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**Tips for Improving Grammar**

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If you’re a non-native English speaker, this post is for you. By now, I’m sure you have experienced the frustration of learning and using English grammar.

Whenever I teach an academic writing class, my students come to my office and ask me how they can get better at using English grammar in their papers. They are confused because they know the grammatical rules extremely well but can’t use the rules properly in their writing.

First off, just know that learning a language is tough—I know because I’ve done it, too. Unfortunately, English grammar has some weird rules that don’t make a lot of sense sometimes.

In this post, I want to make it clear that there is no “easy fix” for grammar issues. In other words, you can’t immediately get rid of all your grammar mistakes. You should also keep in mind that everyone learns at his or her own pace.

However, I also want to make it clear that there are some ways to help you advance your grammar skills.

* Read more in English. I know it may be tiring, and it may be difficult to understand everything. However, this is one step that you can’t skip if you want to get better at grammar. Reading and writing are closely linked. Reading helps you see how English works—how the grammar works. That knowledge can transfer to your writing. Find something you like to read, and then keep on reading! Also try to read as many different genres (e.g. newspaper articles, academic journals, blogs, short-stories, etc.) as you can.
* Write more in English. I know that you’re already writing for your classes, but are you writing for your own enjoyment outside of class? Try writing a daily journal in English. Any extra practice that you can get is going to help you. Don’t worry about your grammar or your word choice being entirely correct. Just try your best.
* Search the Internet for more information and opportunities to practice your skills: The Internet is a great tool for helping you improve your grammar. There are many websites that exist just to help ESL students learn more about grammatical rules and to help students practice them through quizzes. However, you need to look through several websites before you decide on one to use—not all websites are great. If you don’t know where to start, here’s a suggestion: [http://usingenglish.com](http://usingenglish.com/).
* Go to your instructor’s office hours for extra help: Did you not quite understand why your grammar was incorrect on a paper? Go ask your professor. S/he will be able to explain it to you. Professors are great resources and are happy to help when they can.
* Go to a peer tutor or a writing specialist at the Writing Center: While tutors and specialists won’t “fix” your grammar, they are happy to explain why your grammar wasn’t quite correct in your paper. Plus, they can help you identify areas that you can work on and help you develop revision skills. They’re also really nice.

Remember: try not to get discouraged. Learning English grammar and using it correctly takes a lot of time, effort, and practice. Be positive and proactive about practicing your grammar, reading, and writing skills and you’ll begin seeing more improvement.

–Kelley Ruble, Writing Specialist & ESL/ELL Liaison