

Lesson 31: Errors Involving Adding or Removing a Letter

Today's lesson is all about spelling mistakes involving adding an extra letter to a word, or accidentally removing a letter from a word. There are so many words in English where these errors can happen, but again I'm going to focus on the most common ones.

Let's begin with accidentally removing a letter.

Error #132 – Forgetting the “R” in surprise, forward, and February

This error is probably caused by the fact that when speaking fast, we often don't pronounce the R: surprise, forward, February.

Listen to how they sound in sentences:

- We're planning a **surprise** party.
- If I call your name, please step **forward**.
- The month of **February** has 28 days.

Error #133 – Forgetting the “N” before the “M” in environment and government

A similar mistake is forgetting to include the “N” before the M in words like environment and government. Again, it's because when speaking fast, the “N” sound gets shortened or eliminated.

- This new law will help protect the **environment**.
- He's considering a career in **government**.

Error #134 – Forgetting double letters

Double letters can also cause difficulties in spelling. I often see students spell **opportunity** with only one “P,” or **necessary** with only one “s.”

Error #135 – Forgetting double “L”s

Words like finally, equally, really, locally, generally, basically all have two “L”s before the final Y. But the words **definitely** and **fortunately** only have one “L” before the final Y.

Error #136 – Misspelling occur, occurring, occurred

Another common mistake involves the words **occur**, **occurring**, and **occurred**. As you can see, the base form has two “C”s and one “R” - but when we add the -ING or -ED, then we need to double the R.

The word occur means essentially the same thing as the word happen. But with happen, we do NOT double the N when we write happening or happened.

Error #137 – Words with multiple pairs of double letters

Some English words have multiple pairs of double letters, and English learners and native speakers often forget one of the letters.

Here are some of the most common:

- **committee** has two Ms, two Ts, and two Es
- **embarrassed** has two Rs and two Ss
- **succeed** has two Cs and two Es
- **successful** has two Cs, *one* E, and two Ss

- **possession** has two sets of double Ss
- **accommodation** has two Cs and two Ms

Now let's look at some words where the mistake involves adding an extra letter.

Error #138 – Adding an extra double letter

Sometimes people take a word that has a double letter elsewhere, and add an extra double letter:

- **tomorrow** has only one M and two Rs
(not "tommorrow")
- **recommend** has only one C and two Ms
(not "reccommend")
- **beginning** has a single G in the middle and two Ns
(not "beggining")
- **disappointed** has only one S and two Ps
(not "dissappointed")
- **commitment** has two Ms and a single T in the middle
(not "committment")

Error #139 – Adding a "u" to "forty"

The words for the number **four** (4) and **fourteen** have a "u," but the word **forty** (40) does not.

Error #140 – Adding a "u" to "curiosity"

The adjective **curious** contains the letter "u", but the noun **curiosity** does not. The word stress is also different:

- He was a **curious** boy.
(CUR-i-ous)

- His **curiosity** got him into trouble.
(cur-i-OS-i-ty)

Error #141 – Adding an “e” to “truly”

The adjective **true** has an “e,” but the adverb **truly** does not.

It’s similar with the words **argue** and **arguing / argument** - the base form, **argue**, has a silent “e” at the end. We keep the “e” in the past tense - **argued** - but in the continuous form **arguing** and the noun form **argument**, there is no “e” after the “u.”

Error #142 – Adding an extra “o” to “pronunciation”

A common error I see when students are writing about English is to add an extra “o” to the word **pronunciation**. This probably comes from the fact that the verb **pronounce** does have “noun” in the middle. But the word **pronunciation** has “nun” in the middle, not noun.

Error #143 – Adding an extra “L” to “until”

The word **until** is very common in English, and it only has one “L,” not two.

What makes it confusing is we also have the word **till**, which is an informal, short word meaning “until.” **Till** has two “L”s, but **until** has only one.

- I’ll wait **until** you’re finished.
- = I’ll wait **till** you’re finished.

Error #144 – Problems with -GE and -DGE endings

Finally, the endings -ge and -dge often cause spelling problems because they're pronounced the same, so you might not be sure when to include the letter "D."

- **college** and **privilege** and **huge** and **image** do not have a D; they all end in -GE
- **knowledge** and **bridge** and **judge** and **edge** do have a D; they all end in -DGE

If you master these words, you'll be better at spelling than even a lot of native English speakers! Go ahead and try the quiz to practice and review. Thanks for watching and I'll talk to you next time.

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[200 COMMON ERRORS IN ENGLISH COURSE:](#)



Quiz – Lesson 31

Mark each sentence as correct or incorrect, and fix any mistakes.

1. It's not necessary to get a visa before entering that country.
2. He's had a very succesful career in finance.
3. How was the working enviroment in your last job?
4. I finaly finished the 500-page novel I was reading!
5. I was suprised that my kids ate all their vegetables.
6. I'm impressed by his committment to volunteer work.
7. Bob and Sally had a huge arguement last week.
8. Is there anything interesting happening downtown tonight?
9. It's a great priviledge to work with Dr. Smith.
- 10.I've always been curious about science.
- 11.My parents were disappointed that I didn't become a doctor or lawyer.
- 12.She tripped and fell forward.
- 13.Students at this school generally attend elite universities.
- 14.The accident occured on this street corner.
- 15.The judge will make his decision within 90 days.
- 16.I'm truly sorry for my offensive comments.
- 17.There's enough food for about fourty people.
- 18.They have a realy big television in their living room.
- 19.This governmental agency is in charge of health care policy.
- 20.Tomorrow I'll be working untill 10PM.
- 21.We asked a consultant for her reccommendations.
- 22.We've already booked accommodations in Milan.
- 23.I was so embarassed when I spilled my wine.
- 24.There are many opportunities to advance your career in this company.

Answers – Quiz – Lesson 31

1. Incorrect (Correct: necessary)
2. Incorrect (Correct: successful)
3. Incorrect (Correct: environment)
4. Incorrect (Correct: finally)
5. Incorrect (Correct: surprised)
6. Incorrect (Correct: commitment)
7. Incorrect (Correct: argument)
8. Correct
9. Incorrect (Correct: privilege)
10. Correct
11. Correct
12. Correct
13. Correct
14. Incorrect (Correct: occurred)
15. Correct
16. Correct
17. Incorrect (Correct: forty)
18. Incorrect (Correct: really)
19. Correct
20. Incorrect (Correct: until)
21. Incorrect (Correct: recommendations)
22. Correct
23. Incorrect (Correct: embarrassed)
24. Correct