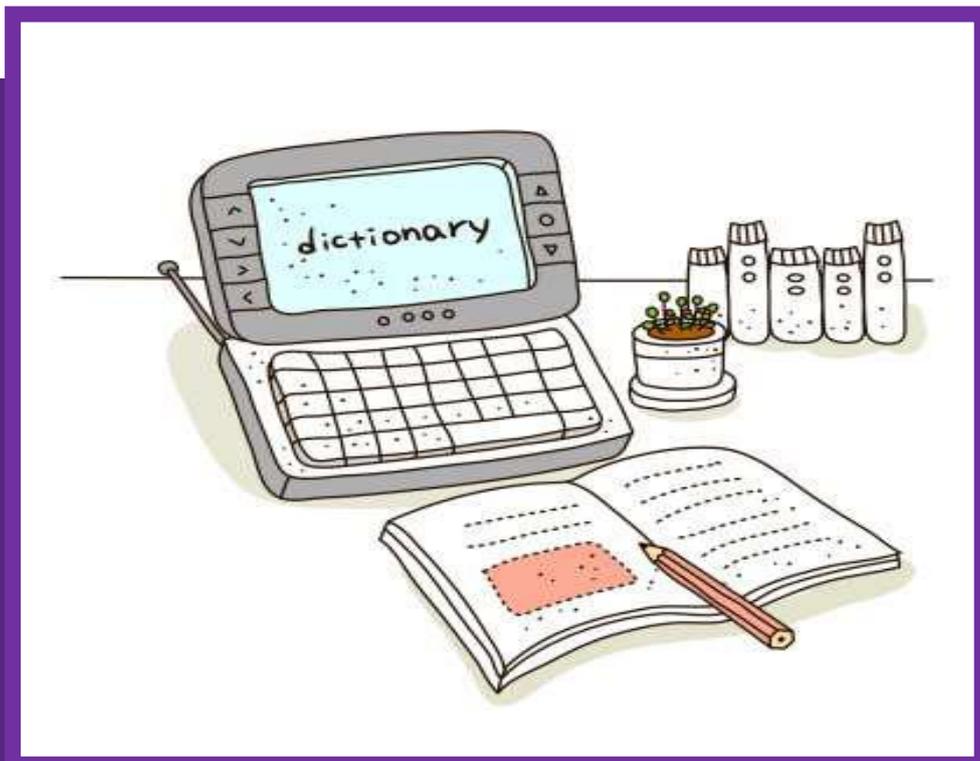




BLOOMSBURY INTERNATIONAL

Common Mistakes in English Grammar

This, they're, they're, it's, its, active versus passive voice, ways to improve your English skills, word puzzles, and English language quizzes.



They're, There and Their Grammar

Understanding the difference between they're, there, and their in English Grammar

While they're, there and their sound exactly the same, they all have very different meanings. Because they sound so similar, these three words are very easy for anyone learning English to get mixed up. This is a very common problem but it shouldn't be a cause of undue concern – they're, there and their catch out many native English speakers too! However, once you really understand what each one means, you should be able to use each word more confidently.

In short, if you mean “belonging to them”, you should use their. If you could replace the word with “they are”, it's they're, and if neither of these apply, the only option left is there. Here are some more examples to help you learn the difference:

There

This is perhaps the most difficult one to master, as it has several different uses. These are as follows:

An adverb that means the opposite of “here”

- Sit over
- The ball is right
- The train station is right there.

A noun, meaning “that place” or “to that place”

- I really don't want to go in there.
- We're off to London After we've been there, we'll carry on to Brighton.

A pronoun to introduce a noun or a clause

- There is a secret I'd like to share with you.
- Is there anything I can do to help?
- There are places I'll remember all my life.

Their

This is the third person plural possessive adjective. To put it more simply, it is used to describe something that belongs to them. It's nearly always followed by a noun. For example:

- Where has their dog gone?
- We went to visit our friends. I like their
- If the teachers come, tell them their books are waiting here.
- Their teaching methods are excellent.

They're

This is probably the simplest one to master. There is a contraction of “they are”, so it’s normally followed by the present participle (that is the verb ending in “-ing”). For example:

- Your parents called. They’re on their way.
- We can’t leave until they’re
- They’re

The best way to remember the difference between they’re, there and their is to keep practising them so you can develop really get a good understanding of what each one means. That way you’ll start to see them as completely different words and will be less likely to get them confused.

Commons Mistakes in English Grammar: it’s or its?



Many people learning the English language find there are some words and phrases that are very easy to muddle up. One of the most common mistakes English language students make is to confuse “it’s” and “its” in written English. This is a mistake many native English speakers make too, so it’s not surprising that so many ESL learners also struggle with it.

So English grammar: it’s or its? Let’s take a look at some examples:

It’s

It’s means “it has” or “it is”.

It’s sunny today.

It’s a good film.

It’s not time to go yet.

It’s been a long day.

Look at that dog. It’s got spots on it.

It’s taken a long time to get to our destination.

Its

Meanwhile, “its” is simply the possessive form for “it”. This can cause confusion for many English language learners, because possessives often have

an apostrophe. It is similar to words like “his” and “hers”, which also don’t need an apostrophe. Look at these examples:

I’m not enjoying this book. Its content is quite dull.
The tree had lost its leaves.

I’m watching a film. Its title is “Gone with the Wind”.

If you’re unsure whether to use it’s or its, try saying the whole sentence aloud with “it has” first, followed by “it is”. Now does it make sense?

I’m watching a film. **It has** title is “Gone with the Wind” (incorrect).

or

I’m watching a film. **It is** title is “Gone with the Wind”? (also incorrect).

It can take a while and a bit of practice to really get the hang of the difference between “it’s” and “its”.

Some Common English Language Mistakes – and How to Avoid Them

English has a reputation for being a difficult language to learn, but it can still be disheartening when you find yourself making mistakes. This really isn’t the end of the world – in fact, many native English speakers regularly make mistakes (possibly because they were never taught properly), so you’re in good company.

There are some very common mistakes that catch out both native English speakers as well as learners of English. These are some of them – and some tips on how you can avoid getting them wrong.

Your – You’re

These words are easy to muddle up because they sound identical (also known as homophones). However, they have very different meanings.

“Your” – indicates possession. For example: “This is your umbrella”.

“You’re” – is the contraction of “you are”. For example: “You’re coming back soon”.

Could of – Would of – Should of

These are all incorrect! Whenever someone uses this form, they mean “could have”, “would have” or “should have”. The contracted form of any of these

follows the pattern of “could’ve”. However, because of the way this is pronounced, many people think the second syllable is “of”. This mistake is often made across all these words.

So this is correct: “You could have told me about the class time changing” or “You would’ve told her if you’d known.”

This is incorrect: “You should of said.”

There – Their – They’re

This is another example of homophones with different meanings.

“There” is used to refer to a place that isn’t here. For example: “It’s over there”. It can also be used to begin a statement – such as “There are no appointments left”.

“Their” is used something belonging to someone. For example: “Their cakes are in the bag”.

“They’re” is short for “they are”. For example: “They’re coming over on Tuesday”.

To – Too – Two

This is yet another example where three words of different meaning are all homophones.

“To” means “towards”, as well as being used in the infinitive form of a verb. For example: “I gave the present to him,” or “to give”.

“Too” means “also” or “as well”. For example: “I completed the assignment too.”

“Two” simply refers to the number 2. For example: “I bought two books at the shop.”

Who – Whom

These words both mean the same thing but are used for the subject and object of a sentence respectively.

“Who” is for the subject of the sentence. For example: “Who is responsible for this?”

“Whom” is for the object. For example: “Whom should I vote for?”

As a simple rule to help you remember which is correct, think of the “he/him”

distinction and apply it to your “who/whom” dilemma. If you’d use “he” you need “who”, and if you’d use “him” you need “whom”.

For example: “Who/whom wrote the letter?” He wrote the letter, so “who” is correct.

For example: “We wondered who/whom the story was about”. It was about him, so “whom” is correct.

Of course, these are only brief guides but hopefully this shows you that these errors are very easy to mistake and can catch out even very experienced English speakers. In order to really master them, there’s no substitute for practice, but always be sure to ask your Bloomsbury International tutor if you’re ever unsure about the correct word to use.

Ways to improve your English skills with your flatmates



If you live in a student residence, it’s highly likely you’ll meet other students who speak the same native language as you. When this happens it can be very tempting to just converse with each other in your native language – after all, it’s quicker and easier to

make yourself understood and to get things done that way. However, doing this can mean you fall into the trap of losing out on opportunities to improve your English skills.

If at all possible, it’s a really good idea to use English when communicating with the people you live with. This will help you to consolidate the skills you already have, while also identifying areas where you need to improve.

Here are some ways you can use even the most mundane daily tasks to improve your English skills together:

Cooking a meal

Whether you choose a typical British meal (such as bangers and mash – a dish of grilled sausages and mashed potatoes) or you want to introduce your friends to your favourite dish from your home country, be sure to do it in English. This could begin with writing a shopping list in English for the

ingredients you'll need, then working with a friend to prepare the meal together, communicating with each other only in English. Be sure to only speak English while you're eating too!

Watching a film or television programme

Why not schedule a time with your flatmates to sit down and watch a film or television programme in English together? Afterwards, you can discuss what you've seen and heard, and work out any new expressions or language you've come across together. It's a good idea to make a note of anything none of you understand, so you can ask your tutor about it later. This can be a great way to spend time improving your skills when you don't have a lot of money to go out.

Doing the chores or laundry

Even if someone helps keep your accommodation clean, it's likely you'll need to do some chores and laundry yourself. Even this can be a fantastic way to improve your English skills, particularly if you do it together with the people in your accommodation. For example, you could start by writing a list of any equipment or products you need to go out and buy together, then take it in turns to ask for the things you need in a shop. If you need to use machinery like a washing machine, you could spend time reading the instructions, then try explaining them in your own words to your friends. All this can make even the most boring tasks a fun way to improve your English skills.

Reading together

Some students like to have an informal 'book club'. This is where you all read the same English book, then discuss it together (in English, of course!). Doing this can be a really helpful way to expand your knowledge of British literature, and to work out anything you don't understand together.

These are just a few ideas to get you started. There will be countless other things you can do. Feel free to share your ideas for improving your English conversation together here.

How to test your knowledge of English Grammar

Test your knowledge of English grammar by reading, writing, and speaking English in contexts of areas where English is the primary method of communication.

ACTIVE

VERSUS

PASSIVE VOICE

A VERB CAN BE ACTIVE OR PASSIVE. THE ACTIVE VOICE IS MORE COMMONLY USED.

THE PASSIVE VOICE IS OFTEN USED FOR ACADEMIC WRITING.

Past

Present



He was hit by a falling light bulb.



A falling light bulb hit him.

They were being chased by a cat.



A cat chased them.



The Christmas holiday was booked by my travel agent.



My travel agent booked my Christmas holiday.



Mistakes were made.



He made mistakes.



Past and Present Tense

Learn English at bloomsbury-International.com

PRESENT TENSE

- SIMPLE →
- CONTINUOUS →
- PERFECT →
- PERFECT CONTINUOUS →



EXAMPLE

I RAN

I AM RUNNING

I HAVE RAN

I HAVE BEEN
RUNNING



Learn English at bloomsbury-International.com

PAST TENSE

- SIMPLE →
- CONTINUOUS →
- PERFECT →
- PERFECT CONTINUOUS →



EXAMPLE

I CLIMB

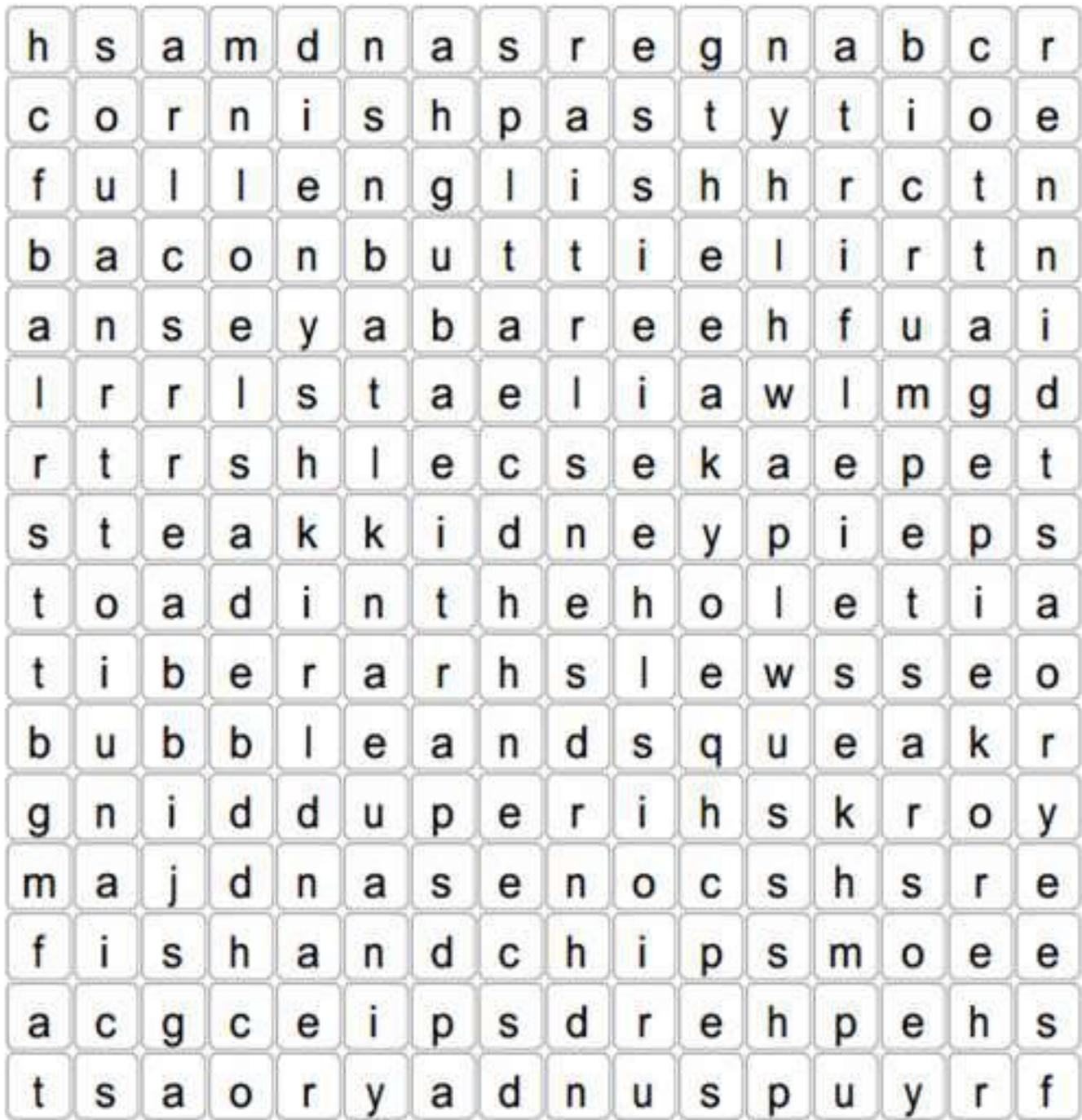
I AM CLIMBING

I HAVE CLIMBED

I HAVE BEEN
CLIMBING



British Food Word Search



Words to find:

bacon buttie
cornish pasty
cottage pie
shepherds pie
fish and chips
welsh rarebit

bangers and mash
bubble and squeak
scones and jam
steak kidney pie
toad in the hole
yorkshire pudding

crumpets
fry up
full english
roast dinner
sunday roast
trifle



Can you name all the animals above?

lion, rabbit, squirrel, walrus, fox, stork, penguin, elephant, giraffe, kangaroo, alligator, koala bear, deer, hippopotamus, emu, buffalo, lizard, bear, albatross, wart hog, wolf, raccoon, seal

Answers:

Have Fun with English

-ed or -ing?

Often it is difficult to know whether an adjective should have –ed or –ing at the end. Can you complete these sentences with the correct word?

1. "I'm not having fun at all. This party is so!"
(bored/boring)
2. "I'm I just ran around the park for a whole hour!"
(exhausted/exhausting)
3. "I can't believe I passed the test without studying. I was so!"
(surprised/surprising)
4. "Julia is so She never stops talking – I can't listen to her anymore!"
(annoyed/annoying)
5. "We went to a museum in London yesterday. I had such an day."
(interested/interesting)
6. "I heard that your brother won a prize for his painting. He must be!"
(thrilled/thrilling)
7. "Dad, please stop talking to my friends. You're so!"
(embarrassed/embarrassing)
8. "My friend is coming to visit from Australia next week. I'm so!"
(excited/exciting)
9. "This is a really book – you should definitely read it!"
(interested/interesting)
10. "I was excited about seeing the film but it had a really ending."
(disappointed/disappointing)

- Check our [Idiom](#) of the Week every Wednesday to help broaden your knowledge of
- Read our bi-weekly [blog](#) which includes study tips, interesting aspects of the English language, worldwide facts and much more!
- Read what our [students](#) have to say about studying at Bloomsbury International and life in London.

1. boring, 2. exhausted, 3. surprised, 4. annoying, 5. interesting, 6. thrilled, 7. embarrassing, 8. excited, 9. interesting, 10. disappointing

Answers: