

The 19 Most Common mistakes Made by Russian Speakers in English

After teaching English to Russian learners for a number of years now, I have noticed the same mistakes being made over and over again by my new students. So, I decided to put some of the most common mistakes here so that you can avoid making them during conversation.

The following mistakes are all down to translating directly from Russian into English. As part of the course you are taking, you will learn how to avoid doing this.

So, here are the top ten mistakes I see my Russian students make.

Common Mistake #1

If it ~~will rain~~ tomorrow, we won't go to the beach.

This is the 1st conditional, and here we need to do the following:

If/When + present simple, will + verb.

Here are some correct examples:

- *If it rains tomorrow, we won't go to the beach.*
- *If I get this new job, I'll be really happy.*
- *I'll wash up when this film finishes.*

Common Mistake #2

I ~~live~~ here for two years. (wrong)

When we talk about a duration that continues in the present we we need to use either the present perfect or present perfect continuous.

- *I have lived here for two years.*
- *He's only been learning English for two months.*
- *They have known each other for ten years.*

(Note: Whether we use the present perfect or present perfect continuous depends on whether the verb is continuous or non-continuous.)

Common Mistake #3

I want ~~that~~ you (to) help me.

The correct way to say this is: *I want you to help me.*

I/you/we etc. + want + subject + infinitive

- *He wants me to go.*
- *They want everyone to come.*
- *She wants Michael to leave.*
- *Everyone wants me to finish.*
- *She doesn't want them to do it.*
- *We want you to see this.*

Common Mistake #4

I have been ~~in~~ London.

In is the wrong preposition to use here. When we are talking about experiences and using the verb (to be) in the present perfect, we use the preposition to.

- *I've been to America three times.*
- *She's been to the gym twice this week.*
- *I have never been to Thailand.*
- *A lot of my students have been to Bali.*

Common Mistake #5

I called ~~to~~ my boss and...

When we use the verb call to mean phone, then there is no preposition needed.

- *I called my boss and told him that I wanted to finish early on Friday.*

- *He called me.*
- *My friend called my dad.*
- *I tried to call my my friend this morning.*

Common Mistake #6

I haven't much time.

When we are using the verb to have and we are using it in the negative, then it is important to do remember the following:

I + do not + have

- *I don't have much time.*
- *We don't have our receipt.*
- *They don't have many clients at the moment.*
- *My workmate doesn't have a smartphone.*

Common Mistake #7

I thought I will finish on time.

In this case, will changes to would.

- *I thought I would finish on time.*
- *Sarah thought she would be able to see me.*
- *We thought that we would have this by now.*

Common Mistake #8

I'm enjoy work with him.

There are two mistakes here (two for the price of one!). This is the correct sentence:

I enjoy working with him.

This is because enjoy is a verb, and when another verb follows enjoy, we have to use the gerund (ing form).

- She enjoys doing that type of work.
- I enjoy working with those people.
- We really enjoy going for a walk in the evening.

(Note: You'll receive more information about gerunds and infinitives in a future lesson)

Common Mistake #9

I feel ~~myself~~ happy today.

When using the verb feel, we **don't use myself**.

- *I feel happy today.*
- *She feels down at the moment.*
- *I feel upset that she didn't call.*

Common Mistake #10

I have a lot of ~~deals~~

Deal is a specific word to mean *a business transaction or a negotiation*.

Most of the time, my students want to say: *I have a lot of work / I have a lot to do / I have a lot of tasks at work.*

Common Mistake #11

If I ~~have~~ more money, I would buy a new car.

This is the second conditional, and to form the second conditional we use the past simple after if.

- If I had more money, I would buy a new car.
- If I didn't play computer games, I could learn a lot more English.
- If I were taller, I'd be better at basketball.
- If my boss was nicer, we would have a better environment at work.

Common Mistake #12

It depends ~~of~~ the weather

The correct preposition here is on. Here are more examples:

- *I might go to the conference, but it will depend on how busy I am.*
- *Do you want to go for a walk? -> It depends on the weather.*
- *Whether I go tonight depends on how tired I am.*

Common Mistake #13

He let me ~~to~~ do it

When we use the verb let, we don't use the full infinitive. Instead, we just use the base infinitive. It is the same for the verb make.

- *My boss let me leave early today.*
- *Our company makes us wear shoes.*
- *My parents used to make me finish my dinner.*
- *My parents used to let me play computer games.*

Common Mistake #14

It is ~~more hard~~

Hard is a regular adjective so we just er onto the end.

- *It is harder.*
- *My first exam was much harder than my last exam.*
- *It is harder to learn Chinese than Spanish.*

Common Mistake #15

It is one of the best movie(s) that I've seen

Common Mistake #16

Hear you next week.

There are two ways to say this:

- See you next week (in person)
- Speak to you next week (on the phone or on Skype).

Common Mistake #17

I feel not very good.

I hear my students say this a lot. It's important to use do not in this situation: *I don't feel very good.*

This is similar to mistake #6, and here are more examples:

- I don't want to go.
- She doesn't like ice-cream.
- We don't think it's a good idea.

Common Mistake #18

I'm ~~wondered~~ about that.

If you want to talk about something that was unexpected, then you need to use the word surprised - *I'm surprised about that.*

- I was surprised that he didn't want to go to the party.
- I'm surprised he's here.

Common Mistake #19

I very like (it).

There are two mistakes here, and the correct way to say this is: *I really like it.*

Firstly, the word really is used as the adverb for like. And, as to like is a transitive verb, we need to have something at the end of the sentence.

- I really liked that film.
- He really likes her.
- Yes, I like it.

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