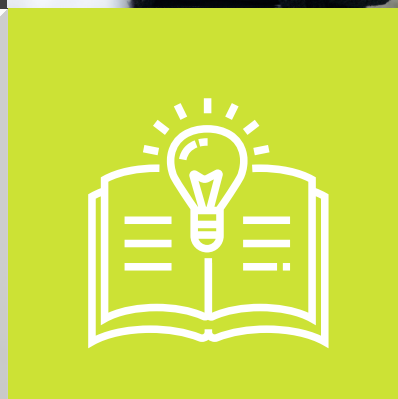
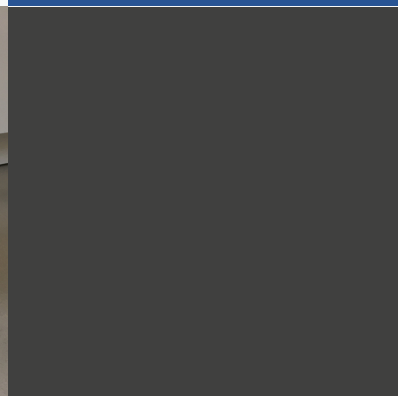


50 English Tips, Tricks and Tidbits You Probably Didn't Know About English

Quick fixes, quirky facts and common mistakes German speakers can finally stop making.

Read more >>





About Me

Hi there, and thank you for picking up this little treasure trove of English tips, tricks and tidbits!

I'm Christine, and I'm passionate about helping people like you feel confident and empowered when using English. With over 25 years of experience teaching Business English in Germany, I understand exactly which aspects of English can trip up German speakers - and more importantly, how to fix them!

My goal is to help you avoid embarrassment, build your confidence—and sound professional in any situation.

How to Use This Guide:

In this guide, you'll find 50 bite-sized tips to help you sound more natural and confident in English.

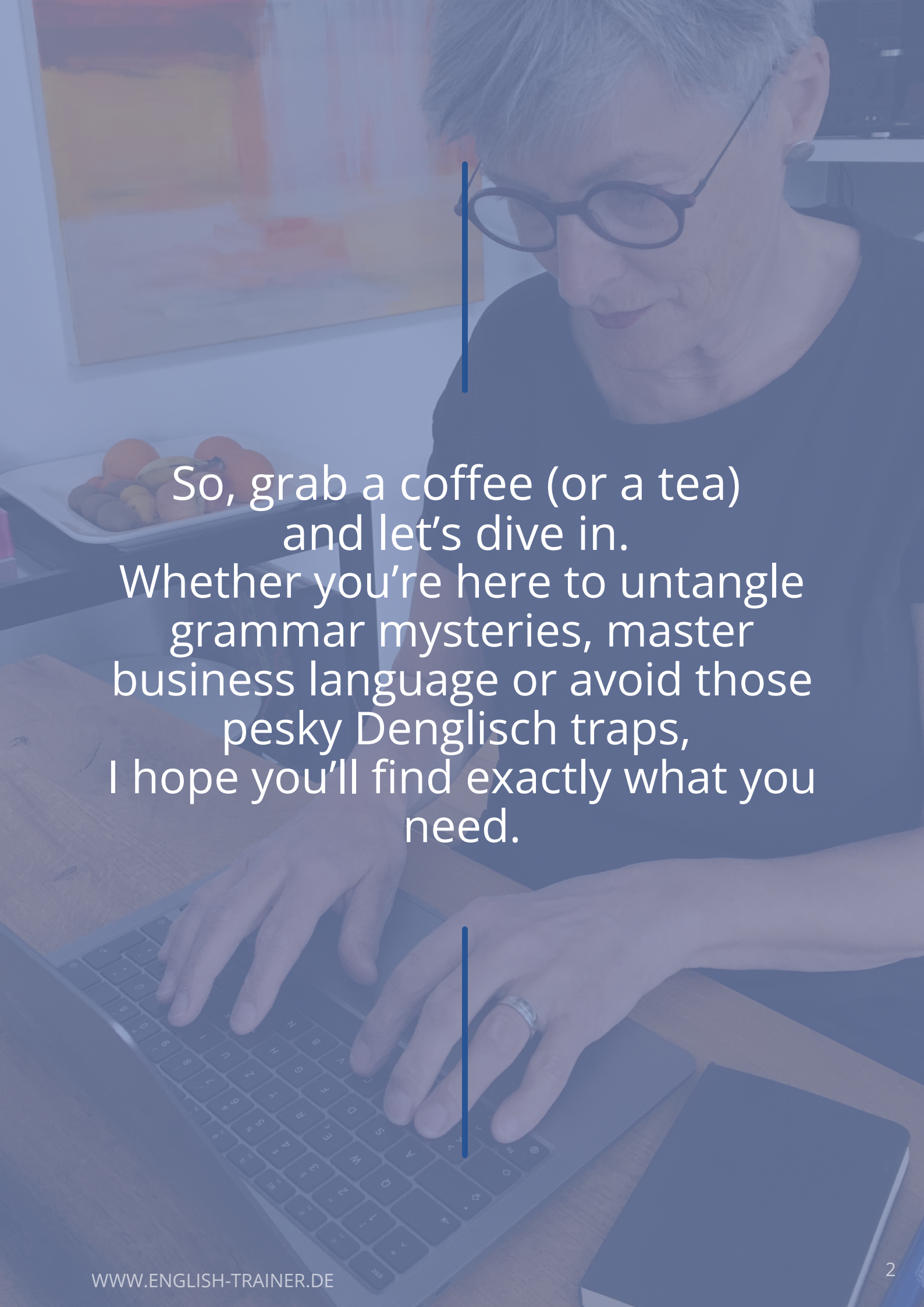
Each tip:

- Takes less than a few seconds to read
- Focuses on common challenges for German speakers
- Can be used immediately in your daily work

Feel free to:

- Read them in order
- Jump to what interests you
- Practise one tip per day
- Share them with colleagues





So, grab a coffee (or a tea)
and let's dive in.
Whether you're here to untangle
grammar mysteries, master
business language or avoid those
pesky Denglisch traps,
I hope you'll find exactly what you
need.

1. OLDTIMER

In German, it's a classic car. In English, it's a senior citizen.

2. NEARBY VS. NEAR

"Nearby" is not a preposition. Say, "*The station is near my house*" or "*I work in a nearby office.*"

3. ADJECTIVE ORDER

Follow this natural sequence: opinion, size, age, shape, colour, origin, material, purpose. "*A lovely little old round blue Italian glass vase.*"

4. BANK HOLIDAY

In British English, public holidays are "bank holidays," often giving you a long weekend.

5. BECOME VS. GET

Germans often misuse "become." It's "*I get tired,*" not "*I become tired.*"

6. DANGLING MODIFIERS

Ensure the subject matches the action. Instead of "*Running to the bus stop, my hat flew off,*" write "*Running to the bus stop, I lost my hat.*"

7. GARAGE

Brits say "gar-ij"; Americans say "guh-rahzh."

8. DIARY VS. AGENDA

A "diary" is for personal plans; an "agenda" lists meeting points.

9. HERB

Americans drop the "h," Brits don't.

10. GIN AND TONIC

It's always "Gin AND Tonic." Skipping "and" might leave bartenders perplexed!

11. RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)

It's "return on investment" not "return on invest."

12. DOWNTOWN

Americans say "downtown" for the city centre, but Brits find it odd.

13. BY VS. UNTIL

"By" means "at the latest" (*"I'll finish it by Friday"*); "until" refers to the whole period (*"I work until Friday."*)

14. COMPLIMENTARY VS. COMPLEMENTARY

"Complimentary" means free of charge or flattering, while "complementary" means matching or completing.

15. PRACTICAL VS. PRACTICABLE

Practical" means sensible; "practicable" means feasible.

16. THE CITY

Refers to London's financial hub, not the entire city. It's the UK's answer to Wall Street.

17. DISCUSS VS. TALK ABOUT

Avoid saying "discuss about." It's *"Let's discuss the report."*

18. SQUARE BRACKETS

Let's call these [] square brackets, () round brackets and {} curly brackets (so everyone should understand!).

19. ADVICE VS. ADVISE

"Advice" is a noun (*"Let me give you advice"*). "Advise" is a verb (*"I advise you to stay calm"*).

20. VOCABULARY

"Vocabulary" is always singular. We don't say "vocabularies".

21. EASTER WITHOUT "N"

Remember, "Easter" is spelled without an "N" at the end. The holiday before? It's "Good Friday."

22. WHO VS. WHOM

"Who" is the subject, "whom" is the object. If you can replace it with "him," use "whom": "*Whom did you invite?*" (You invited him).

23. PRESENT PERFECT VS. PAST SIMPLE

Use past simple for specific times ("*I visited Paris in 2020*") and present perfect for unspecific times ("*I've been to Paris*").

24. FEWER VS. LESS

Use "fewer" with countable nouns ("fewer jobs") and "less" with uncountable nouns ("less time").

25. COMMA CONFUSION

In British English, the comma goes outside quotation marks: "*He said, 'hello', and smiled.*" In American English, it stays inside: "*He said, 'hello,' and smiled.*"

26. A VS. AN

Use "a" before consonant sounds and "an" before vowel sounds. It's about sound, not spelling: "a university" but "an umbrella".

27. CHEF VS. BOSS

In German, "Chef" means boss, but in English, it's only for cooks.

28. SCHEDULE

Brits say "shed-yool"; Americans say "sked-jool."

29. OVERHEARING VS. LISTENING

Germans confuse "overhear" (accidentally hear) and "listen" (deliberately hear).

30. ITS VS. IT'S

"Its" shows possession ("*The cat licked its paw*"), while "it's" means "it is" or "it has" ("*It's raining*").

31. HANDY VS PHONE

Germans use "Handy" for mobile phone. Stick to "phone" in English.

32. KEEP AGE SIMPLE

Say, "I'm 48" and not "48 years of age."

33. SURVEY

The noun is pronounced "SURvey" and the verb "to surVEY".

34. CAPITAL LETTER

After the "Dear X," in a letter or email, the next word is capitalised.

35. SAY V-I-P

Pronounce "VIP" as individual letters, not "VIPP."

36. CAPITALISE COUNTRY-RELATED WORDS

For example: English, German, French.

37. NOT AS ... AS

Say, "not as ... as" and "not so ... as" (e.g. "*Canterbury is not as big as London*").

38. CHRISTMAS

We have Christmas Eve (24th), Christmas Day (25th) and Boxing Day (26th).

39. HEADQUARTERS

It's always "headquarters," and not "headquarter."

40. INFORMATION IS SINGULAR

Say "some information" or "a piece of information," not "informations."

41. I WANT VS. I WOULD LIKE

It sounds a lot politer!

42. INTERVAL AND BREAK

The break in a play is an "interval" and between lessons it's a "break".

43. I USED TO ...

Replace "in former times" with "I used to" (e.g. *"I used to live in Hamburg"*).

44. WHERE WERE YOU BORN?

*"I **was** born in England"* not *"I am born..."*

45. SENSIBLE VS. SENSITIVE

"Sensible" means reasonable and using common sense ("vernünftig"); don't confuse it with "sensitive" which means "sensibel" in German.

46. PANTS OR TROUSERS

British English: trousers = outerwear (pants = underwear).
American English: pants = trousers.

47. I.E. VS. E.G.

"i.e." means "that is" and "e.g." means "for example."

48. FORM VS FORMULA

A pre-printed form (e.g., for job applications) is a "form," not a 'formula.'

49. MENU

In a restaurant, the list of dishes is called the "menu," not the "card" or "menu card."

50. NOTE VS. NOTICE

A 'note' is a short written message, while a 'notice' is an official sign. '

Want more tips?

Let's Keep the Learning Going.

If you've enjoyed these tips and want to dive deeper into the fascinating world of English, head over to my website for more bite-sized insights, helpful resources, and even some free goodies.

Visit: www.english-trainer.de

Let's make learning English fun, inspiring and truly effective.

See you there!



CHRISTINE
BURGMER

let's talk business

PS And come along to one of my free Speed Networking events.

