

# Read American Newspapers and Learn English: A Practical English Book

## 10 Tips to Improve Your Grammar

- ✓ **Mind apostrophes:**  
Possessive case or contractions: **its** vs. **it's**, **they're** vs. **their**.
- ✓ **Always use a comma after an introductory or prepositional phrase:**  
"After a hard day at work, Jean loves to relax in the backyard."
- ✓ **Memorise homophones and endings:**  
too vs. two, your vs. you're, accept vs. except.  
-able when a whole root word is used: **fashionable**.  
-ible if a word doesn't make sense without the ending: **divisible**.
- ✓ **Articles: definite or indefinite:**  
For general 'a/an': Someone called a **doctor**.  
For specific 'the': Someone called **the doctor** living the next door.
- ✓ **Appositives : these dependent clauses modify the subject and often add non-essential information – offset with commas:**  
"The popular sitcom Brian O'Brien was cancelled after seven years."  
(Essential)  
"Brian O'Brien, the popular sitcom, was cancelled after seven years."  
(Non-essential)
- ✓ **That, who, and which - use commas for non-essential information:**  
"No one trusts politicians who lie." (Essential)  
"Mr. Trout, who is wearing the red shirt, announced his mayoral candidacy this week." (Non-essential)
- ✓ **The semicolon replaces a period and links two independent clauses:**  
"The family had never seen Mrs. Baker so mad; everyone thought the maid was going to have a heartattack."
- ✓ **Countable and non-countable nouns:**  
**many** for countables (*dress, house, car*),  
**much/a lot** and **little/few** for non-countables (*money, snow, time*).
- ✓ **Vocabulary building techniques:**  
Read books, magazine articles and newspaper columns.
- ✓ **Spellchecking and proofreading:**  
Use online spellcheckers like <http://www.spellchecker.net/spellcheck> and quietly read the text aloud to catch more mistakes.

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