

A BRIEF ENGLISH LESSON: MARCH 04

This month we look at some common mistakes. Sometimes they are not very serious mistakes; people will still understand what you're saying. But it doesn't sound very good. And if you can start correcting these mistakes when you speak or write, you will begin to sound more and more like a native speaker.

1. How is the weather in England?
2. I look forward to see you soon.
3. I would like that you help me.
4. If you need any further informations, please don't hesitate to contact me.
5. I would like to discuss about this issue at the meeting next Friday.
6. It has a lot of nice restaurants and theatres in London.
7. I'm afraid but we cannot deliver the goods until the end of next month.
8. This letters have to be answered as soon as possible.
9. If you go to him, he'll be able to give you some good advices.
10. I would appreciate if you could let me know by next Monday.
11. I'm coming with the car to work tomorrow.
12. I think that's the cat from the neighbour.

And the answers?

1. *What* is the weather *like* in England?
(The German word "*wie*" when asking for a description of characteristics is translated as "*what like?*", not "*how*". For example: "*How* is she?" – "She's very well" but "*What* is she *like*" – "She's very nice".)
2. I look forward to *seeing* you soon.
(The expression "*to look forward to*" is followed either by a noun – "I'm looking forward to *my holiday*" – or a verb *in the -ing form* – "I'm looking forward to *going away*".)
3. I would like *you to help* me.
(If there is a verb after "*would like*" or "*want*", it is in the full infinitive form – *to do*. For example: "I would like (you) *to have* some fun!")
4. If you need any further *information*, please don't hesitate to contact me.
(The word "*information*" – like "*advice*" – is uncountable. So it takes a verb in the singular, and never has an "s" at the end.)
5. I would like to *discuss this* issue at the meeting next Friday.
(There is no preposition after "*discuss*". You simply *discuss something*.)

6. *There are* a lot of nice restaurants and theatres in London.
(The expression “*es hat*” is normally translated into English as “*there is*” or “*there are*”.)
7. I’m *afraid that* we cannot deliver the goods until the end of next month.
(We say “I’m *sorry but...*” and “I’m *afraid that*”. Or you can leave out “*that*” altogether – “I’m *afraid we cannot deliver...*”)
8. *These* letters have to be answered as soon as possible.
(The plural form of “*this*” is “*these*”. And the plural form of “*that*” is “*those*”.)
9. If you go to him, he’ll be able to give you some good *advice*.
(The word “*advice*” – like “*information*” – is uncountable. So it takes a verb in the singular and never has an “s” at the end.)
10. I would appreciate *it* if you could let me know by next Monday.
(The verb “*appreciate*” must have an object – “I appreciate *his help*” “He doesn’t appreciate *me*” or “Thanks, I would appreciate *it*”.)
11. I’m coming *by car* to work tomorrow.
(You go *by car*, *by plane*, *by sea*, *by train*, *by air* etc. but *on foot* in English!)
12. I think that’s the neighbour’s cat.
(When we are forming the genitive with people or animals, we normally use the apostrophe and “s” form – “my aunt’s house”, “the dog’s basket”. And “*from*” is incorrect here.)