

**ACCELERATE**  
**ENGLISH**

GRAMMAR SERIES

# STOP SAYING THAT!

VERSION FOR KOREAN, JAPANESE AND CHINESE NATIVE SPEAKERS

200 LESSONS

THE MOST COMMON INCORRECT PHRASES  
**IN ENGLISH**

Dear English Learners,

Welcome to a sample of the book “Stop Saying That!” My goal with this book is to help you understand common incorrect phrases that English learners say and how to say these phrases correctly.

In this sample, you can find the following parts:

- The table of contents pages, which describe the contents of the book
- 5 sample lessons:

Each section of ten lessons has a review page with practice exercises where you can test your knowledge of the lessons and the answers are included so that you can get feedback. The practice exercises and answers are not included in this sample book (because this sample is only 5 lessons) but the complete book includes these exercises and answers.

I hope you enjoy the book and feel free to contact me for any questions!

Sincerely,

Blake Howe  
Accelerate English

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## “Everybody didn’t know”

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What You Should Say: “*Nobody knew.*”

Why It’s Wrong:

The words “everybody” and “everyone” should only be in the subject position when the verb is in positive form, such as “knew”, and not with negative forms like “didn’t know”.

If you want to say that zero people did something, use “no” in the subject instead of “every”, and then use a *positive* verb form with it: “*nobody did it*”. The word “no” is negative, so it will make the whole clause negative. Don’t use a negative verb form when the subject includes “no”, because that would be a double negative.

Use “everybody/everything” with a positive verb if you want to say that the statement is true about all people:

- *Everybody can come tomorrow.* – 100% of the people can come
- *Everything is cheap here.* – 100% of the products are cheap
- *Every student passed the test.* – 100% of the students passed

Use “nobody/nothing” or the word “no” with a subject and then a verb in positive form if you want to say that the situation is true about *zero* people.

- *Nobody can come tomorrow.* – zero people can come
- *Nothing happened* – zero events happened
- *No student passed the test.* – zero people passed, so all the students failed

It’s incorrect to use “no” with a negative verb because this is saying a negative twice:

- *Nobody ~~couldn’t~~ could do it.*
- *Nobody ~~hasn’t~~ has been there before.*
- *Nothing ~~isn’t~~ is wrong.*

Tip: you can use a positive verb for both “every” and “no”, but the meaning is completely opposite (“all” or “zero”). Try to practice it to create a good habit by focusing on using “no” as part of the subject with a positive verb when you want to express a quantity of zero.

**To learn more about the difference between “every”, “any”, “some” and “no”, read Lesson #4 in the book “What’s the Difference Between...?”**

## “I don’t think so, too”

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What You Should Say: “*I don’t think so, either.*”

Why It’s Wrong:

The word “too” is only used with positive statements (when the verb is in positive form). In this case, the verb is in negative form: “*don’t think*”. With verbs in negative form (*don’t, aren’t, can’t, won’t, haven’t, shouldn’t* etc.) you should use “either”.

Too

You can use “too” when you want to say that what is true for the first noun is also true for a second noun. However, it is important to remember that you should only use “too” when both statements use a verb in positive form. It doesn’t matter if the meaning is positive or negative, but the verb has to be in the positive form.

- *I think she’s funny. → I think so, too.* – the second person agrees with the first person
- *I can speak Italian and my brother can, too.* – both of us can speak Italian
- *He dislikes soccer. I do, too.* – even though “dislike” has a negative meaning, the verb is in positive form, so use “too”

Either

You can use “either” when you are saying what is true about the first noun is also true about the second noun, but both verbs are in *negative* form. Again, the meaning of the verb isn’t important – only focus on whether the verb is positive or negative form.

- *I don’t think it’s interesting.* → *I don’t think so, either.* – the second person agrees with the first person
- *She isn’t going to go on the trip. I’m not going to go, either.* – the two people aren’t going
- *I won’t forget to send you the gift, and I won’t forget to call you, either.* – the phrase “won’t forget” has a positive meaning but the verb is in the negative form, so use “either”

**Tip:** practice getting used to saying negative verb forms with the word “either” instead of “too”. For example, when you say “don’t”, “didn’t”, “won’t”, “haven’t”, or “can’t”, end your statement in “either” to show agreement.

**To learn more about the difference between “too”, “either” and “neither”, read Lesson #50 in the book “What’s the Difference Between...?”**

## “I’m expecting your party tomorrow”

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**What You Should Say:** “I’m looking forward to your party tomorrow.”

Why It’s Wrong:

In this situation, the person wants to show positive anticipation for the party, so they should use “look forward to” and not “expect”, because the word “expect” has a different meaning.

Expect (something)

The verb “expect” is related to the noun “expectation” and it means that we think that something will happen in the future. The word “expect” doesn’t have any emotion attached to it, so it doesn’t communicate any positive feeling to the other person.

If you tell someone that you “expect” something to happen related to their actions, it can sound demanding and authoritative. For example, parents will tell their children “*I expect your room to be clean when I come back here in ten minutes!*” Obviously, you don’t want to communicate this kind of message to your friend about a party.

Below are some correct uses of “expect”:

- *I expect that it’ll rain soon.* – this doesn’t have any positive or negative meaning; it only means that I think it will rain
- *She expects a bad score on the test.* – this is obviously not a good situation, but she thinks it will happen
- *Everyone expects that the government will raise taxes.* – people don’t like this, but they think it will happen

Look Forward to (something)

The three-word phrasal verb “look forward to” means you have positive anticipation or excitement for something in the future. We use this to describe future events that we have positive feelings about.

- *I am looking forward to your party tomorrow.* – I am excited about the party
- *They look forward to meeting you this weekend!* – they have positive feelings about meeting you
- *We are all looking forward to our trip together next month.* – we have positive anticipation for it

**Tip:** a common expression that we use after making plans with someone is to say: “*I look forward to it.*” The pronoun “it” means “our plans.” Also, note that the word “to” in “look forward to” is a preposition so if you use a verb after it, you need to use it in gerund form (prepositions connect to gerunds): “*I look forward to seeing you.*”

**To learn more about using phrasal verbs, read Lesson #44 in the book “Grammar Essentials”.**

## “Today night” / “Today morning” / “Yesterday night”

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What You Should Say: “Tonight”, “This morning” and “Last night”

Why It’s Wrong:

These mistakes happen most often because of translation. In many languages, you can connect the word “today” with the words “night” or “morning” to describe parts of the current day. However, in English we have specific words for these situations, so you need to use them:

- *I went to bed too late last night.* – the night before today
- *This morning I went to the gym before work.* – the morning of today
- *This afternoon I have a meeting with an important client.* – the afternoon of today
- *My sister is coming to my house for dinner this evening.* – the evening of today, which is usually around 6 or 7pm.
- *I have tickets for the basketball game tonight.* – the night of today; it is similar to “this evening”, but “tonight” sounds a little later, like between 8pm and 12am

Tip: it is possible to talk about other periods of time with “yesterday”, such as “yesterday morning”, “yesterday afternoon”, and “yesterday evening”. It’s also possible to talk about all periods of time with the word “tomorrow”, such as “tomorrow morning”, “tomorrow afternoon”, “tomorrow evening”, and “tomorrow night”

## “I gonna” / “She wanna”

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What You Should Say: “I’m gonna” / “She wants to”

Why It’s Wrong:

A lot of students say, “gonna” instead of “going to”, which can be an acceptable pronunciation in casual situations, but it is *not* an acceptable word to write. When you write, only use the proper form “going to”.

However, even when saying “gonna”, students forget to add the “be” verb. The word “gonna” is the combination of “going” and “to” but it does *not* include the “be” verb. Therefore, you still need to include the be verb: “I’m gonna”, “he’s gonna”, “they’re gonna” etc.

The word “wanna” is also only acceptable in spoken form and must always be written as “want to”. There are also mistakes when people say “wanna”, which is the combination of “want” and “to”. The problem is that when you use “he” or “she” as the subject, the verb “want” needs to have an “s” – “he wants to go”. Therefore, you cannot use “wanna” when the subject is “he” or “she” because it needs the “s”:

- *They wanna join us.* – correct because “want” does not need “s” with “they” (but this can only be spoken – not written)
- *He wanna join us.* – incorrect because “want” needs to have “s” with “he”
- *He wants to join us.* – correct
- *She gonna join us.* – incorrect because there is no “be” verb
- *She’s gonna join us.* – correct because the “be” verb is included (but this can only be spoken – not written)