



**BLOOMSBURY INTERNATIONAL**

# **The secret to perfecting your grammar**



# 1. Tackle one grammar point at a time



More often than not, I witness students trying to learn multiple grammar points in one sitting. It is certainly useful to contrast and highlight the differences and similarities, but if you're not well versed in the basics, it can be overwhelming. Take it one step at a time so you have a strong foundation to start with.

Everyone has their own take on the best way to learn grammar but I don't think it exists. There are many tried and tested methods but the key is to find a method and manner which suits you. The general formula to consolidating grammar is meaning, form and usage. I'd recommend investing in Grammar In Use by R. Murphy. It comes in elementary, intermediate and advanced and can be bought for as a little as a tenner on Amazon. This book is considered the EFL bible and if you peep inside our teacher staff room, you'll find a shrine dedicated to the author.

## 2. Manage your expectations



Unfortunately, there is no short cut to learning grammar. It's a long and at times, challenging journey. You need to set yourself realistic goals that you intend to achieve in a manageable time frame. For instance, if you plan to study for a week, don't expect to master all the conditional structures! First ask yourself why you're learning, is it for university? For social/travel purposes? Work? From there, you can list what you expect to achieve. Another thing to consider: It's okay to make mistakes. In fact, it's a fantastic thing! The more mistakes you make, the more you learn from them. I had a student who spent a lot of time writing her mistakes and the mistakes of others. At first, I found it quite strange. But after the lesson, she would ask me why those statements were grammatically incorrect. I'd explain and she'd go off and study the examples some more. She slowly began to correct her issues and as a result, she became a much more confident and fluid speaker. Of course when she progressed to the next level she made new mistakes but she was able to face the problem and work through it successfully.

### 3. Turn your bedroom wall into an art studio



Well, not exactly. This depends on your drawing skills really. When I was a student, I'd draw colourful spider diagrams and make bright flashcards. I'd have Shakespeare quotes all over my wall so whenever I woke up, I would review any new concepts and ideas that I'd been taught. My mum didn't appreciate all the blu-tac marks I'd left, but it definitely helped me internalise what I'd been learning at lectures. If you aren't great at drawing, just make simple posters or print them off from Google. Just type in what you'd like to memorize, e.g. phrases with get and print a coloured copy. Remember to keep one in the loo, quality reading material for those long 'baths'. Above all, consistency is key. Try to have daily contact with grammar by reading the free paper on the tube or investing in a graded reader. If you're a visual learner, watch a British TV series and stick the subtitles on. Watch and enjoy!