**[IELTS Vocabulary: notice, look up, use](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/10/ielts-vocabulary-notice-look-up-use.html)**

**Notice**
A student called herry commented below [this lesson](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/10/ielts-writing-task-2-five-sentence-paragraph.html%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self) that he/she noticed the phrase "resort to" in my paragraph about credit cards.

**Look up**
Herry then looked the phrase up in a dictionary and found the meaning:
resort to something = do something that you do not want to do because you cannot find any other way.

**Use**
The next step is to try using the phrase in a sentence of your own (e.g. Many stores have resorted to cutting prices). If possible, ask a teacher to check your sentence to make sure it's correct.

This is a great way to improve your vocabulary repertoire.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/10/ielts-vocabulary-notice-look-up-use.html)**|**[**Comments (8)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/10/ielts-vocabulary-notice-look-up-use.html#comments)

**Sunday, September 28, 2014**

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/09/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)

People often make mistakes when they try to use 'difficult' language. Can you correct the following sentences and write them in a less complicated way?

1. Banks always motivates their customers for availing various types of credit cards.
2. As a credit card has become prevalent for which it is easy to apply and gain this, there are several problems that people undergo.
3. Credit cards do have both pros and cons but it depends on the inevitability of user and their attitude to know purposely that determines the usage of mostly worth of it.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/09/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (21)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/09/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html#comments)

**Saturday, September 20, 2014**

[**IELTS Grammar: Googling for grammar patterns**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/09/ielts-grammar-googling-for-grammar-patterns.html)

Have you tried using Google (or another search engine) to resolve grammar problems? For example, students asked me to explain the following sentences from the [essay](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/09/ielts-writing-task-2-happiness-essay.html%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self) in Wednesday's lesson:

1. There are some basic preconditions to achieving happiness.
2. There do seem to be some common needs that we all share.
3. It is no doubt true that...

If we put quotation marks ("...") around the key words, and Google them, we can look for patterns in the search results that help us to understand the grammar.

***Example:***
Try searching for "preconditions to achieving", then try "preconditions to being" and "preconditions to doing". The search results should show you that "preconditions to +ing" is a normal grammar pattern in English.

Now search for "there do seem to be" and "it is no doubt true that". You might find that searching for grammar patterns is more useful than learning grammar rules.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/09/ielts-grammar-googling-for-grammar-patterns.html)**|**[**Comments (10)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/09/ielts-grammar-googling-for-grammar-patterns.html#comments)

**Saturday, August 23, 2014**

[**IELTS Grammar: uncountable nouns**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/08/ielts-grammar-uncountable-nouns.html)

Students often make mistakes with uncountable nouns. These are nouns that you can't count. Most importantly, they don't have a plural form.

For example, you ***can't*** say "an information, two informations, many informations". You ***can*** say "some information, more information, a lot of information, a piece of information".

Below are some common uncountable nouns. Do you know any others?

* give advice, some advice, a piece of advice (~~an advice~~, ~~advices~~)
* do research, carry out research (~~a research~~, ~~researches~~)
* gain knowledge, share knowledge, increase knowledge (~~knowledges~~)

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/08/ielts-grammar-uncountable-nouns.html)**|**[**Comments (12)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/08/ielts-grammar-uncountable-nouns.html#comments)

**Saturday, July 19, 2014**

[**IELTS Vocabulary: nice bits of language!**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/07/ielts-vocabulary-nice-bits-of-language.html)

There were a few nice bits of language that you might have noticed in yesterday's speaking lesson:

* all sorts of things
* a certain amount of
* I pick up a newspaper most days
* I usually have a book on the go
* I couldn't put it down
* opens the door to all aspects of education

These phrases made my answers sound very natural and "native-speaker-like". Try using them in your own sentences.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**IELTS Speaking**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/ielts-speaking/)**,**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/07/ielts-vocabulary-nice-bits-of-language.html)**|**[**Comments (8)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/07/ielts-vocabulary-nice-bits-of-language.html#comments)

**Sunday, July 13, 2014**

[**IELTS Grammar: are phrasal verbs ok?**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/07/ielts-grammar-are-phrasal-verbs-ok.html)

People often ask me whether it's ok to use phrasal verbs in the IELTS writing and speaking tests.

My answer is yes; phrasal verbs are generally fine. In Friday's [speaking lesson](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/07/ielts-speaking-part-2-family-celebration.html%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self) I used the phrasal verb ***to grow up***, and the 'multi-word verbs' ***to take place*** and***to make sure***. In [this](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/07/ielts-writing-task-2-private-schools-essay.html%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self) essay, I used the phrasal verb ***to result in***.

It isn't true that all phrasal verbs are informal. Read [this](http://www.macmillandictionaries.com/MED-Magazine/October2005/34-Feature-PV-Spoken-Written.htm%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self) article for a full explanation.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/07/ielts-grammar-are-phrasal-verbs-ok.html)**|**[**Comments (14)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/07/ielts-grammar-are-phrasal-verbs-ok.html#comments)

**Sunday, July 06, 2014**

[**IELTS Grammar: be careful with the 's'**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/07/ielts-grammar-be-careful-with-the-s.html)

Notice where we put the "s" on the end of a word and where we don't:

* Thousand**s** of people watched the show.
* Fifty thousand people watched the show.
* over a period of ten year**s**
* over a ten-year period
* The fish weighed 5 kilo**s**.
* It was a five-kilo fish.
* The boy is three year**s** old.
* He is a three-year-old boy.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/07/ielts-grammar-be-careful-with-the-s.html)**|**[**Comments (9)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/07/ielts-grammar-be-careful-with-the-s.html#comments)

**Sunday, June 08, 2014**

[**IELTS Grammar: easy sentences**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/06/ielts-grammar-easy-sentences.html)

Here are my suggestions for the sentences in [Friday's lesson](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/06/ielts-speaking-part-1-keep-it-simple.html%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self). Remember, the aim was to make the sentences as easy as possible.

1. I like learning languages because they help me to communicate with people from other countries.
2. I do lots of reading in my spare time.
3. If you can speak the local language, it's easier to make friends.
4. Knowing a foreign language can help you to get a better job.
5. The best time to learn another language is when you are young.
6. Learning a foreign language opens your mind and expands your horizons.
7. The more you practise, the easier it becomes to communicate in a new language.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**IELTS Speaking**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/ielts-speaking/)**,**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/06/ielts-grammar-easy-sentences.html)**|**[**Comments (8)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/06/ielts-grammar-easy-sentences.html#comments)

**Saturday, June 07, 2014**

[**IELTS Advice: if you have a grammar question**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/06/ielts-advice-if-you-have-a-grammar-question.html)

If you have a grammar question, this website probably isn't the best place to find the answer. There are many dedicated grammar sites, so all you need to do is put your problem into a search engine (e.g. Google).

**Example:**
A student asked me to explain how to use "not only... but also...". If we do a Google search for "grammar not only but also", here's the first website that Google suggests: [click here](http://www.grammarly.com/handbook/sentences/parallelism/4/parallelism-with-not-only-but-also/%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self).

After reading the explanation of "not only... but also...", you could try making your own sentences about common IELTS topics, such as education, work or the environment.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Questions/Advice**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/students-questions/)**,**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/06/ielts-advice-if-you-have-a-grammar-question.html)**|**[**Comments (8)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/06/ielts-advice-if-you-have-a-grammar-question.html#comments)

**Sunday, May 25, 2014**

[**IELTS Grammar: verbs and nouns**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/05/ielts-grammar-verbs-and-nouns.html)

The problem with the following sentences is that the verbs and nouns (underlined) don't go together. Do you know what the correct verbs should be?

1. I gave the IELTS exam last week.
2. I usually take a coffee in the morning.
3. This will bring a negative impact on people.

The correct 'verb + noun' groups are examples of [collocation](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/10/ielts-writing-task-2-collocations.html%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self).

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/05/ielts-grammar-verbs-and-nouns.html)**|**[**Comments (55)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/05/ielts-grammar-verbs-and-nouns.html#comments)

**Saturday, May 03, 2014**

[**IELTS Grammar: lead, contribute, result**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/05/ielts-grammar-lead-contribute-result.html)

Students often make mistakes with the verbs lead, contribute and result. Try to correct the sentences below.

1. Qualifications and skills may lead to get promotions.
2. Lack of exercise contributes to have an unhealthy body.
3. Violence on television is one factor that results to increase the crime rate.

What is the rule for these 3 verbs?

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/05/ielts-grammar-lead-contribute-result.html)**|**[**Comments (43)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/05/ielts-grammar-lead-contribute-result.html#comments)

**Sunday, April 20, 2014**

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/04/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)

Improve the following sentences. All of them are about the 'teleworking' topic.

1. There are several disadvantages to do work at home.
2. In comparison with office, home is a relatively quiet and comfortable place to work at.
3. People's daily activity may be decreased.
4. Not everyone enjoy working and living at the same places.
5. Employee tend to put less important on work because there is no supervisor.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/04/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (31)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/04/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html#comments)

**Sunday, March 16, 2014**

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/03/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)

Find and correct the mistake in each of the sentences below:

1. Technology allowed the growing of factories.
2. Parents should be more conscious on their children’s online activities.
3. The Internet allows people from all over the world to involve in discussions about current events.

I'll put my answers in the "comments" area tomorrow.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/03/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (26)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2014/03/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html#comments)

**Sunday, December 01, 2013**

[**IELTS Grammar: two important points**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/12/ielts-grammar-two-important-points.html)

Here are two grammar points to note from the mistakes in [Friday's lesson](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/11/ielts-speaking-correct-the-mistakes.html%22%20%5Co%20%22%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self):

**1. Commas don't connect sentences**
You can't write "They asked me to do an interview, I felt so shy" with a comma connecting the two ideas. You would need a full stop or a linking word like "and" or "but" (e.g. They asked me to do an interview, but I felt so shy).

**2. Don't put "which" and "it" together**
You can't write "a conversation which I found it interesting". Delete the "it".

[Click here](http://ielts-simon.com/files/correct-the-mistakes.pdf) to see all of the answers to Friday's exercise.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/12/ielts-grammar-two-important-points.html)**|**[**Comments (14)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/12/ielts-grammar-two-important-points.html#comments)

**Saturday, November 16, 2013**

[**IELTS Grammar: nouns and verbs**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/11/ielts-grammar-nouns-and-verbs.html)

Sometimes the noun form and the verb form of a word are the same. For example, the word “increase” can be a noun or a verb. The problem is that nouns and verbs are used differently. Here are some examples:

**Increase**
There was an increase in the unemployment rate. (noun)
The unemployment rate increased. (verb)

**Lack**
There is a lack of investment in hospitals. (noun)
Many hospitals lack the investment they need. (verb)

**Pay**
Companies should give men and women equal pay. (noun)
Companies should pay men and women equally. (verb)

It's the little words like "an increase in" that cause most problems for students. Examiners do notice these things, so it's worth getting them right.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/11/ielts-grammar-nouns-and-verbs.html)**|**[**Comments (5)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/11/ielts-grammar-nouns-and-verbs.html#comments)

**Saturday, October 19, 2013**

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/10/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)

Last Sunday's [lesson](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/10/ielts-grammar-using-with-instead-of-and.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self) was about using 'with' instead of 'and'. Several people tried to make their own 'with' sentences, but some corrections are necessary. Can you help with the following sentences?

1. He love that girl, with she loving another boy.
2. London is the world's sixth most expensive city, with being visited by almost 1 million tourists every day.
3. City life is quite stressful, with the people lacking of the sense of community.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/10/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (28)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/10/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html#comments)

**Sunday, October 13, 2013**

[**IELTS Grammar: using 'with' instead of 'and'**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/10/ielts-grammar-using-with-instead-of-and.html)

Here's a structure that my students found interesting:

A) The IELTS exam is popular, and over 1 million people take it every year.
B) The IELTS exam is popular, with over 1 million people taking it every year.

A) The cost of living is high, and prices ***are*** going up every year.
B) The cost of living is high, with prices going up every year.

Notice the use of the 'ing' verb form after 'with'. Notice also that there is no auxiliary verb 'are' in the second example. To practise this type of sentence, try making an example of your own!

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/10/ielts-grammar-using-with-instead-of-and.html)**|**[**Comments (22)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/10/ielts-grammar-using-with-instead-of-and.html#comments)

**Saturday, September 28, 2013**

[**IELTS Grammar: for band 7**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/09/ielts-grammar-for-band-7.html)

I don't think that using 'difficult' grammar is the best way to get a band 7.

If you want a band 7, the most important thing is to be able to write error-free sentences. If all of your sentences contain small mistakes, it's unlikely that you'll get a 7. It might be better to take fewer risks with complex structures, and aim for more error-free sentences.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/09/ielts-grammar-for-band-7.html)**|**[**Comments (12)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/09/ielts-grammar-for-band-7.html#comments)

**Saturday, September 07, 2013**

[**IELTS Grammar: 'most' or 'most of'?**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/09/ielts-grammar-most-or-most-of.html)

Should you write "most people", "most of people" or "most of the people"?

Answer:

1. Don't write "most of people".
2. "Most of the people" is correct when you are talking about a specific group of people e.g. most of the people in my department.
3. For IELTS writing and speaking "most people" is the best phrase.

Here are some examples for IELTS Writing:

* English is taught in most countries. (~~most of countries~~)
* Most people agree that the ability to speak English is a useful skill.
* Most products are made in factories rather than by hand.
* Crime is on the increase in most major cities.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/09/ielts-grammar-most-or-most-of.html)**|**[**Comments (3)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/09/ielts-grammar-most-or-most-of.html#comments)

**Sunday, August 18, 2013**

[**IELTS Grammar: collocations**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/08/ielts-grammar-collocations.html)

A student asked me to explain which is better: 'a prime example' or 'a primary example'.

I would say 'a prime example'. Why? The answer is that 'prime example' is a normal collocation in English. It's the phrase that English speakers would use.

Native speakers instinctively know which words go together more commonly. They recognise groups of words like 'prime example'. This is what we mean by "collocation".

***Tip:***
Put "prime example" and "primary example" into Google (don't forget the speech marks), and look at the numbers of results. It should be clear which collocation we prefer.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/08/ielts-grammar-collocations.html)**|**[**Comments (7)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/08/ielts-grammar-collocations.html#comments)

**Saturday, July 20, 2013**

[**IELTS Grammar: 'lead to'**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/07/ielts-grammar-lead-to.html)

Students often make mistakes when using 'lead to' in their writing. What's the problem with these sentences?

1. Consumerism can lead to increase the economy.
2. Tourism can lead to destroy natural habitats.
3. A competitive atmosphere in lessons leads to motivate students.

The problem is that we need a **noun or noun phrase after 'lead to'**, not a verb.

So, here are some some ways that you could rewrite the sentences:

1. Consumerism can lead to a more successful economy.
2. Tourism can lead to the destruction of natural habitats.
3. A competitive atmosphere in lessons motivates students.

Notice that in sentence 3 it is better to keep the verb 'motivates' and miss out 'leads to'.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/07/ielts-grammar-lead-to.html)**|**[**Comments (5)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/07/ielts-grammar-lead-to.html#comments)

**Saturday, July 13, 2013**

[**IELTS Grammar: passives, conditionals, subjunctives?**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/07/ielts-grammar-passives-conditionals-subjunctives.html)

It seems that teachers in some countries are telling their students to fill their answers with "difficult grammar devices" like passives, conditionals and[subjunctives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_subjunctive%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self).

***I tell my students to do the opposite: forget about these things!***

In my experience, the more you focus on grammar (25% of your score), the less you focus on answering the question well, organising your ideas, and using good vocabulary (75% of your score). Worrying about "difficult grammar" is likely to ruin your answers rather than improve them! Focus on the other 75%.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/07/ielts-grammar-passives-conditionals-subjunctives.html)**|**[**Comments (10)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/07/ielts-grammar-passives-conditionals-subjunctives.html#comments)

**Saturday, June 22, 2013**

[**IELTS vocabulary review**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/06/ielts-vocabulary-review.html)

**Here's a quick review of the band 7-9 vocabulary from this week's lessons:**

- the current generation of language learners
- have the Internet at their disposal
- the chance to immerse themselves in

- upset by
- opposed to... for ethical reasons
- carry out research

- stalls are spread across several sites
- the centrepiece
- an array of
- mouth-watering food and drink
- spilling over into other pedestrian streets
- attracting thousands of visitors
- the fantastic atmosphere
- Manchester seemed to come alive
- the streets were bustling
- there was a real festive feel to the city

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/06/ielts-vocabulary-review.html)**|**[**Comments (11)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/06/ielts-vocabulary-review.html#comments)

**Sunday, May 19, 2013**

[**IELTS Grammar: 'for example' and 'such as'**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/05/ielts-grammar-for-example-and-such-as.html)

Students often make mistakes when using these two phrases. To avoid mistakes, follow this simple advice:

- Use ***For example,*** at the start of a sentence.
- Use ***such as*** in the middle of a sentence.

Compare these examples:

1. Children should eat less junk food. For example, they should avoid eating burgers and chips.
2. Children should avoid eating junk food such as burgers and chips.

Notice that 'For example' is followed by a comma and a full sentence. 'Such as' is in the middle of the sentence, followed by two nouns. You can use 'For instance' instead of 'For example'. You can use 'like' instead of 'such as'.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/05/ielts-grammar-for-example-and-such-as.html)**|**[**Comments (21)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/05/ielts-grammar-for-example-and-such-as.html#comments)

**Sunday, May 12, 2013**

[**IELTS Grammar: rules and exceptions**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/05/ielts-grammar-rules-and-exceptions.html)

When learning a language, grammar rules are useful because they show you how the language ***normally*** behaves. For example, you might learn that the word "to" is followed by the infinitive of the verb. The rule tells you that "to have" is correct and "to having" is wrong.

However, you should also be prepared to meet some exceptions to the grammar rules that you learn. For example, students are often confused by phrases like ['look forward to having'](http://www.google.co.uk/webhp?hl=en&tab=ww" \l "hl=en&sclient=psy-ab&q=%22look+forward+to+having%22&oq=%22look+forward+to+having%22&gs_l=hp.3..0l2j0i22i30l2.3191.10075.0.11539.24.24.0.0.0.1.449.2242.19j3j0j1j1.24.0...0.0...1c.1.12.psy-ab.tpFi40mLAuk&pbx=1&bav=on.2,or.r_qf.&bvm=bv.46340616,d.d2k&fp=a6e63727a0ee5b33&biw=1042&bih=734" \t "_self) or ['advantages to having'](http://www.google.co.uk/webhp?hl=en&tab=ww" \l "hl=en&output=search&sclient=psy-ab&q=%22advantages+to+having%22&oq=%22advantages+to+having%22&gs_l=hp.3..0l4.2452.11029.0.11441.22.22.0.0.0.0.97.1089.22.22.0...0.0...1c.1.12.psy-ab.2G3-3BSYbwk&pbx=1&bav=on.2,or.r_qf.&bvm=bv.46340616,d.d2k&fp=a6e63727a0ee5b33&biw=1042&bih=734" \t "_self), both of which are correct.

When you find an exception to a grammar rule, don't get frustrated; consider it an opportunity to expand your knowledge of the language, and perhaps to impress the examiner!

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/04/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)

Try to improve the following sentences.

1. It is clear that, the commuter numbers by car are dominant.
2. The number of passengers in train showed upward trend.
3. The number of commuters favor car and train significantly increase.
4. About average 5 million commuters traveled by car.
5. The figure for train started from about 2 millions.
6. British people continuously used more car than other vehicles.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/04/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (30)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/04/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html#comments)

**Saturday, April 20, 2013**

[**IELTS Grammar: opinion + conditional**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/04/ielts-grammar-opinion-conditional.html)

Try this useful technique for IELTS writing and speaking:

**Give an opinion, then follow it with a conditional sentence.**

Look at these examples:

1. In my opinion, governments should invest more money in public transport. If rail and bus services were more reliable, fewer peoplewould need to drive.
2. Schools have an important role to play in children's health. If schoolsbanned junk food, they would help to reduce the problem of childhood obesity.
3. In the future I think more people will do their shopping online. But ifInternet shopping becomes more popular, many traditional shops will lose customers.

I've underlined the conditionals. Examples 1 and 2 are second conditionals, while 3 uses the first conditional.

***Practice:***
Prepare your own "opinion + conditional" ideas for different topics. Having a few of these ideas ready could help you in the writing and speaking tests.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/04/ielts-grammar-opinion-conditional.html)**|**[**Comments (19)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/04/ielts-grammar-opinion-conditional.html#comments)

**Saturday, March 30, 2013**

[**IELTS Grammar: 'finally' or 'at last'?**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/03/ielts-grammar-finally-or-at-last.html)

This week I wrote a lesson about using "Firstly, Secondly, Finally", and a student asked me whether it's ok to use "at last" instead of "finally".

The answer is no. "Finally" and "at last" ***are not*** used in the same way.

Use "finally" in the IELTS writing test when you want to make your final point, or to talk about the final stage in a process e.g. Finally, as well as making life more fun and interesting, new experiences can be good for our physical and mental health. (taken from [this lesson](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/03/ielts-writing-task-2-firstly-secondly-finally.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self))

Only use "at last" when you have been waiting for a long time for something to happen e.g. At last I've passed the IELTS exam!

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/03/ielts-grammar-finally-or-at-last.html)**|**[**Comments (9)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/03/ielts-grammar-finally-or-at-last.html#comments)

**Saturday, February 23, 2013**

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/02/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)

Try to correct the mistakes in the sentences below:

1. Most of advertising aim to persuade people that buying things will make them happier.
2. Advertisers use every efforts to make their products more attractive.
3. Governments should control advertising or even banned.

I'll give you my answers in the "comments" area tomorrow.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/02/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (39)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/02/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html#comments)

**Saturday, January 12, 2013**

[**IELTS Grammar: affect or effect?**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/01/ielts-grammar-affect-or-effect.html)

Almost every week I see mistakes in the use of "affect" and "effect". These are common and important words, especially in the IELTS writing test, so you need to get them right.

"Affect" is a verb. ***Don't*** write "affect on".

* Smoking affects your health. (~~smoking affects on your health~~)
* The Internet is affecting our way of life.
* Children are affected by what they see on television.

"Effect" is a noun. ***Do*** write "have an effect on".

* Smoking has a harmful effect on your health.
* The Internet is having a significant effect on our way of life.
* Television can have a negative effect on children.

If you use these words correctly, the examiner will be impressed.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/01/ielts-grammar-affect-or-effect.html)**|**[**Comments (9)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2013/01/ielts-grammar-affect-or-effect.html#comments)

**Sunday, December 16, 2012**

[**IELTS Grammar: simplify to avoid mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/12/ielts-grammar-simplify-to-avoid-mistakes.html)

Try to correct / improve the following sentences by writing them in a simpler way.

1. There is no doubt that the attraction of video games are catching people’s attraction easily.
2. In our world today where technologies bound to run in our daily existence, playing video games plays a vital part to our own society.
3. All RPGs (role-playing games), as the name already suggests, involves the player assuming a character and controlling the entire process and unlock tasks to advance.
4. On the one hand, it is undoubtedly that video games have offered much more benefits to human beings.
5. I personally believe that video games seem to have noxious implications.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/12/ielts-grammar-simplify-to-avoid-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (14)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/12/ielts-grammar-simplify-to-avoid-mistakes.html#comments)

**Saturday, August 04, 2012**

[**IELTS Grammar: find the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/08/ielts-grammar-find-the-mistakes.html)

Find the mistakes in the following sentences. All of the sentences relate to the graph in [this lesson](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/02/ielts-writing-task-1-line-graph-exercise.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self).

1. Families who do not have cars have decreased from 1971 to 2007.
2. Households without a car percentage gradually decreased.
3. There is a rise can be noted in the proportion of households with two cars.
4. The number of household with no car were well below 50% in 1971.
5. There were least percentage of household who had three or more cars, but it steadily improved to 5% by 2007.

I'll put my answers in the comments area tomorrow.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/08/ielts-grammar-find-the-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (24)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/08/ielts-grammar-find-the-mistakes.html#comments)

**Saturday, July 28, 2012**

[**Students' grammar questions**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/07/students-grammar-questions.html)

Here are a few grammar questions that I've been asked this week:

***1. Which is better: "like normal" or "as usual"?***

You might hear people say "like normal", but it's much better to use "as usual".

***2. What do "in order to" and "in terms of" mean?***

A dictionary will explain the meaning of these phrases. However, it's probably more useful to see some examples of how they are used. A search engine like Google will give you many more examples than I can.

***3. Is it correct to write "it is worth spending maintaining libraries" or "libraries are worth spending"?***

Neither is correct I'm afraid. I would write: "It is worth spending money to maintain libraries" or "libraries are worth maintaining".

***4. Can we put "for example" in the middle of a sentence like this: "There are many environmental problems, for example, people litter everywhere"?***

The use of "for example" in the sentence above is not correct. To avoid confusion, I'd recommend using "for example" only at the beginning of sentences. Use "such as" in the middle (e.g. There are many environmental problems, such as air pollution).

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/07/students-grammar-questions.html)**|**[**Comments (10)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/07/students-grammar-questions.html#comments)

**Saturday, June 23, 2012**

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/06/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes-1.html)

Try to correct the mistakes in the following sentences.

1. More proportion of American people in 1970 than in 2000 got married.
2. There are many things easy enough for those young people to do.
3. I am agreed that volunteer work can build up the responsibilities in youngs.
4. Society gets benefitted as the juvenile crime rate reduced.
5. Having a work experience may help to having a job quicker and easier.

PS. Nobody answered this question from Monday's reading lesson:

If a survey showed that "households spent seven hours a day on transporting themselves and their goods", does this mean that it was "a survey of household expenditure on transport"?

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/06/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes-1.html)**|**[**Comments (21)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/06/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes-1.html#comments)

**Saturday, June 09, 2012**

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/06/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)

Here are some sentences about this week's writing task 1 question. Can you find and correct the mistakes? Not all of them are grammar mistakes!

1. There were 51 million pmt incidents than 35 million pmt injuries by bus.
2. In general, both the figures for serious fatalities and injuries were dramatically higher for the demand response field.
3. The number of people having injuries showed the more popular level than that of people having incidents.
4. There is a somewhat difference between the number of people using heavy rail and light rail.
5. The bar chart illustrates the amount of passengers who were been incidents and injuries travelled by five types of transport such as demand response, bus, heavy rail, light rail, and commuter rail in 2002.
6. The bus, which is used by almost 80 people, tallied 66 injuries.
7. In three types of rail, being lower than light rail, heavy rail surpassed commuter rail in the amount of incidents and injuries.
8. Injuries by bus was went up approximately 4 times than commuter rail.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/06/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (18)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/06/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html#comments)

**Saturday, May 05, 2012**

[**IELTS Grammar: cause and effect**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/05/ielts-grammar-cause-and-effect.html)

Here are some useful phrases for describing causes and effects (for IELTS Writing Task 2 and maybe Speaking Part 3). I'll use the topic of 'global warming' to show how the phrases work.

1. Cause and Effect

Pollution causes global warming.
Pollution leads to global warming.
Pollution results in global warming.
Pollution is the main cause of global warming.
Factories pollute the atmosphere. As a result, global warming is occurring.

2. Effect and Cause

Global warming is caused by pollution.
Global warming is the result of pollution.
Global warming is due to pollution.
Global warming occurs as a result of pollution.

Notice the different uses of 'result' (results in, is the result of, as a result). Students make a lot of mistakes with these phrases.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/05/ielts-grammar-cause-and-effect.html)**|**[**Comments (9)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/05/ielts-grammar-cause-and-effect.html#comments)

**Saturday, April 14, 2012**

[**IELTS Grammar: punctuation**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/04/ielts-grammar-punctuation.html)

Here are some simple rules to help you with punctuation for IELTS writing:

**Full stops**
Full stops are very important. Put a clear full stop at the end of each sentence, and then begin the next sentence with a capital letter. If you don't do this, you will get a low score.

**Commas**

1. When you start a sentence with these words, put a comma after them:
Nowadays, Recently, Firstly, Secondly, Finally, Furthermore, In addition, Also, However, By contrast, On the other hand, In my opinion,...
2. We use commas in lists:
e.g. This problem affects individuals, communities and society in general.
3. We don't usually put a comma after the word "that":
e.g. It is clear that the rate of immigration increased.
4. Don't worry about other uses of commas. The use of a comma is often optional in other situations.

**Apostrophes**
Avoid contractions in IELTS writing. Use "do not" instead of "don't".
You may sometimes need to show possession e.g. the government's decision.

**Other punctuation**
You don't really need to use any other punctuation in IELTS writing.
My advice is to avoid trying to use colons and semicolons.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/04/ielts-grammar-punctuation.html)**|**[**Comments (16)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/04/ielts-grammar-punctuation.html#comments)

**Saturday, April 07, 2012**

[**IELTS Grammar: verbs with 'exam'**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/04/ielts-grammar-verbs-with-exam.html)

A lot of students write to me saying "I gave the IELTS test yesterday". Please note that "give an exam" is not correct.

**Don't say:**
- I gave an exam.
- I gave the IELTS test.

**Do say:**
- I took the IELTS exam/test.
- I passed the exam. (i.e. you were successful)

In other words, use "take" not "give".

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/04/ielts-grammar-verbs-with-exam.html)**|**[**Comments (9)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/04/ielts-grammar-verbs-with-exam.html#comments)

**Saturday, March 31, 2012**

[**IELTS Grammar: 'by/in contrast' and 'on the contrary'**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/03/ielts-grammar-byin-contrast-and-on-the-contrary.html)

A few people have asked me about these phrases recently. Do they have the same meaning? When is each one used?

**By contrast / In contrast**
I often use these two phrases in both writing task 1 and 2. They are exactly the same, and are used in a similar way to "however" or "on the other hand" to introduce a contrast / comparison. Put "By / In contrast" at the beginning of a sentence, with a comma after "contrast".

**Example**
Unemployment rose in the UK. By contrast, the number of unemployed people in Canada fell.

**On the contrary**
I've never used this phrase in any of my IELTS lessons. It doesn't mean the same thing as "by / in contrast". We use "on the contrary" to deny that something is true, and to explain that the opposite is true.

**Example**
- Person 1: "You had some problems with your hotel, didn't you?"
- Person 2: "On the contrary, the hotel was great, but the airline lost my suitcase."

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/03/ielts-grammar-byin-contrast-and-on-the-contrary.html)**|**[**Comments (18)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/03/ielts-grammar-byin-contrast-and-on-the-contrary.html#comments)

**Saturday, February 25, 2012**

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/02/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)

Try to find and correct the mistakes in these sentences:

1. I agree that we should interest more with our own societies and countries.
2. There three main problems that we need to tackle first, education.
3. You should mention your opinion in the introduction so examiner have some idea what to expect from your essay.

Feel free to share your corrections as 'comments'. I'll add my answers tomorrow.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/02/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (33)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/02/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html#comments)

**Sunday, January 29, 2012**

[**IELTS Grammar: articles**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/01/ielts-grammar-articles.html)

Today I'm attaching some questions that a student asked about articles. You can read my answers below each question.

[Click here to download](http://ielts-simon.com/files/articles.pdf)

Please note that I cannot provide a complete explanation of all article rules and uses. Grammar books take many pages to do this!

Article rules can become very confusing, so don't worry too much about them. Students who are good at using articles have normally learnt by copying what they read and hear, rather than by learning the 'rules'.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/01/ielts-grammar-articles.html)**|**[**Comments (13)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/01/ielts-grammar-articles.html#comments)

**Sunday, January 22, 2012**

[**IELTS Grammar: capital letters**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/01/ielts-grammar-capital-letters.html)

A few people have asked me about using capital letters in different parts of the IELTS test. Here's my advice:

* In the reading and listening tests, they don't care about capital letters. So you can write everything in lowercase or in capitals, and it won't affect your score.
* In the writing test, try to follow the normal rules for capital letters. Grammar books and websites explain these rules in detail. [Click here](http://www.englishclub.com/writing/caps0.htm%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self)to see a website that summarises the rules quite well.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/01/ielts-grammar-capital-letters.html)**|**[**Comments (26)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/01/ielts-grammar-capital-letters.html#comments)

**Sunday, January 15, 2012**

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/01/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)

Find the mistakes in the following sentences:

1. Parents influence on their children and give them many advices.
2. Students need to develop their knowledges and skills.
3. We can use the Internet to do some researches.
4. If we want to find some informations fastly, the Internet is the best resource.

Feel free to share your answers in the "comments" area. I'll give you my answers tomorrow.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/01/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (52)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2012/01/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html#comments)

**Saturday, December 31, 2011**

[**IELTS Grammar: 'highest' or 'the highest'?**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/12/ielts-grammar-highest-or-the-highest.html)

Most grammar books will tell you that you need "the" before a superlative like "highest" or "lowest", but this is not always true.

* We use "the" when there is a noun after the adjective e.g. the highest number, the highest proportion.
* When we put the noun before, we don't need "the" e.g. the number was highest, the proportion was highest.

So, compare these 2 sentences:

- The UK had the highest rate of unemployment.
- The unemployment rate was highest in the UK.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/12/ielts-grammar-highest-or-the-highest.html)**|**[**Comments (37)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/12/ielts-grammar-highest-or-the-highest.html#comments)

**Sunday, December 11, 2011**

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/12/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)

Here are some more sentences that contain mistakes. See if you can find them.

* Children are not enough mature to make decisions.
* Poor parenting has contributed children to misbehave more.
* Good parenting encourages children acquire social skills.
* Bringing up children and educate them is the responsibility of parents.

Please share your corrections in the "comments" area below this lesson. I'll add my corrections tomorrow.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/12/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (50)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/12/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html#comments)

**Saturday, December 03, 2011**

[**IELTS Grammar: number, amount, proportion, figure**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/12/ielts-grammar-number-amount-proportion-figure.html)

Somebody asked me about the difference between these 4 words (for IELTS writing task 1). I'll try to explain some basic ways to use them.

**number**
- Use "the number of + plural noun" e.g. the number of visitors.
- Don't use it to describe percentages or uncountable nouns e.g. ~~money~~.

**amount**
- Use "the amount of + uncountable noun" e.g. the amount of money.
- Don't use it with countable nouns e.g. the amount of ~~person~~/~~people~~.

**proportion**
- Only use this to describe percentages (not numbers).
- Use "the proportion of + plural noun" e.g. the proportion of people.

**figure**
- Use "the figure for + plural noun" e.g. the figure for visitors to the UK.
- Use it with uncountable nouns e.g. the figure for unemployment.
- Use it with countries e.g. the figure for Canada.
- Use it with percentages e.g. the figure (for...) rose to 10%.

***Note:***
If you've read any of my task 1 essays, you'll see that I like "the figure for" because it can be used in almost any situation.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/12/ielts-grammar-number-amount-proportion-figure.html)**|**[**Comments (14)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/12/ielts-grammar-number-amount-proportion-figure.html#comments)

**Sunday, November 27, 2011**

[**IELTS Grammar: using 'see' in writing task 1**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/11/ielts-grammar-using-see-in-writing-task-1.html)

A few people have asked me about using 'see' to describe numbers on a graph or chart. Look at the following sentence:

* In Britain, CD sales increased dramatically in the 1980s.

We can write the same sentence in various ways using 'see':

* Britain saw a dramatic increase in CD sales in the 1980s.
* The 1980s saw a dramatic increase in CD sales in Britain.
* British shops saw CD sales increase dramatically in the 1980s.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**IELTS Writing Task 1**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/ielts-writing-task-1/)**,**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/11/ielts-grammar-using-see-in-writing-task-1.html)**|**[**Comments (21)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/11/ielts-grammar-using-see-in-writing-task-1.html#comments)

**Sunday, November 20, 2011**

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/11/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes-1.html)

Can you correct the mistakes in the following sentences?

1. The pollution and waste that we produce also affect on animals.
2. Many animals are in danger extinction.
3. Traffic congestion in nearly all over the world is on the increase.
4. Most of people who live in cities are suffering from traffic.
5. Schools can make a big part in educating children about this issue.

Please share your corrections in the "comments" area below this lesson. I'll add my corrections tomorrow.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/11/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes-1.html)**|**[**Comments (35)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/11/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes-1.html#comments)

**Sunday, November 06, 2011**

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/11/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)

Can you find the mistakes in the following sentences? You might need to make several changes.

1. It is clear that, diploma and degree were the most popular qualifications.
2. Parents are usually try to provide their children different alternatives.
3. Most of computer games contain several of violence.
4. The number of people living in cities will be sharply increased.
5. Advertising are widely spread nowadays.

Please share your corrections in the "comments" area below this lesson. I'll add my corrections tomorrow.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/11/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (34)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/11/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html#comments)

**Sunday, October 02, 2011**

[**IELTS Grammar: notice your mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/10/ielts-grammar-notice-your-mistakes.html)

Students often don't notice when a teacher corrects their mistakes.

Look at this example of a conversation between a student and a teacher:

**Student:** *I gave the IELTS exam last week.*
**Teacher:** *Oh, you mean you took the exam last week?*
**Student:** *Yes, I have given the exam twice.* (should be 'taken')

The student doesn't notice that the teacher is correcting a mistake. Your teacher can 'give' you a test or an exam, but you 'take' or 'do' the exam.

When a teacher repeats something that you said in a different way, you probably made a mistake. Listen carefully, and try to correct yourself.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/10/ielts-grammar-notice-your-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (8)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/10/ielts-grammar-notice-your-mistakes.html#comments)

**Sunday, September 11, 2011**

[**IELTS Vocabulary: word family for 'compare'**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/09/ielts-vocabulary-word-family-for-compare.html)

Let's look at the word family for 'compare'. Remember that we are looking at usage, not meaning (I'm sure you know the meaning of these words).

* The graph compares the number of males and females...
* 10% of males were unemployed, compared to only 8% of females.
* The unemployment rate was high in 2008 compared with previous years.
* The unemployment rate was high in 2008 in comparison with...
* By/in comparison, the unemployment rate in 2008 increased to...
* Figures for the USA were comparable with/to those for the UK.
* The figure for females was comparatively low, at only 8%.

You've probably noticed that this word family is really useful for writing task 1.

PS. Thanks to Martin for sharing [this online dictionary](http://www.oxfordadvancedlearnersdictionary.com/dictionary/compare%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self). The 'usage notes' at the bottom of the page are especially helpful.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/09/ielts-vocabulary-word-family-for-compare.html)**|**[**Comments (12)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/09/ielts-vocabulary-word-family-for-compare.html#comments)

**Sunday, September 04, 2011**

[**IELTS Grammar: word families**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/09/ielts-grammar-word-families.html)

If you want to improve your vocabulary knowledge, it's a good idea to study word families.

Let's look at the word family for "different".

1. We usually say different from e.g. A is different from B.
2. The noun is difference e.g. There is a difference between A and B.
3. The verb is differ e.g. A differs from B (or A and B differ).

I'm sure you understood these words, but did you really know how to use them correctly? We'll look at another word family next week.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/09/ielts-grammar-word-families.html)**|**[**Comments (8)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/09/ielts-grammar-word-families.html#comments)

**Sunday, July 10, 2011**

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/07/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)

The sentences below contain some common mistakes. Try to correct them.

1. The number of holidays abroad was dramatically increased in 2005.
2. The figure was raised again in 2006, but it reduced in 2007.
3. In 2008, the number of foreign holidays was reduced to its lowest point.

What grammar point can we learn by correcting these 3 sentences?

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/07/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (26)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/07/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html#comments)

**Sunday, June 12, 2011**

[**IELTS Grammar: verb + noun collocations**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/06/ielts-grammar-verb-noun-collocations.html)

When deciding whether to give a band 7 in IELTS speaking or writing, one of the things that examiners look at is your use of collocations.

'Collocation' basically means using the right words together. Many students know a lot of nouns, but they don't always know the right verbs to use with those nouns.

Here are some useful 'verb + noun' collocations:

* to make a mistake (not 'do' a mistake)
* to do/carry out/conduct research (not 'make' research, not 'a' research)
* to make/take/reach a decision
* to have/gain/lack experience
* to have/face/experience difficulties

Think about this, especially when you are writing essays. Check in a dictionary to make sure you have used the right verb with the right noun.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/06/ielts-grammar-verb-noun-collocations.html)**|**[**Comments (8)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/06/ielts-grammar-verb-noun-collocations.html#comments)

**Sunday, May 29, 2011**

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/05/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes-1.html)

The following sentences contain mistakes. Can you find them?

1. Governments have played an essential place in society.
2. Lack of exercise has bad effects to health.
3. Qualifications lead to get promotions.
4. This may contribute to reach their dreams.
5. The main important thing is to make people aware for this problem.

I'll put my corrections in the "comments" area tomorrow.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/05/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes-1.html)**|**[**Comments (26)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/05/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes-1.html#comments)

**Sunday, March 20, 2011**

[**IELTS Grammar: find the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/03/ielts-grammar-find-the-mistakes.html)

Find the mistakes in the sentences below.

1. The graph shows the number of people travelled to and from UK.
2. In 1979, the number of people visited UK was 10 millions.
3. Turkey was the least country in terms of the number of people visiting it.

Feel free to share your answers in the "comments" area below. I'll post my answers tomorrow.

[**IELTS Grammar: using Google**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/03/ielts-grammar-using-google.html)

If you are unsure about the correct way to use a word, Google can often solve the problem. Here are 2 examples:

1. Yesterday I googled "drink driving" and "drunk driving". Both are correct, but which is more common?
2. I wanted to explain the use of "having had", so I googled "having had grammar" and found [this page](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/grammar/learnit/learnitv305.shtml%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self) from the BBC.

Google and Wikipedia are two of the best tools for improving your vocabulary and grammar. Try them the next time you have a language problem.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/03/ielts-grammar-using-google.html)**|**[**Comments (6)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/03/ielts-grammar-using-google.html#comments)

**Sunday, February 20, 2011**

[**IELTS Grammar: more mistakes!**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/02/ielts-grammar-more-mistakes.html)

Try to correct the mistakes in the following sentences:

1. I am completely agree that job satisfaction for workers are important.
2. On the other side, maybe it is difficult for all workers to be happy in their jobs.
3. Although, we all need to work in order to pay our bills etc, but we also need to enjoy our jobs.

Be careful with "although". Most English learners make mistakes with this word.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/02/ielts-grammar-more-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (15)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/02/ielts-grammar-more-mistakes.html#comments)

**Sunday, February 13, 2011**

[**IELTS Grammar: find the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/02/ielts-grammar-find-the-mistakes.html)

Correct the mistakes in the sentences below.

1. With developments in nuclear technology, the risk of accidents are being reduced.
2. Scientists need to make more researches to improve the safety of nuclear power stations.
3. Using of nuclear power not only does it produce cheap electricity, but also it does not have any pollution.

I'll put my answers in the "comments" area tomorrow.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/02/ielts-grammar-find-the-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (21)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/02/ielts-grammar-find-the-mistakes.html#comments)

**Saturday, January 22, 2011**

[**IELTS Grammar: correct the mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/01/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)

The following sentences contain mistakes. Try to correct them.

1. We are friends ever since we first met.
2. If people work in teams can help them to achieve more.
3. If we consider unemployment is another important issue.
4. It is difficult to live in a new country, it is also difficult to speak a new language.
5. Many children behave badly, could be because their parents are not strict enough.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/01/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html)**|**[**Comments (15)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2011/01/ielts-grammar-correct-the-mistakes.html#comments)

**Sunday, December 19, 2010**

[**IELTS Grammar: subject + verb**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/12/ielts-grammar-subject-verb.html)

Question: Which of the following is a correct sentence?

1. Learning a foreign language.
2. Firstly, learning a foreign language in order to improve your career prospects.
3. For example, learning a foreign language by living in a country where that language is spoken, and communicating with native speakers on a daily basis.

Answer: None of these are correct sentences. None of them has a main verb.

To make a sentence, you need a subject (noun/noun phrase) and a verb:

1. I am learning a foreign language. OR, Learning a foreign language isuseful.
2. Firstly, many people learn a foreign language in order to improve their career prospects.
3. For example, some people learn a foreign language by living in a country where that language is spoken and communicating with native speakers on a daily basis.

Some students really need to work on writing correct "subject + verb" sentences. Missing the verb in a sentence is a serious mistake that will definitely affect your score.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/12/ielts-grammar-subject-verb.html)**|**[**Comments (10)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/12/ielts-grammar-subject-verb.html#comments)

**Saturday, November 20, 2010**

[**IELTS Grammar: while, whilst, whereas, as**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/11/ielts-grammar-while-whilst-whereas-as.html)

Joshua asked me the following question:

"Can you explain ***while, whilst, whereas, as***? Either can be used to connect two sentences, but I am not sure how to identify them and quite often I use them wrongly."

Here's my simplified explanation:

1. ***While*** and ***whilst*** are the same, but ***whilst*** is a bit more formal (according to one famous grammar book).
2. ***Whereas*** is always used for contrast. ***While/whilst*** can be used for contrast, OR to mean "at the same time".
3. ***As*** can mean "because" or "exactly at the moment when".

Try to write an example sentence using each of these words. Feel free to share your sentences in the "comments" area below.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/11/ielts-grammar-while-whilst-whereas-as.html)**|**[**Comments (12)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/11/ielts-grammar-while-whilst-whereas-as.html#comments)

**Sunday, November 14, 2010**

[**IELTS Grammar: 'however' and 'whereas'**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/11/ielts-grammar-however-and-whereas.html)

You can't use 'however' and 'whereas' in the same way. Follow these general rules in order to avoid grammar mistakes:

**Use 'however' (followed by a comma) at the beginning of a sentence to contrast with the previous sentence:**

* Some people believe that schools are responsible for the behaviour of their students. However, others argue that discipline is the responsibility of parents.

**Use 'whereas' (after a comma) to contrast two ideas in the same sentence:**

* Some people believe that schools are responsible for the behaviour of their students, whereas others argue that discipline is the responsibility of parents.

You can use 'on the other hand' or 'by contrast' in the same way as 'however'. You can use 'while' instead of 'whereas'.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/11/ielts-grammar-however-and-whereas.html)**|**[**Comments (22)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/11/ielts-grammar-however-and-whereas.html#comments)

**Saturday, October 23, 2010**

[**IELTS Grammar: 'because of'**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/10/ielts-grammar-because-of.html)

Last week I looked at how to use the word 'because'. One of my students then asked me to explain the difference between 'because' and 'because of'.

Compare these two sentences:

I stayed at home because the weather was bad.
I stayed at home because of the bad weather.

The important difference is the use of the word 'was' in the first sentence. After 'because', you need a subject and a verb (e.g. the weather was). After 'because of', we don't use a verb, only a noun, nouns or noun phrase.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/10/ielts-grammar-because-of.html)**|**[**Comments (7)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/10/ielts-grammar-because-of.html#comments)

**Saturday, October 16, 2010**

[**IELTS Grammar: because**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/10/ielts-grammar-because.html)

Students often make mistakes when using the word "because". You can't use "because" to connect ideas in two separate sentences. Put both the main idea and the reason in the same sentence.

***Which sentence is NOT correct?***

1. Some children behave badly at school because their parents are too lenient at home.
2. Because parents are often too lenient at home, discipline in schools is becoming more difficult to enforce.
3. Children's behaviour is getting worse nowadays. Because parents are not strict enough.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/10/ielts-grammar-because.html)**|**[**Comments (17)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/10/ielts-grammar-because.html#comments)

**Saturday, September 11, 2010**

[**IELTS Grammar: linking with "this"**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/09/ielts-grammar-linking-with-this.html)

All students learn to link ideas using words like "however", "furthermore" etc. Most students don't realise that the word "this" is also a linking word. Look at the following examples:

* Nowadays, people can use the Internet, fax and mobile phones to work from home. In this way, people who do not have access to transport can find employment.
* Most products are built to last only a short time, and this creates a "throw-away" culture.
* A global economy means free trade between countries. This can strengthen political relationships.

The word "this" refers to the sentence or idea that came before. "This" helps you to link ideas and avoid repetition. Native speakers and good writers use "this" a lot, and the IELTS examiner will be impressed if you can use it.

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/09/ielts-grammar-linking-with-this.html)**|**[**Comments (11)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/09/ielts-grammar-linking-with-this.html#comments)

**Saturday, September 04, 2010**

[**IELTS Grammar: fall or reduce?**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/09/ielts-grammar-fall-or-reduce.html)

These two words are the opposites of 'rise' and 'raise' (see last week's grammar lesson):

* something falls (e.g. the price fell)
* somebody reduces something (e.g. the company reduced the price)

You will probably use 'fall' to describe numbers on a graph or chart for IELTS Writing Task 1:

* In 2008, the number of customers fell. (verb, past)
* There was a sharp fall in Internet usage. (noun)

'Reduce' and 'reduction' are probably more useful for Writing Task 2:

* We need to reduce the amount of pollution from exhaust fumes. (verb)
* Recycling leads to a reduction in waste. (noun)

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/09/ielts-grammar-fall-or-reduce.html)**|**[**Comments (7)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/09/ielts-grammar-fall-or-reduce.html#comments)

**Saturday, August 21, 2010**

[**IELTS Grammar: before or ago?**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/08/grammar-before-or-ago.html)

***Don't say:*** I came to Manchester before two weeks.

***Do say:*** I came to Manchester two weeks ago.

Use "past time + ago"

* 10 years ago, a long time ago, a few weeks ago, a couple of days ago

Use "before + action / event"

* before you left, before we start, before lunch

***Don't use*** "before + past time" (~~before two weeks, before three days~~)

**Posted by**[**Simon**](http://profile.typepad.com/6p0120a5bb05d8970c)**in**[**Vocabulary/Grammar**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/mistakesgrammar/)**|**[**Permalink**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/08/grammar-before-or-ago.html)**|**[**Comments (12)**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/08/grammar-before-or-ago.html#comments)

**Sunday, July 18, 2010**

[**IELTS Grammar: some typical mistakes**](http://ielts-simon.com/ielts-help-and-english-pr/2010/07/ielts-grammar-some-typical-mistakes.html)

Find 5 common mistakes in the paragraph below:

Some people believe that, all police officers should carry a gun. While, others disagree with this idea, and argue that it is intimidating to see armed police officers on the streets. From my view, the advantages of police officers carrying guns have overweighed the disadvantages. Because the police need to be able to protect both themselves and the general public.

Feel free to share your answers in the "comments" area below. I'll reveal the correct answers tomorrow.