After Naresh's ascent of the Nilgri Hill, Rahul gave her assent to the proposal.*

Aside/ a side. Aside is an adverb meaning 'to or on one side' or a noun meaning 'words in a play spoken to the audience out of hearing of the other characters'. **A side** is used to mean 'on each side'.

Assignment/assignation. Assignment is a legal transfer of a right or property, or the document that effects this. The word **assignation** means 'an appointment to meet, especially between lovers'.

Assurance/insurance. The word **assurance** is used in the context of life insurance whereas the word insurance is used in the context of other policies. **Assurance** is used of policies under whose terms a payment is guaranteed, either after a fixed term or on the death of the insured person. The word **insurance** means to compensate the other person for the loss on the happening of an event as agreed in the agreement.

Berth/birth. A **berth** is for sleeping in, **birth** means being born.

Breach/breech. **Breach** is a noun and verb meaning 'a break' or 'to break' or 'to break' e.g. *a breach of contract*. **Breech** is a noun meaning 'the back or lower part of something'.

By/bye. By is a preposition with a wide range of meanings whereas **bye** is a noun with meaning in Cricket and other games or short for *'goodbye'*.

Calendar/calender. A **calendar** is a list of days and months whereas a **calender** is a type of mangle for paper or cloth.

Cannon/canon. A **cannon** is a large gun or a stroke in billiards, a **canon** is a member of a cathedral chapter.

Canvas/canvass. **Canvas** means either 'coarse heavy cloth' or something made from it. The plural is **canvass** and as a verb , it means 'to solicit votes' and as noun means 'the soliciting of votes'.

Coherent/cohesive. **Coherent** means 'logical and consistent' and is applied to speakers and their arguments. **Cohesive** means 'tending to stick together' and is generally used either physically or in relation to groups, e.g. *The caste lobby is a cohesive force in the politics.*

Complement/compliment. As a verb **complement** means 'to add to (something) in a way that enhances or improves, e.g. *His shirt complements his looks.* On the other hand, the word **compliment** means 'to admire and praise for something' e.g. *He complimented her on her appearance.*

Confidant/confident. A **confidant** is someone in whom you confide and **confident** means 'sure of oneself'.

Credible/credulous. **Credible** means 'believable' or 'convincing' and can be applied to a situation, statement, policy or threat, etc. **Credulous** means 'too ready to believe, gullible' and is generally used to describe a person.

Deduction/induction. **Deduction** is the inferring of particular instances from known or observed evidence, while **induction** is the inferring of a general rule from particular instances.

Definite/definitive. **Definite** means 'clear and distinct' whereas **definitive** means 'decisive, unconditional, final' and normally refers to an answer, verdict, treaty, etc.

Depositary/depository. A **depositary** is a person or authority to whom something is entrusted, a trustee. A **depository** is either a storage place for articles or a source of wisdom or knowledge.

Desert/dessert. **Desert** is the barren land whereas the word **dessert** means 'to abandon'.

Device/devise. **Device** is a noun meaning 'tool or contrivance', where as **devise** is a verb meaning 'contrive or invent'.

Distinct/distinctive. **Distinct** means separate or different, e.g. *The word has several distinct meanings.* **Distinctive** means 'characteristic, identifying' e.g. *The bird has distinctive black and white wing markings.*

Dominate/domineer. **Dominate** means 'to influence or exercise control over' and is used transitively (with an object). **Domineer** is a more judgmental word meaning 'to behave in an arrogant and overbearing way' and is often used with 'over' or in the adjectival form domineering.

Doubtful/dubious. **Doubtful** indicates uncertainty about facts, e.g. *We are doubtful about the accomplishing of the target.* The word **dubious** implies suspicion about value or genuineness e.g. *The auditor's role in detection of frauds is dubious.*

Draft/draught. A **draft** is a preliminary sketch or version, or a written order for payment by a bank. A **draught** is a current of air, a ship's displacement, a drink or one of the pieces in the game of draughts.

Effective/efficient. **Effective** means 'having a definite or desired effect' that is actual rather than theoretical, e.g. *He is effective speaker as he can influence the audience.* **Efficient** refers to a person's capacity to do work and produce results with minimum effort and cost, e.g. *He is efficient worker as he can produce more number of goods in a day.*

Exceedingly/excessively. **Exceedingly** means 'very, extremely' and is used only with adjectives and adverbs, whereas **excessively** means 'too' (with adjectives and adverbs) or 'too much' (with verbs).

Facility/faculty. **Facility** means 'ease or ready ability to do something' e.g. *He has greater verbal facility*. **Faculty** means 'an aptitude or ability to do something', e.g. *The faculty of language is reflected in writer's written pieces of works.*

Fearful/fearsome. **Fearful** means 'full of fear, frightened' and is usually followed by 'of' or by a 'that' clause specifying the cause of fear, e.g. *She is fearful of being nervous*. **Fearsome** means 'appalling or frightening, especially in appearance', e.g. *He belongs to terrorist group with a fearsome reputation.*

Fictional/fictitious. **Fictional** means 'occurring in fiction' whereas **fictitious** means 'invented, unreal; not genuine'.

Forceful/forcible. **Forceful** means 'vigorous and powerful', e.g. *forceful personality*, whereas **forcible** means primarily 'done by or using force' (rather than persuasion), e.g. *forcible eviction.*

Foreword/forward. The noun **foreword** means 'an introductory statement in a book or thesis' whereas **forward** is the adverb or adjective relating to frontward movement or position.

Graceful/gracious. **Graceful** means 'having or showing grace or elegance' and is generally used of physical appearance and movement, e.g. *a graceful appearance*. **Gracious** means 'showing grace, kindness, courteous' and refers to things that people say and do rather than their physical attributes, e.g. *a gracious apology*.

Guarantee/guaranty. A **guarantee** usually relates to the quality of a product or service, while **guaranty** is usually an undertaking to pay a debt if the person or party primarily responsible defaults.

Holey/holy. The adjective **holey** meaning 'full of holes' whereas **holy** meaning 'sacred'.

Human/humane. As an adjective, **human** is used predominantly in non judgmental contexts, e.g. *the human rights, human element,* etc. **Humane** denotes the specific quality of being civilized or compassionate in one's treatment of other people or animals, e.g. *a humane penal system.*

Imply/infer. **Imply** means 'to express indirectly, insinuate, hint at' whereas **infer** means 'to deduce or conclude from facts and reasoning'.

Inflammable/inflammatory. **Inflammable** means 'flammable; easily set on fire'. **Inflammatory** means 'tending to cause inflammation (of body) and figuratively tending to cause anger.

Judicial/judicious. **Judicial** means 'relating to judges or legal processes' e.g. *judicial enquiry*. The word **judicious** means sensible or prudent, e.g. *judicious decision.*

Liquidate/liquidize. **Liquidate** is the word used in business contexts and in the sense 'eliminate by killing'. **Liquidize** means 'to make liquid'.

Lyric/lyrical. **Lyric** is the adjective to use when referring to poetry that expresses subjective emotion in set forms, e.g. *a lyric poet, lyric verses.* A **lyrical** is 'using language of a heightened and enthusiastic kind appropriate to lyric poetry' e.g. *lyrical descriptions of the countryside.*

Metal/mettle. **Metal** is iron, copper, gold, etc. **Mettle** means 'spirit, courage'.

Meter/metre. A **meter** is a measuring instrument of some mind whereas **metre** is a metric unit of distance.

Miner/minor. A **miner** works underground in a mine whereas **minor** is a person below age of 18.

Modus operandi/modus Vivendi. **Modus operandi** means 'a plan or method of working', whereas **modus Vivendi** means 'a way of living or coping'.

Moral/morale. **Moral** means 'relating to the principles of good or bad behavior' (adjective) or 'the lesson of a story or event'. **Morale** means 'confidence, optimistic attitude' e.g. *Goals are accomplished quickly when the morale of the team is high.*

Motif/motive. A **motif** is a distinctive or recurrent theme in a literary or musical work, a decorative pattern, or a single ornament on a garment. A **motive** is what induces a person to act in a particular way.

Nationalize/naturalize. **Nationalize** means 'to take an industry into state control and ownership' whereas to **naturalize** means 'to admit (a foreign person) into citizenship of a country' and also 'to adopt (a foreign word or custom)'.

Naval/navel. **Naval** is the adjective relating to 'navy' and **navel** is the rounded knotty depression in the centre of the belly or a kind of orange.

Observance/observation. **Observance** is the word used in connection with respecting rules, carrying out duties and obligations, and performing formal customs and rituals, e.g. *religious observance*. **Observation** is used in the more physical senses of seeing and perceiving and has the special meaning 'a remark or comment' e.g. *medical observation*.

Obsolete/obsolescent. Something (either physical or conceptual) is **obsolete** when it is outdated and no longer used. It is **obsolescent** when it is falling out of use, i.e. is becoming obsolete but is not yet actually so.

Official/officious. The meanings of **official** are 'in the nature of an office', e.g. *official duties*. **Officious** is a judgmental word meaning 'asserting authority aggressively or intrusively', and is most commonly used of a person or the actions of a person, e.g. *officious traffic wardens*.

Passed/past. **Passed** is the past tense and past participle of the verb 'to pass', e.g. *the time passed quickly*. **Past** is an adjective, preposition, or adverb referring to the expired time e.g. *Past is dead and future is challenging*.

Perquisite/prerequisite. Perquisite means 'an extra benefit or privilege' e.g. *House accommodation is one of the perquisite of the job*. ***Prerequisite*** means 'something required as a precondition' *e.g.* A general education is perquisite to live in the modern society.

Practical/practicable. Practical usually has a general application, denoting what is possible in practice as distinct from theory, e.g. *His practical approach to find the solution is praiseworthy*. **Practicable** means 'able to be carried out, feasible' and is more usually applied to a particular instance under consideration, e.g. *The plan is not practicable in the present circumstances*.

Precede/proceed. To **precede** is to go before or ahead of something; to **proceed** is to begin or continue a course of action.

Principal/principle. Principal means chief of the educational institution, e.g. *He is college principal*. ***Principle*** means 'a fundamental basis of a system of thought or belief', *e.g. The principles of economics*.

Put/putt. Put us used in athletics to mean 'throw, cast' e.g. *to put the shot;* a **putt** is a stroke in golf.

Regretful/regrettable. **Regretful** means 'feeling or showing regret', e.g. *He was feeling regretful for not attending the meeting*. **Regrettable** means 'giving rise to regret, undesirable' e.g. *The loss of jobs is regrettable*.

Review/revue. A **review** is a general survey or assessment of something, particularly in the form of a published criticism of a book, article, etc. A **revue** is a theatrical entertainment consisting of a series of short acts or sketches.

Skeptic/septic. A **skeptic** is a habitual doubter, septic means 'relating to disease or putrefaction caused by bacteria', e.g. *a septic tank.*

Sometime/some time. Sometime generally means 'at some unspecified point of time', e.g. *You must take dinner with your family sometime.* **Some time** means 'an unspecified amount of time' or 'a considerable amount of time' e.g. *After some time had passed, he came to my house.*

Stationary/stationery. Stationary is an adjective and means 'not moving', e.g. *Sun is stationary;* whereas **stationery** is a noun and denotes paper and writing material.

REVIEW OF CHAPTER

A writer should know the correct use of the different parts of speech like verbs, nouns, adjectives, articles, etc. It has been found that there are common mistakes that we usually commit because of the lack of knowledge of the grammar and its usages. It creates bad image in the mind of the reader. As various business messages like advertising copies, notices, reports, letters, memos etc. act as silent ambassadors of the organization, it is essential that these documents should be error free. The various errors in the English language relate to the following:

A. Errors related with incorrect use of grammar

B. Errors related with confusion of the use of words

EXERCISE

1. Correct the following sentences :

1. He will be pleased if you let he go.
2. Is there any young lady who you consider unworthy of your courtesies.
3. The farther I went, the bad it became.
4. He knew that his wife will never come.
5. A poor man rose his head.
6. Raju got ten numbers in English.
7. Sohan has done a three years course in Computer.
8. The choice is your.
9. He is the bravest of the two brothers.
10. Gold is heaviest than most other metals.

Answers:

1. He will be pleased if you let him go.
2. Is there any young lady whom you consider unworthy of your courtesies.
3. The farther I went, the worse it became.
4. He knew that his wife would never come.

5. A poor man raised his head.
6. Raju got only ten marks in English.
7. Sohan has done a three-year course in Computer.
8. The choice is yours.
9. He is braver of the two brothers.
10. Gold is heavier than most other metals.

2. Correct the following sentences:

1. His father looks terrible old.
2. He has returned back from the forest.
3. When we reached the college we were thorough drenched.
4. They chased with us to our home.
5. He died from Cholera.
6. They sent of the doctor.
7. They reached at the station in time.
8. No sooner did she see the lion when she cried loudly.
9. The elephant neither stirred or fell.
10. Run fast lest you may miss the train.
11. He is so tired when he cannot walk.
12. She would rather die or beg.
13. There was a abandoned house in the jungle.
14. There was bridge at the river.
15. Romance is privilege of rich.

Answers:

1. His father looks terribly old.
2. He has returned from the forest.
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