

# BASIC ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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# NOTES ON BASIC ENGLISH GRAMMAR

- The following slides present examples of basic English grammar rules that are often problematic for Chinese English language learners.
- These rules help organize your writing. They make your intent clear so that the reader better understands your message.
- Because these rules are seldom broken by native speakers of English, you will be expected to internalize these rules until they become second nature.
- Your writing will not be taken seriously if these rules are not followed. They are what all English-speaking children know by second grade, so take care not to make these mistakes!

# INSERT A SPACE AFTER PERIODS (.), COMMAS (,), EXCLAMATION POINTS (!), AND QUESTIONS MARKS (?)

## **Incorrect**

What is the meaning of  
life?food,fun,and cheese

## **Correct**

What is the meaning of life? Food, fun,  
and cheese.

## FOR QUOTATION MARKS (“):

-NO SPACE AFTER THE FIRST ONE

-INSERT A SPACE AFTER THE SECOND ONE.

### **Incorrect**

She said,” I am not crazy! “

### **Correct**

She said, “I am not crazy!”

## FOR PARENTHESSES ( )::

-NO SPACE AFTER THE FIRST ONE

-INSERT A SPACE AFTER THE SECOND ONE.

### **Incorrect**

I always tell the truth(except for when  
I don't ) .

### **Correct**

I always tell the truth (except for  
when I don't).

# USE AN APOSTROPHE (') IN CONTRACTIONS.

## **Incorrect**

You dont have to say you love me.i  
know im irresistible !

## **Correct**

You don't have to say you love me. I  
know I'm irresistible!

# FOR APOSTROPHES ( ' ): -NO SPACE IS NEEDED BEFORE OR AFTER

## **Incorrect**

Don ' t be afraid to try and fail .It 's important to keep trying.

## **Correct**

Don't be afraid to try and fail. It's important to keep trying.

# CAPITALIZE THE WORD “I”

## **Incorrect**

i was surprised. i did not expect the  
cat to fall on my head.

## **Correct**

I was surprised. I did not expect the  
cat to fall on my head.

# SPELL OUT THE WORD “YOU”

## **Incorrect**

U are not as funny as you think. My cat is funnier than u.

## **Correct**

You are not as funny as you think. My cat is funnier than you.



# CAPITALIZE ALL NAMES AND IMPORTANT WORDS IN TITLES

## Incorrect

Cormac mccarthy wrote *No country  
for old men.*

Some americans love coca cola. sarah  
does not.

## Correct

Cormac McCarthy wrote *No country  
for Old Men.*

Some Americans love Coca Cola.  
Sarah does not.

# SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT – CONJUGATE YOUR VERBS PROPERLY.

## **Incorrect**

I think they goes to KFC too much

He take his sister's chocolate.

The boy with the crazy hair are nice.

## **Correct**

I think they go to KFC too much.

He takes his sister's chocolate.

The boy with crazy hair is nice.

# USE PAST TENSE WHEN APPROPRIATE

## **Incorrect**

Yesterday she go to KTV and she sing horrible.

## **Correct**

Yesterday she went to KTV and she sang horrible.

# USE PLURALS WHEN APPROPRIATE. USE THE CORRECT PLURAL FORM OF THE NOUN.

## **Incorrect**

Not all man live but all man die.

Many student had to go to room 307 yesterday.

## **Correct**

Not all men live, but all men die.

Many students had to go to room307 yesterday.