

Understanding World English – Come Again?

Prepositions tend to be **killers** for non-native speakers of English. Even natives can hardly explain why you provide, for example, 'advice *on* a subject' and not 'advice *in* a subject'. We've just heard things said a certain way a million times since childhood and naturally know which preposition to choose.

If this isn't enough, at some point you realize that English comes in a wide variety – with the two main ones, British and American English – and a whole **host** of others, from South African English to Singapore English.

Just look at Microsoft Word's language checker – there are 18 versions of English to use!

Most people can recognize Australian English as its own distinct variant, but how about Indian English? For non-natives, trying to understand what someone is saying when that someone is speaking 'English' is a real challenge!

Unfortunately, there is no **singular** worldwide **body** regulating what is the correct form of English. This causes many non-natives certain **angst**, as '**trial and error**' is often the only way to **unearth** and master the differences.

All Brits know that 'per cent' is two words. Why? Because they've seen it this way since childhood. While for an American, this word is naturally just one: 'percent'. Fortunately, Brits and Americans pronounce it the same ... which can't be said for a **myriad** of other English words, the spelling of which often **defies** reason!

But **take heart** – it's not like native speakers necessarily understand each other. There's many a native English speaker who's **left in the dust** once the Scottish **brogue** starts to roll.

Glossary

angst	a feeling of dread or anxiety
body	a group of people who have joined together for a particular reason
brogue	a regional accent
come again	something that you say when you want someone to repeat what they have just said because you did not hear or understand it
defy	resist
host	crowd
killer	something that is extremely difficult to deal with or withstand
left in the dust	left behind when someone or something speeds off (here when the Scot starts speaking in his native accent)
myriad	so many that they cannot be counted
singular	the single one of its kind
take heart	start to feel more hopeful and more confident
trial and error	method of reaching a correct or satisfactory result by trying out various means until the error is reduced or eliminated
unearth	uncover, find