

Everyday Traps: The Errors Hiding in Ordinary English

C1-C2

ACCURACY

Lesson 2 of the Accuracy Clinic leaves the boardroom for stories, travel, family and everyday conversation, where fossilised errors hide most comfortably. You diagnose your own errors, work through seven grammar zones and twelve confusable word pairs, and learn to tell a real error from a school myth. Over-correction counts as an error too.

YOU CAN NOW

- You can use used to, would and be / get used to accurately, never would with states.
- You can speculate about the past with must have / can't have and separate needn't have from didn't need to.
- You can report what people said, asked and did with say / tell and reporting verb patterns.
- You can use the passive and causative correctly and avoid everyday confusables.
- You can recognise correct English that looks wrong, and leave it alone.

USEFUL PHRASES

- *I'm used to getting up early.*
- *You needn't have brought wine.*
- *She told me the news. He asked me where I lived.*
- *He apologised for being late. She denied taking it.*
- *He's the man whose car was stolen.*
- *The more you practise, the easier it gets.*
- *It was such nice weather that we ate outside.*
- *We had the house painted. My wallet was stolen.*

KEY VOCABULARY

lie / lay · Lie (lay, lain) = be horizontal; lay (laid) = put down.

win / beat · Win a game or prize; beat an opponent.

bring / take · Bring towards the speaker or listener; take away elsewhere.

lose / loose · Lose = no longer have; loose = not tight.

trip / journey / travel · Visit and return; going from A to B; general activity.

relatives / parents · Parents = mother and father; relatives = any family members.

rob / steal · Rob a person or place; steal a thing.

say / tell · Tell + person (told me); say + words or say to someone.

fun / funny · Fun = enjoyable; funny = makes you laugh, or strange.

hear / listen · Hear = sounds reach you; listen (to) = pay attention deliberately.

memory / souvenir · A memory is in your mind; a souvenir is an object.

avoid / prevent · Avoid (+ -ing) = stay away from; prevent = stop it happening.

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Past habits and past modals

Used to covers past habits and states; would is for repeated past actions only, never states such as have, live, be or know. For deduction about the past use modal + have + past participle, and for one specific success use managed to or was able to, not could.

- *When I was a child, I used to have a dog. (not: I would have a dog)*
- *She must have been tired after the race.*
- *After two hours, we managed to get tickets.*

Take it further: Before you send any everyday message, run the 60-second check: would with states, said me, which + noun, was happened, then your personal top three errors.