

TYPICAL MISTAKES

Save your English!

*Dürfen wir vorstellen:
unsere Sprachheldin,
Spotlight Corrector
Woman. Ihre Mission:
das Aufspüren typisch
deutscher Fehler.*

*Text von VANESSA
CLARK, Illustrationen
von SIMON MYERS*

EASY PLUS



Everybody makes mistakes when speaking another

language, but it can be frustrating if you make the same mistakes again and again. What you need is someone to point them out to you — and this is why we created our very own language heroine, Spotlight Corrector Woman. Let's follow her on her first mission to London, where Jakob is working for six months as an intern in a recording studio. See which typical German mistakes she corrects — and learn from them.

intern ['ɪntɜːn]

• Praktikant(in)

Where are you staying?

Will is asking Jakob about his accommodation in London. Read their conversation. Jakob's typical German mistakes are highlighted in red. Then read the corrected version of the conversation below and compare the two.

Will: You're here for only three months, aren't you? Where are you staying?

Jakob: **I live** in a shared house in Chiswick. It's **in the near of** Turnham Green.

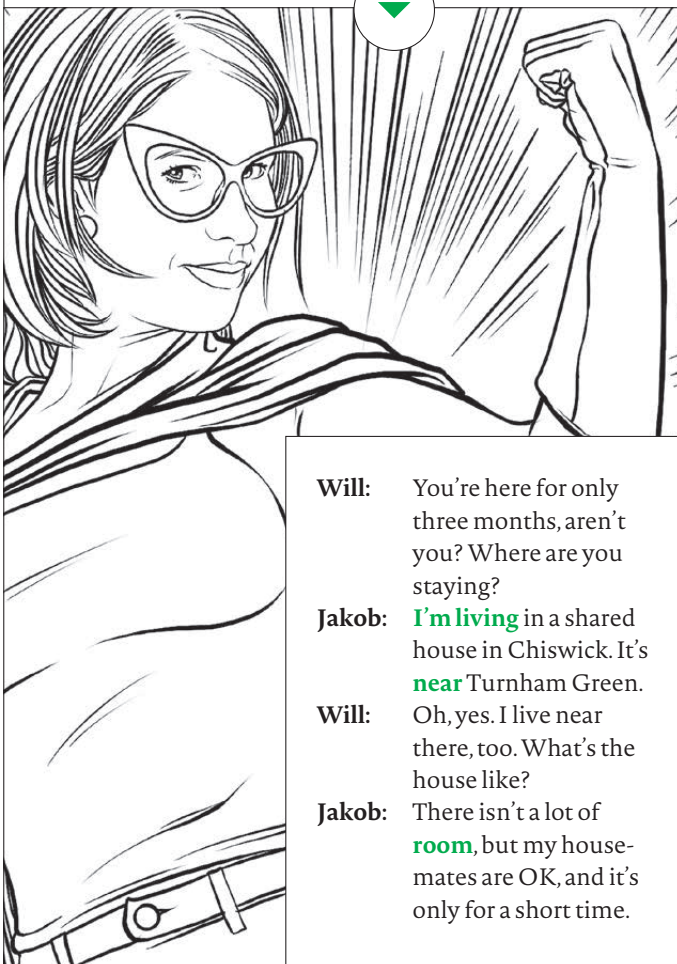
Will: Oh, yes. I live near there, too. What's the house like?

Jakob: There isn't a lot of **place**, but my house-mates are OK, and it's only for a short time.



Spotlight Corrector Woman says:

- "I live" is used to talk about one's permanent home.
- "I'm living" refers to temporary situations (such as that of a student, an intern or someone during a gap year).
- "near" Don't translate directly from German "in der Nähe von".
- "room" / "space" Don't translate directly from German "Platz".



hostel ['hɒstəl]
• Jugendherberge

housemate
['haʊsmet]
• Mitbewohner(in)

internship ['ɪntɜːnʃɪp]
• Praktikum

Will: You're here for only three months, aren't you? Where are you staying?

Jakob: **I'm living** in a shared house in Chiswick. It's **near** Turnham Green.

Will: Oh, yes. I live near there, too. What's the house like?

Jakob: There isn't a lot of **room**, but my house-mates are OK, and it's only for a short time.

Test yourself

Choose the correct words.

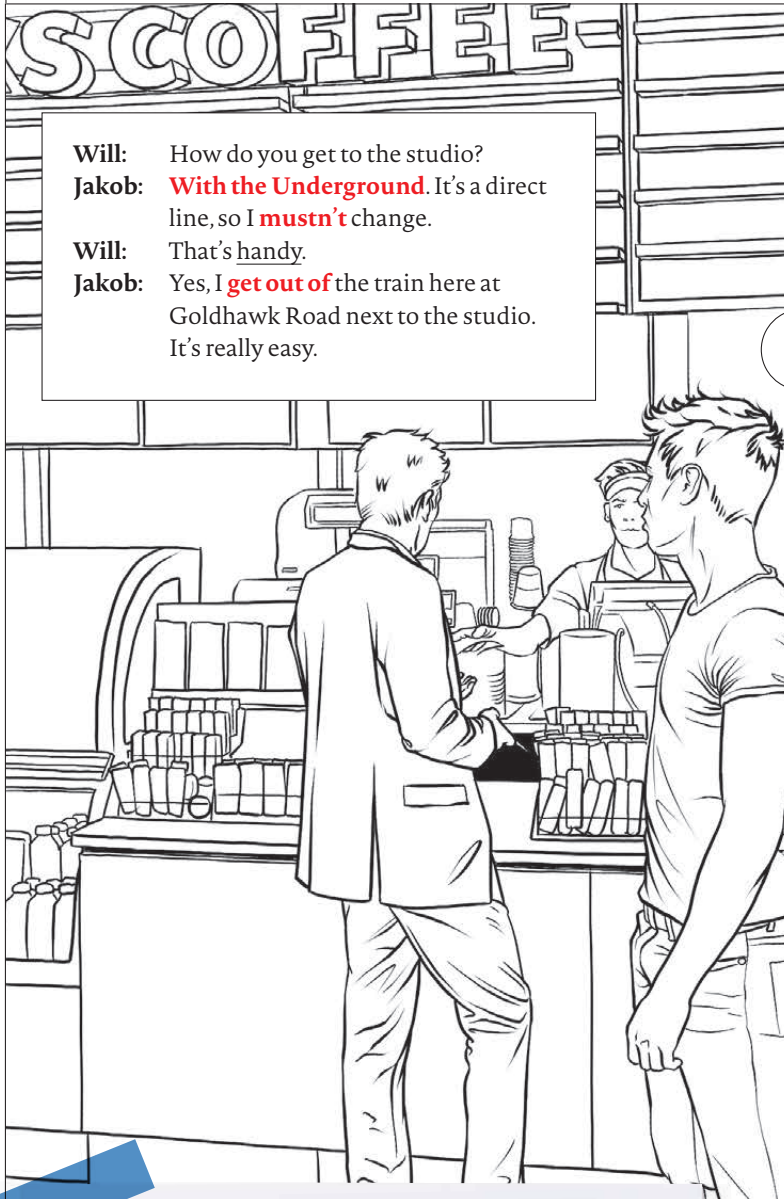
- Hello from Thailand!
We stay / We're staying in a cheap **hostel**.
- We need a bigger house with more **room / place**.
- Our first flat was **in the near of / near** a car factory.
- He does / He's doing** an **internship** in a studio.

Answers

A. We're staying; B. room; C. near; D. He's doing

How do you get to the studio?

Here, Jakob is talking to Will about his journey to work. Read the two conversations and compare the highlighted phrases.

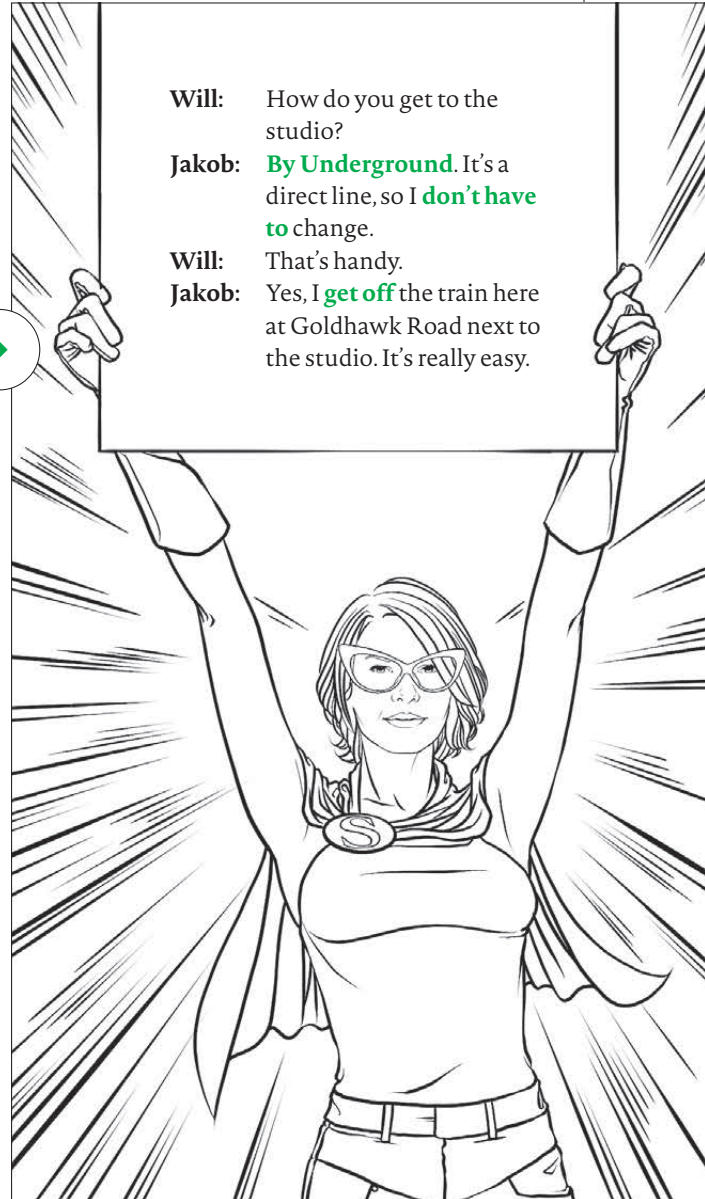


Will: How do you get to the studio?

Jakob: **With the Underground.** It's a direct line, so I **mustn't** change.

Will: That's **handy**.

Jakob: Yes, I **get out of** the train here at Goldhawk Road next to the studio. It's really easy.



Will: How do you get to the studio?

Jakob: **By Underground.** It's a direct line, so I **don't have to** change.

Will: That's handy.

Jakob: Yes, I **get off** the train here at Goldhawk Road next to the studio. It's really easy.

Spotlight Corrector Woman says:

- "by underground"
use "by" for all forms of transport. Don't translate "mit der U-Bahn" directly.
- "I don't have to..." = it isn't necessary to...
- "mustn't" (= it isn't allowed) is not the same as the German "muss nicht". Use "I don't have to..." here.
- "get on" / "off" is used for all public transport. Don't translate "ein-" / "aussteigen" directly.

Test yourself

Insert the correct words in the spaces below.

- You have to buy a ticket before you get ____ the train.
- I went to London ____ train.
- If you want to get ____ the tram, ring the bell.
- The company pays all travel costs, so you don't ____ to pay for your ticket.

Answers

A. on; B. by; C. off; D. have

handy ['hændi]
• praktisch

Sorry, I'm too busy.

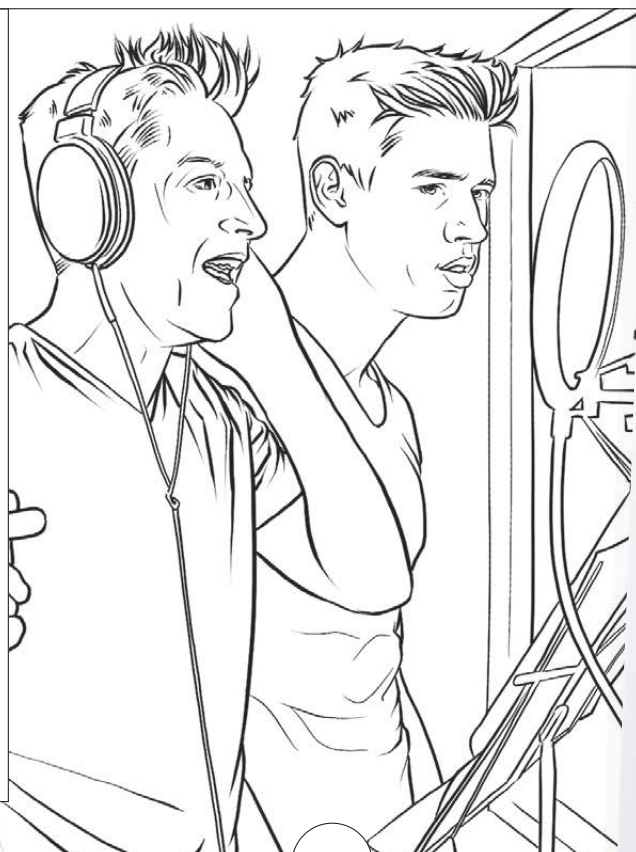
Will has a job for Jakob.

Will: Could you check these microphones for me this morning, please?

Jakob: Sorry, I'm really busy. I have to finish all of these scripts **until** midday. They need them in the studio this afternoon. I would do it for you **if I would have time**.

Will: No problem. I can do it later.

Jakob: You could **bring** them to Helen. She might be able to do it for you.



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Will: No problem. I can do it later.

Jakob: You could **take** them to Helen. She might be able to do it for you.

Spotlight Corrector
Woman says:

- "by"
Use "by" to talk about the maximum amount of time you can take. ("I must finish this by two o'clock.")
- "until"
Use "until" to talk about how long an activity lasts. ("We talked until midnight.")
- "if"
To talk about unreal or hypothetical ideas, use "if" + past tense. Don't translate directly from German "würde".
- "bring" / "take":
"Bring" always means towards the speaker; "take" means away from the speaker.

Test yourself

Choose the correct words.

- We would have more time for hobbies if we **had** / **would have** a cleaner.
- Could you **bring** / **take** this jacket to the dry cleaner's for me, please?
- They promised to deliver my new sofa **by** / **until** the end of the week.
- If we **moved** / **would move** out of the city, life would be cheaper.
- Could you **bring** / **take** me a coffee, please?

Answers

A. had; B. take; C. by; D. moved; E. bring

Ready for a break

It has been a long and busy day in the studio for Jakob and Will.



- Will:** I'm ready for a break. What about you?
- Jakob:** Yes, **we're here** since eight o'clock. Is the client happy?
- Will:** Yes, I think so. The recordings are going well. We just need to set up the sound levels for the next one.
- Jakob:** Sure. Then **I get** coffee for everyone. How many **persons** want coffee, do you think?

Spotlight Corrector Woman says:

- "since"
use the present perfect tense (not the present) to say how long you have been in a place.
- "I'll"
use "I'll" (not the present tense) for (spontaneous) offers.
- "people"
"one person" (singular);
"two people" (plural)

Will: I'm ready for a break. What about you?

Jakob: Yes, **we've been here** since eight o'clock. Is the client happy?

Will: Yes, I think so. The recordings are going well. We just need to set up the sound levels for the next one.

Jakob: Sure. Then **I'll get** coffee for everyone. How many **people** want coffee, do you think?



Test yourself

Choose the correct words.

- A. **He is / He has been** in London since August.
- B. There are six **persons / people** in our team.
- C. Don't worry. **I help / I'll help** you.

Answers

A. He has been; B. people; C. I'll help

set up [set 'ʌp]

• einstellen, einrichten

Looking online

Jakob wants to help make his workplace more environmentally friendly. He's looking online.

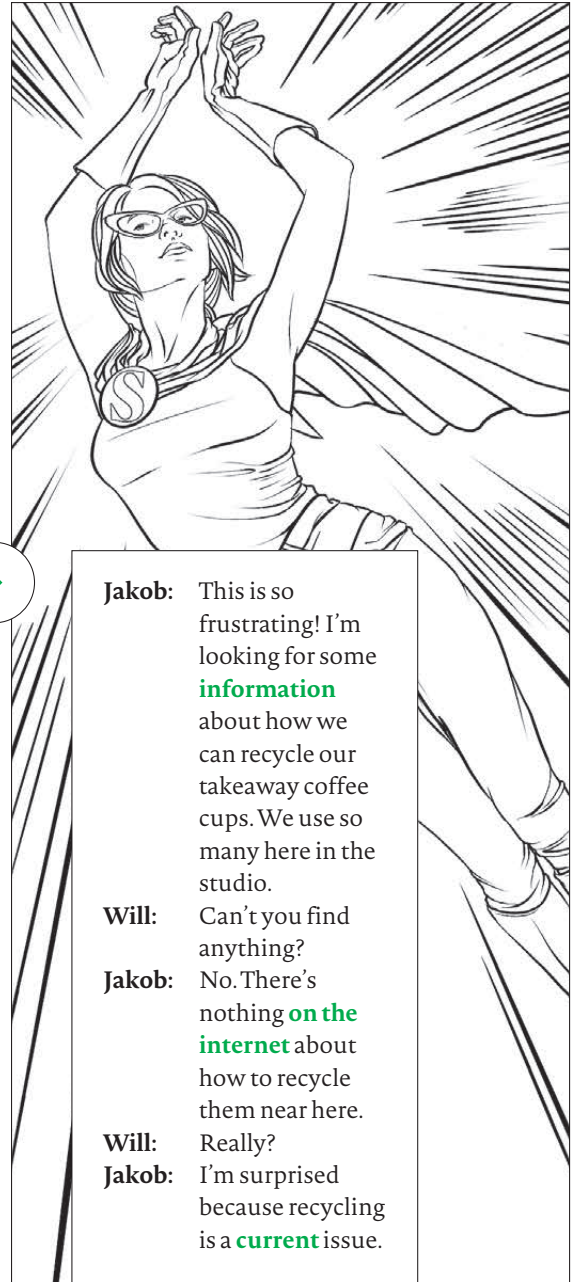
Jakob: This is so frustrating! I'm looking for some **informations** about how we can recycle our takeaway coffee cups. We use so many here in the studio.

Will: Can't you find anything?

Jakob: No. There's nothing **in the internet** about how to recycle them near here.

Will: Really?

Jakob: I'm surprised because recycling is an **actual** issue.



Jakob: This is so frustrating! I'm looking for some **information** about how we can recycle our takeaway coffee cups. We use so many here in the studio.

Will: Can't you find anything?

Jakob: No. There's nothing **on the internet** about how to recycle them near here.

Will: Really?

Jakob: I'm surprised because recycling is a **current** issue.

Spotlight Corrector Woman says:

- "information"
This word is uncountable in English. It doesn't have a plural form, so don't add an -s at the end.
- "on the internet"
Don't translate "im Internet" directly.
- "current"
"Aktuell" is a false friend, so don't translate directly from the German. In English, "actually" means "eigentlich".

Test yourself

Add the correct words to these sentences.

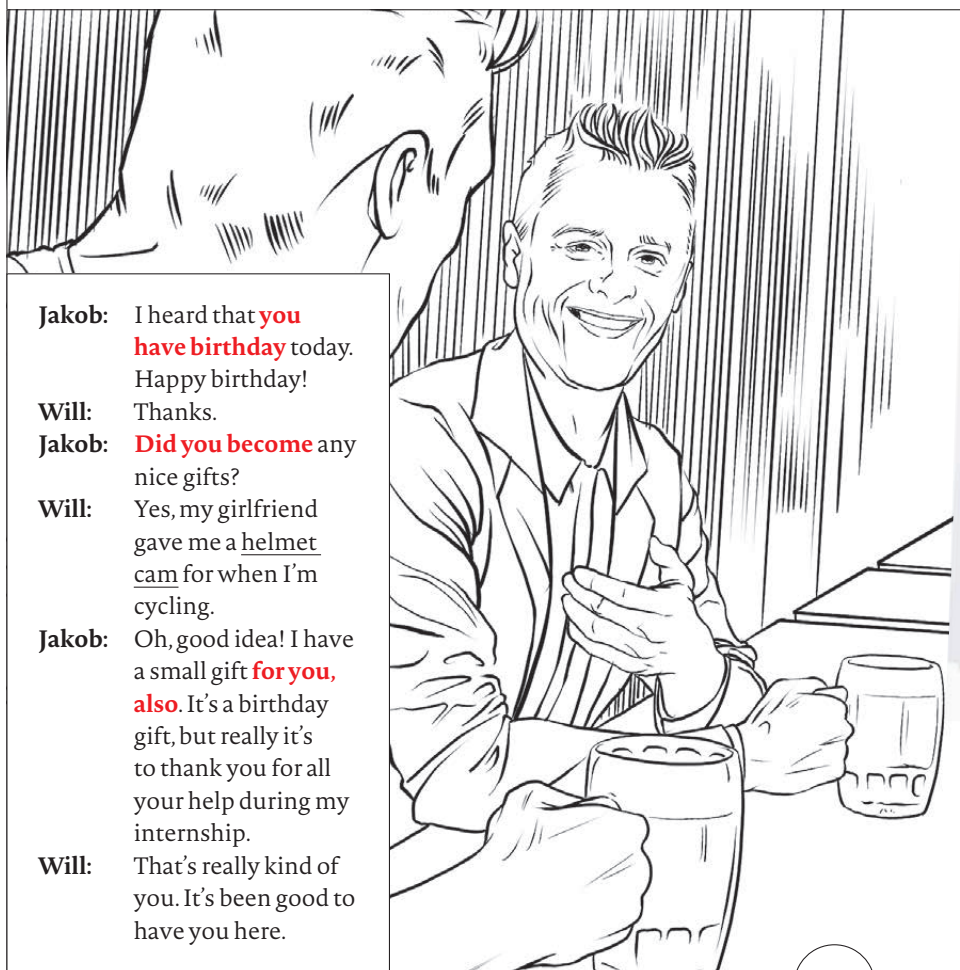
- A. I read it _____ the internet.
B. I'd like some _____ about trains to Glasgow, please.
C. Climate change is a _____ issue.

Answers

A. on; B. information; C. current

I have a small gift for you

Jakob has nearly reached the end of his time in London, and it's a special day for Will.



Jakob: I heard that **you have birthday** today. Happy birthday!

Will: Thanks.

Jakob: **Did you become** any nice gifts?

Will: Yes, my girlfriend gave me a helmet cam for when I'm cycling.

Jakob: Oh, good idea! I have a small gift **for you, also**. It's a birthday gift, but really it's to thank you for all your help during my internship.

Will: That's really kind of you. It's been good to have you here.

Spotlight Corrector
Woman says:

- "birthday"
Don't translate directly from "Ich habe Geburtstag".
- "get"
You "get" or "receive" gifts. Don't translate directly from "bekommen". It's a false friend. In English, "become" means "werden".
- "too" / "also"
"Too" is placed at the end of a sentence (He works there, too); "also" goes before the verb (He also works there).

helmet cam ['hɛlmɪt kæm]
• Helmkamera



Jakob: I heard that **it's your birthday** today. Happy birthday!

Will: Thanks.

Jakob: **Did you get** any nice gifts?

Will: Yes, my girlfriend gave me a helmet cam for when I'm cycling.

Jakob: Oh, good idea! I have a small gift for you, **too**. It's a birthday gift, but really it's to thank you for all your help during my internship.

Will: That's really kind of you. It's been good to have you here.

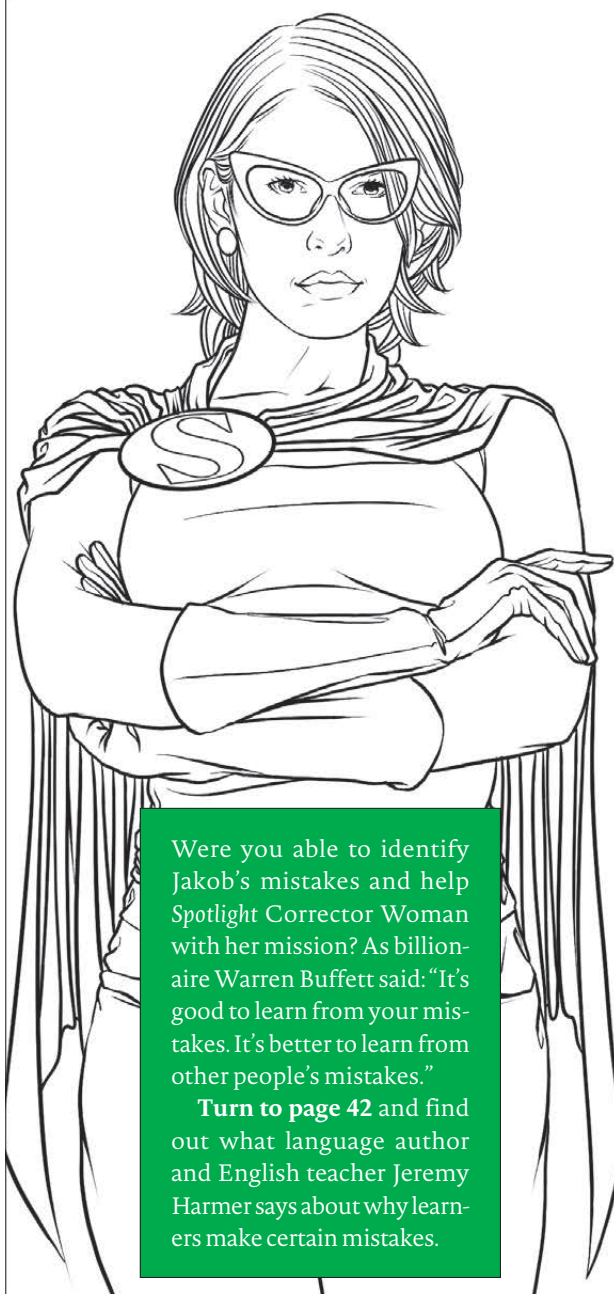
Test yourself

Choose the right words.

- A. I **became** / **received** a letter in the post this morning.
- B. When **is your** / **do you have** birthday?
- C. I like cycling, and I like running, **also** / **too**.
- D. I eat healthy food, and I **also** / **too** do a lot of exercise.

Answers

A. received; B. is your; C. too; D. also



Were you able to identify Jakob's mistakes and help Spotlight Corrector Woman with her mission? As billionaire Warren Buffett said: "It's good to learn from your mistakes. It's better to learn from other people's mistakes."

Turn to page 42 and find out what language author and English teacher Jeremy Harmer says about why learners make certain mistakes.

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Tricky time words

On pages 34–41, Vanessa Clark looks at common mistakes in English made by German native speakers. Here, you can practise some of the **tricky time words**.

1. What's missing?

E

Complete sentences A–F with the correct time word in the right place.

- A. Make sure you're at the airport 12 o'clock at the latest.
- B. Please keep your mobiles switched off the meeting.
- C. I'll be out an hour or so.
- D. Could you look after my cat I'm away?
- E. I'm afraid you'll have to wait Monday.

2. What's wrong?

M

In each line below (A–E), cross out one phrase on the right that cannot be used with the time word on the left.

- A. by tomorrow morning / the previous two weeks / 3.30 at the latest
- B. during the night / the tourist season / 20 minutes
- C. for a long time / my childhood / a little while
- D. since my stay in Paris / this morning / just a moment
- E. until yesterday / two hours / I hear from you

3. Two words each

M

Use two different time words from the list to complete each sentence.

by | during | for | since | until | while

- A. I usually manage to sleep an hour or so the afternoon.
- B. They want our decision next week, so we have Friday to think about it.
- C. I met my husband my year in Australia, and we were married I was still a student.
- D. She's been ill the summer holidays, so she hasn't been at school the past two months.

4. Mix and match

E

Match the sentence halves below to form logical statements.

- | | |
|--|--|
| A. We didn't stay... | 1. for a long time. How is she? |
| B. The town is very busy... | 2. since September, but I haven't made any friends yet. |
| C. I haven't seen Sarah... | 3. while I'm in the meeting? I should be back by four. |
| D. Please hand in your essay... | 4. until the end. It was so boring. |
| E. I've been living here... | 5. during the tourist season. It's difficult to find a hotel room. |
| F. Can you please take my phone calls... | 6. by Wednesday. I'll need a few days to correct it. |

5. In English, please!

A

Translate the following German sentences into English, using one of the time words presented in the exercise above.

- A. Um neun Uhr hatte ich genug und beschloss, nicht länger zu warten.

- B. Hast du Spanisch gelernt, während du in Spanien gelebt hast?

- C. Das Geschäft ist während der Sommermonate immer geschlossen.

- D. Wir kennen uns schon seit mindestens zehn Jahren.

- E. Hans ist neu hier. Er arbeitet für die Firma erst seit August.
