

Most common mistakes in English

The following three points are very important to learn, since they are the most common mistakes amongst Germans:



haben ≠ have

Translate the following 2 sentences:

- a) *Ich habe gestern gegessen.*
- b) *Ich habe schon gegessen.*

If you translated it as

- a) I have eaten yesterday.
- b) I have already eaten.

then you only have one correct.

The first one should read : I ate yesterday.

One should not blindly translate haben as has/have. German doesn't have the present perfect tense, which is used quite often in English, so you'll often end up using present perfect (has/have + 3rd form) instead of past tense.

Remember - if the action happened quite clearly in the past and has no connection to the present, then we use the **past** tense and **not present perfect** (i.e. not has/have).



seit ≠ since

Translate the following:

- a) *Ich lerne seit einem Jahr Englisch.*
- b) *Ich tanze seit Februar.*

Hopefully you would have realized that there's something funny and didn't translate both using *since*, but rather:

- a) I've been learning English for one year.
- b) I've been dancing since February.

In English we use **since only when we speak about a point in time**, so since (8 o'clock, Monday, yesterday etc.) **For is used for a period of time**, eg. for (one week, 3 months, a long time).



machen ≠ make

Translate the following:

- a) *Wir machen Urlaub.*
- b) *Wir machen Ordnung.*

The right answers are:

- a) We are on holiday / We are going on holiday.
- b) We are tidying up.

We don't use make in any of these sentences. **Make is used when we talk about producing something**, eg. Miele **makes** washing machines.

Remember - Auf Englisch **machen** wir nicht viel, wir **tun** es lieber.