

GOLDEN GRAMMAR RULES

BY MICHAEL SWAN

➤ **Another is one word.**

Can I have **another** cup of coffee? (NOT ~~an other cup...~~)

Ann's going to look for **another** job.

➤ **2. After would rather, use an infinitive (without to) or a past tense, not a present tense.**

I'd rather **stay** at home this evening. (NOT ~~I'd rather to stay at home...~~)

I would rather you **paid** me in cash. (NOT ~~I would rather you pay me in cash.~~)

➤ **3. Use an -ing form after be/get used to.**

I'm **used to driving** in London now, but it was hard at the beginning. (NOT ~~I'm used to drive...~~)

I'll never **get used to living** in this place.

➤ **4. How long are you here for? asks about the future.**

'**How long are you here for?**' 'Till Easter.' (NOT ~~'Since Christmas.'~~)

➤ **5. Don't use could to talk about something that you succeeded in doing.**

I **managed to** run 10 km yesterday in under an hour. (NOT ~~I could run 10 km yesterday...~~)

How many eggs **were you able to** get? (NOT ~~...could you get?~~)

➤ **6. Indirect questions usually have the same construction as statements.**

I asked **where her parents were**. (NOT USUALLY ~~I asked where were her parents.~~)

The policeman wanted to know **where I lived**. (NOT ~~...where did I live?~~)

➤ **7. To say that something is not necessary, use needn't or don't have to, not mustn't.**

You **needn't** pay now; tomorrow will be OK. (NOT ~~You mustn't pay now; tomorrow will be OK.~~)

I **don't have to** wear a tie at work. (NOT ~~I mustn't wear a tie at work.~~)

➤ **8. Everything is a singular word.**

Everything **was** broken. (NOT ~~Everything were broken.~~)

Is everything ready?

➤ **9. Use because or so, but not both together.**

Because the train was late I missed the meeting. OR The train was late, **so** I missed the meeting. (BUT NOT ~~Because the train was late, so I missed the meeting.~~)

➤ **10. We say something to a person.**

She never says 'Hello' **to** me. (NOT ~~She never says me 'Hello'.~~)

Andrew has said nothing **to** Peter. (NOT ~~Andrew has said Peter nothing.~~)

➤ **11. Tell normally needs a personal object.**

He told **us** that he was going home. (NOT ~~He told that he was going home.~~)

I've told **you** everything I know.

➤ **12. Don't use every to talk about two people or things.**

You can park on **each** side of the street. (NOT ~~...on every side of the street.~~)

He was holding a glass in **each** hand.

➤ **13. Far is unusual in affirmative sentences, except in a very formal style.**

We live **a long way** from here. (NOT USUALLY ~~We live far from here.~~)

It's **a long way** to Tipperary.

➤ **14. We don't usually use before to mean 'in front of'.**

You can park **in front of** the station. (NOT ~~...before the station.~~)

There's a big tree just **in front of** our house.

➤ **15. After look, we use at with an object.**

Look **at** the moon! (NOT ~~Look the moon!~~)

What are you looking **at**?

➤ **16. We use when, not as or while, to talk about ages and periods of life.**

When I was 14 I first got interested in archaeology. (NOT ~~As/While I was 14...~~)

We lived in London **when** I was a child. (NOT ~~...as/while I was a child.~~)

- **17. After as long as, use a present tense to refer to the future.**

I'll remember this holiday **as long as** I live. (NOT ...as long as I will live-)
You can have my bike **as long as** you **bring** it back tomorrow.

- **18. We say as usual, not as-usually-**

Let's meet tomorrow at 10.00, **as usual**.
John's late **as usual**.

- **19. As well as (with a similar meaning to 'not only... but also') is normally followed by an -ing form.**

As well as breaking his leg, he hurt his arm. (NOT As well as he broke his leg...)
He works full time **as well as bringing** up three children.

- **20. Expressions like in three hours' time refer to the future.**

We'll need the report **in two weeks' time**. (BUT NOT He wrote the report in four hours' time-)
I'll see you again **in a month's time**.

- **21. We don't normally use to after arrive.**

What time do we **arrive in** Bedford? (NOT ...arrive to Bedford?)
The train **arrived at** our station half an hour late.

- **22. Because is a conjunction; because of is a preposition.**

We cancelled the match **because** it rained. (NOT ...because of it rained-)
We cancelled the match **because of** the rain. (NOT ...because the rain-)

- **23. After the verb lack, no preposition is necessary.**

The soup **lacks** salt. (NOT ...lacks of salt-)
It's a good novel, but it **lacks** structure.

- **24. Before (meaning 'before that') follows an expression of time.**

Last summer, I decided to go and visit the town that I had left **eight years before**. (NOT ...before eight years-)
I had already met her once, about **three years before**.

- **25. News is singular.**

All the news **is** bad. (NOT All the news are bad-)
BBC Radio 4. Here **is** the news.

- **26. You borrow something from somebody.**

I borrowed the money **from** my mother. (NOT I borrowed my mother the money-)
Can we borrow some glasses **from** you?

- **27. We prefer closed, not shut, before a noun.**

When I talk to you, I feel as if I'm standing in front of a **closed** door. (NOT ...a shut door-)
He's got a **closed** mind. You can't tell him anything.

- **28. We say come from (present) to give our town, country etc of origin.**

Sarah **comes from** Texas. (NOT Sarah came from Texas-)
Where **do** you **come** from?

- **29. Comparatives are made with more or -er, but not both.**

The weather is getting **colder**. (NOT ...more colder-)
Please try to be **more polite**. (NOT ...more politer-)

- **30. We don't use on the contrary to give another side of a question.**

It's hard work. **On the other hand**, it's interesting. (NOT on the contrary, it's interesting-)
She's very bad-tempered. **On the other hand**, she's generous.

- **31. In affirmative sentences we generally use a long time, not long, except in a very formal style.**

We waited **a long time**, but she didn't come. (NOT We waited long, but ...)
It will be **a long time** before we invite her again.

- **32. Use superlatives to compare people and things with the groups that they belong to.**

Sandra is the **tallest** of the five girls. (NOT Sandra is the taller of the five girls-)
I think I'm the **oldest** person in the class.

➤ **33. We usually use *in* after *dressed*.**

She was dressed **in** yellow from head to foot. She looked like a daffodil.
The bride was dressed **in** white silk.

➤ **34. We don't use *it ... + infinitive* with *allow*.**

Smoking is not allowed. (NOT ~~It is not allowed to smoke.~~)
We weren't allowed to use calculators in the exam. (NOT ~~It wasn't allowed to use ...~~)

➤ **35. *Who's* means 'who is' or 'who has'; *whose* is a possessive.**

Who's that? (NOT ~~Whose that?~~)
Who's taken my keys? (NOT ~~Whose taken my keys?~~)
Whose coat is that? (NOT ~~Who's coat is that?~~)

➤ **36. We don't usually use *other* with uncountable nouns.**

Can I have **more** rice? (NOT ... ~~other rice?~~)
Perhaps we should use **different** oil. (NOT ... ~~other oil.~~)

➤ **37. We use *either*, not *any*, to talk about two people or things.**

I can write with **either** hand. (NOT ... ~~with any hand.~~)
'Do you prefer Monday or Tuesday?' '**Either** day will do.'

➤ **38. Don't put articles and possessives together before nouns.**

She's a friend of mine. OR She's **my** friend. (BUT NOT ~~She's a my friend.~~)
Peter's lost **his** keys. (NOT ... ~~the his keys.~~)

➤ **39. We say that somebody is *good, bad, clever* etc at something.**

My sister is very good **at** maths. (NOT ... ~~good in maths.~~)
I'm not very clever **at** languages.

➤ **40. Don't leave out *a/an* in negative expressions.**

Don't go out without **a** coat. (NOT ... ~~without coat.~~)
It's difficult to get there if you haven't got **a** car. (NOT ... ~~if you haven't got car.~~)

➤ **41. We use *any*, not *every*, to say 'one or another'.**

'Which newspaper would you like?' 'It doesn't matter. **Any** one.' (NOT ... ~~every one.~~)
'When would you like to come to dinner?' '**Any** day is OK.'

➤ **42. *Advice* is uncountable.**

Can you give me **some advice**? (NOT ... ~~an advice?~~)
My father gave me three **pieces of advice**. (NOT ... ~~three advices.~~)

➤ **43. We don't use *some* if we know the exact number.**

You've got **beautiful fingers**. (NOT ... ~~some beautiful fingers.~~)
A mountain bike needs to have **strong wheels**. (NOT ... ~~some strong wheels.~~)

➤ **44. We drop articles in some common expressions with *school* and *bed*.**

Why isn't Angela **at school** today? (NOT ... ~~at the school today?~~)
I want to spend a day **in bed**.

➤ **45. When *which? what? or who?* are subjects, we make questions without *do*.**

Which costs more – the blue one or the grey one? (NOT ~~Which does cost more ...?~~)
What happened to your car? (NOT ~~What did happen to your car?~~)
Who phoned? (NOT ~~Who did phone?~~)

➤ **46. We drop articles after *the amount/number of*.**

I was surprised by **the amount of money** that was collected. (NOT ... ~~the amount of the money ...~~)
The number of unemployed rose sharply last month. (NOT ~~The number of the unemployed ...~~)

➤ **47. We use *because*, not *as* or *since*, if the reason is the most important part of the sentence.**

Why am I leaving? I'm leaving **because** I'm fed up. (NOT ~~I'm leaving as/since I'm fed up.~~)
They're laughing **because** they think your hat's funny.

➤ **48. *Travel* is normally uncountable.**

I like **travel**.
We went on **a trip/journey** to the Antarctic last spring. (NOT ~~We went on a travel ...~~)

➤ **49. Can has no infinitive. We use be able to instead.**

I'd like to **be able to** sing. (NOT ... to can sing-)
When will you **be able to** meet us?

➤ **50. With abbreviations, the difference between a and an depends on pronunciation, not spelling.**

She's **a US** citizen. (NOT ~~She's an US citizen.~~)
Would you like to be **an MP**? (NOT ... a MP?)

➤ **51. Weather is uncountable.**

We had **terrible weather** last week. (NOT ... a terrible weather...)
I hope we get **good weather** at the weekend

➤ **52. Words like President, King, Doctor in titles have no article.**

President Nixon resigned over the Watergate scandal. (NOT ~~The President Nixon...~~)
I'd like to see **Dr Franklin**. (NOT ... the Dr Franklin.)

➤ **53. We usually use over, not across, to mean 'on/to the other side of something high'.**

Why are you climbing **over** that wall? (NOT ... across that wall?)
I threw his keys over the fence, where he couldn't get them.

➤ **54. Actually means 'really' or 'in fact', not 'now'.**

She said she was 18, but **actually** she was 15.
In 1900 the population of London was higher than it is now. (NOT ... than it actually is.)

➤ **55. Asleep and afraid are not normally used before nouns.**

He had the innocent expression of a **sleeping** baby. (NOT ... of an asleep baby.)
In the house, we found a **frightened** child hiding in the kitchen. (NOT ... an afraid child.)

➤ **56. We don't usually put an adverb and its complement together before a noun.**

We're looking for people **who are skilled in design**. (NOT ... skilled in design people.)
He has a **difficult** accent **to understand**. (NOT ... a difficult to understand accent.)

➤ **57. Eventually means 'finally', not 'possibly' or 'perhaps'.**

It took a long time, but **eventually** he finished his studies.
I'm not sure what I'll do next year. **Perhaps** I'll go to university if I can get a place. (NOT ~~Eventually I'll go to university ...~~)

➤ **58. We don't usually use too before adjective + noun.**

The problem was **too difficult**. (BUT NOT ~~It was a too difficult problem.~~)
I put down the bag because it was **too heavy**. (BUT NOT ~~I put down the too heavy bag.~~)

➤ **59. We usually put descriptive adjectives before classifying adjectives.**

An **old political** idea (NOT ~~A political old idea~~)
The **latest educational** reform (NOT ~~The educational latest reform~~)

➤ **60. Nouns referring to nationality are often different from the corresponding adjectives.**

Ellis considers himself a typical **Welshman**. (NOT ... a typical Welsh.)
She's married to a **Spaniard**. (NOT ... a Spanish.)

➤ **61. Adjectives that express opinions usually come before other descriptive adjectives.**

a **lovely cool** drink (NOT ~~a cool lovely drink~~)
their **wonderful old** house (NOT ~~their old wonderful house~~)

➤ **62. Pronoun objects come before adverb particles.**

Can you switch **it on**, please? (NOT ... ~~switch on it...~~)
I'm going to throw **them all out**. (NOT ... ~~throw out them all.~~)

➤ **63. Adverbs can't usually be used instead of adjectives.**

She danced **happily** into the room. (NOT ~~She danced happy...~~)
I'm **terribly** sorry. (NOT ~~I'm terrible sorry.~~)

➤ **64. After all doesn't mean 'finally'. It means 'all things considered' or 'in spite of what was expected'.**

It took a long time, but **finally** we found our dream house. (NOT ... ~~but after all we found our dream house.~~)
She can make her own bed. **After all**, she's not a baby any more.
I expected to fail the exam, but I passed **after all**.

- **65. Ago comes after an _expression of time.**

Ann phoned **two hours ago**. (NOT ... ~~ago two hours~~.)

I should have finished this work **six weeks ago**.

- **66. We don't normally use *all* without a noun to mean 'everybody'.**

Everybody was quiet. (NOT ~~All were quiet~~.)

I've written to **everybody**. (NOT ~~I've written to all~~.)

- **67. In exclamations with *how*, the adjective or adverb comes immediately after *how*.**

How cold it is! (NOT ~~How it is cold!~~)

How well she sings! (NOT ~~How she sings well!~~)

- **68. We don't use *every* with uncountable nouns.**

I like **all** music. (NOT ~~I like every music~~.)

I can do **every kind of work**. (NOT ... ~~every work~~.)

- **69. After *either*, we use a singular noun.**

I can come on Wednesday or Thursday - **either day** is OK. (NOT ... ~~either days~~ ...)

She can write with **either hand**.

- **70. We usually ask 'What colour ...?' without a preposition.**

What colour is your new car? (NOT ~~Of what colour ...?~~)

What colour is her hair this week?

- **71. We don't usually drop nouns after adjectives.**

Poor **little boy**! (NOT ~~Poor little!~~)

The most important thing is to be happy. (NOT ~~The most important is to be happy~~.)

- **72. *All day* doesn't mean the same as *every day*.**

I worked **all day** yesterday, from 8.00 till bedtime.

I worked **every day** except Sunday last week. (NOT ... ~~all-day except Sunday~~ ...)

- **73. Don't drop *a/an* after *what* in exclamations.**

What a rude man! (NOT ~~What rude man!~~)

What an awful film! (NOT ~~What awful film!~~)

- **74. *Experience* and *experiment* don't mean the same.**

We did an **experiment** in the chemistry lesson to see if you could get chlorine gas from salt. (NOT ~~We did an experience~~ ...)

I'm **experimenting** with a new perfume.

I had a lot of interesting **experiences** during my year in Africa. (NOT ~~I had a lot of interesting experiments~~ ...)

Have you ever **experienced** the feeling that you were going mad? (NOT ~~Have you ever experimented the feeling~~ ...?)

- **75. We don't usually use reflexive pronouns after *feel*.**

I **feel** really energetic today. (NOT ~~I feel myself really~~ ...)

Andrew often **feels** depressed. (NOT ... ~~feels himself depressed~~.)

- **76. We use *half* without *of* in expressions of measurement and amount.**

They live about **half a mile** from here. (NOT ... ~~half of a mile~~ ...)

I only need **half a pint**.

- **77. We use *hear*, not *listen to*, to say that something 'comes to our ears'.**

Suddenly I **heard** a strange noise. (NOT ~~Suddenly I listened to a strange noise~~.)

Did you **hear** that?

- **78. After *help*, we can use object + infinitive (with or without *to*).**

Can you **help me (to) find** my ring? (NOT ... ~~help me finding my ring?~~)

Let me **help you (to) wash up**.

- **79. We usually say *hope ... not*, rather than *do not hope*.**

I **hope** it doesn't rain tomorrow. (NOT ~~I don't hope it rains tomorrow.~~)

'Is Peter coming this evening?' 'I **hope not**.'

- **80. We say that you crash *into* something.**

Granny crashed **into** a tree yesterday. (NOT ~~Granny crashed against a tree yesterday.~~)

The plane crashed **into** a mountain.

- **81. Singular forms are used before nouns in plural measuring expressions.**

I found a **ten-euro** note on the pavement. (NOT ... ~~a ten-euros note...~~)

He goes for a **five-mile** walk every morning.

- **82. *It's* means 'it is' or 'it has'; *its* is a possessive.**

It's late. (NOT ~~Its late.~~)

It's stopped raining. (NOT ~~Its stopped raining.~~)

The dog hasn't eaten **its** food. (NOT ... ~~it's food.~~)

- **83. We don't usually use *also* in short answers.**

'I like this place.' '**Me too**.' (NOT ~~I also.~~)

'I've got a headache.' '**So have I**.' (NOT ~~I have also.~~)

- **84. We don't usually put a comma before *that* (conjunction or relative pronoun).**

I knew **that** I had seen him somewhere before. (NOT ~~I knew, that...~~)

She couldn't find the paper **that** had his address on. (NOT ... ~~the paper, that had...~~)

- **85. *Rest* (meaning 'things left over') is uncountable.**

I'll take these grapes and you can have the **rest**. (NOT ... ~~the rests.~~)

We're having **left-overs** for supper. (NOT ~~We're having rests...~~)

- **86. *Same* is normally used with *the*, and followed by *as*.**

Give me **the same** again, please. (NOT ~~Give me same again, please.~~)

She has **the same** birthday **as** me. (NOT ~~She has my same birthday.~~ OR ~~She has same birthday like me.~~)

- **87. After *would like*, we normally use a *-to* infinitive.**

Would you like **to dance**? (NOT ~~Would you like dancing?~~)

I'd like to go to Australia. (NOT ~~I'd like going to Australia.~~)

- **88. We use *remind (of)* to mean 'make somebody remember'.**

Remind me to pay the milkman. (NOT ~~Remember me to pay...~~)

The smell of hay **reminds** me **of** my childhood. (NOT ... ~~remembers me my childhood.~~)

- **89. After *accuse*, we normally use *of*, not *for*.**

She accused me **of** reading her letters. (NOT ... ~~for reading her letters.~~)

Both the young men are accused **of** attempted murder.

- **90. We don't normally use an infinitive after *why*.**

I know how to do it, and I know when to do it, but I don't know **why I should do** it. (NOT ... ~~I don't know why to do it.~~)

- **91. Demonstratives replace articles.**

I don't like **that** colour. (NOT ... ~~the that colour.~~)

Have you seen **this** report? (NOT ... ~~the this report.~~)

- **92. We don't normally use progressive forms of *hear*.**

I **(can) hear** the sea. (NOT ~~I am hearing the sea.~~)

I think I **(can) hear** Peter coming up the stairs.

- **93. After *discuss*, no preposition is necessary.**

We spent half an hour **discussing** the weather. (NOT ... ~~discussing about the weather.~~)

Let's **discuss** your plans.

- **94. We usually drop *at* in questions beginning *What time ...?***

What time would you like to eat? (NOT USUALLY ~~At what time ...?~~)

I'm not sure **what time** the film starts.

- **95. We say *on holiday* (singular).**

I'll be **on holiday** next week. (NOT ... ~~on holidays...~~)

We met John and Virginia when we were **on holiday** in Greece.

➤ **96. Don't drop a before *hundred*.**

Our family has lived here for **a hundred** years. (NOT ... ~~for hundred years.~~)
The factory is about **a hundred** miles west of London.

➤ **97. If you can't see or find somebody, they are *nowhere to be seen/found*.**

When I went back to the car park, my car was **nowhere to be seen**. (NOT ... ~~my car was nowhere to see.~~)
The children were **nowhere to be found**. (NOT ... ~~nowhere to find.~~)

➤ **98. We don't normally use *might* to talk about past possibility.**

I felt very hot and thirsty. **Perhaps** I was ill. (NOT ... ~~I might be ill.~~)
I saw a girl going into Peter's house. **Maybe** it was Jeanne. (NOT ... ~~It might be Jeanne.~~)

➤ **99. We use *beat*, not *win*, to say that one person defeats another in a game, fight etc.**

My girlfriend **beat** me at poker last night. (NOT ~~My girlfriend won me at poker last night.~~)
Aberdeen **beat** Bristol 3-0.

➤ **100. We use *even*, not *also*, to add surprising information.**

They were all asleep, **even** the guard dog. (NOT ... ~~also the guard dog.~~)
Everybody was in time, **even** Granny. (NOT ... ~~also Granny.~~)