



All Ears English Episode 213:

Do Yourself a Favor: Learn 'Make' versus 'Do' in English

Gabby: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 213: "Do Yourself a Favor: Learn 'Make' versus 'Do' in English."

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Welcome to the All Ears English Podcast, where you'll finally get real, native English conversation with your hosts, Lindsay McMahon, the 'English Adventurer' and Gabby Wallace, the 'Language Angel', from Boston, USA.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: In today's episode, you'll learn about the mistakes you're making with 'make' and 'do' and you'll find out how to finally correct them.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: Hey, guys. Remember your English is a Porsche and if you wanna (want to) keep tuning up your Porsche, if you wanna (want to) know all of the TOP 15 FIXES today, go straight to AllEarsEnglish.com/TOP15. And you can get that in a free e-book right away.

[Instrumental]



Gabby: Hey, Lindsay.

Lindsay: Hey, Gabby!

Gabby: How are you?

Lindsay: Good. How are you doing today?

Gabby: Good. Good.

Lindsay: Excellent.

Gabby: Yeah. So I – h-how’s it going in Boston? How are you doing?

Lindsay: Oh, Boston is good. I’m doing great, I’m doing great. (Um), awesome day, again. The weather’s been phenomenal this summer, or this fall now.

Gabby: Wonderful.

Lindsay: And I’ve been outside riding my bike, enjoying the days and things are good. How are things in Tokyo?

Gabby: Oh, things are going great. Yeah, I’ve been making new friends, (uh), going out, (you know), seeing different places. Hey...

Lindsay: Oh cool.

Gabby: ...have you, have you made any more cookies lately?

Lindsay: I tend to make a lot of mistakes when I make cookies, Gabby.

Gabby: Put too much salt...

Lindsay: Because I don’t know how to cook. I just don’t know how to cook. I never learned and I don’t know if I ever will.

Gabby: Ohh. Well...

Lindsay: Do you do your best when you cook or do you, do you slack off when you cook?

Gabby: (Um), I just kind of do my best. Yeah.



Lindsay: Yeah. That's a good idea. That's a good idea.

Gabby: Yeah. Well, it's okay. (You know), I, I think you can just make it up as you go.

Lindsay: Make it up as you go. So, so guys today we're here with Number 3 of your TOP 15 FIXES, talking about a really common mistake which is 'make' and 'do'. What is the difference and how do you know which one to use?

Gabby: Yeah, this is a common confusion because 'make' and 'do' could be translated in the same way in your native language. So, again, let's change our mindset from the get-go, from the beginning and...

Lindsay: Yes.

Gabby: ...stop translating from your native language.

Lindsay: Isn't, isn't it interesting how a lot of these TOP 15 mistakes have been all about translating.

Gabby: Yeah, we really have to change our mindset first. And so what I recommend is that you learn to associate the meaning with the English word. So we're gonna (going to) help you out today to understand the general meaning, like how you differentiate 'make' and 'do' and also give you several examples that you can remember to make sense of 'make' and 'do'.

Lindsay: Yeah, and this is another one of those examples where we can give you some vague rules...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...but you have to know that there's lots of exceptions to the rule, lots of situations where it just doesn't necessarily follow the rule.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: So the best thing is learn the rule, but then also learn phrases. Learn it by the...



Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: ...phrase, the chunks.

Gabby: Well, and one...

Lindsay: (Um)...

Gabby: ...other thing is that we should be aware of the verb 'make' can be part of a phrasal verb, which is not what we're talking about today. We're talking about how to use the verb 'make' by itself, not as a phrasal verb. So, (you know), if you wanna (want to) look up how to use 'make' as a phrasal verb, you could look at 'make up', 'make do', (um)...

Lindsay: Right, right.

Gabby: ...'make out'. (I mean)...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...there's a lot of different phrasal verbs. But that's not what we're talking about today. We're just looking at the basic meaning of 'make' versus 'do'.

Lindsay: Yeah, that's a good point. This is not about phrasal verbs.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Phrasal verbs are for, for another day or plenty of other...

Gabby: And even...

Lindsay: ...days.

Gabby: ...'do', 'do' can be used as a phrasal verb too, right.

Lindsay: (Uh-hmm).

Gabby: 'Do up'.

Lindsay: (Uh-hmm). 'Do over'.

Gabby: 'Do over'. Yeah.



Lindsay: Oh my god, Gabby. You're stressing me out with these phrasal verbs. Let's stop talking about phrasal verbs.

Gabby: All right. Let's just talk about 'make' and 'do' by themselves and, (you know), maybe another time we can touch on phrasal verbs. But phrasal verbs are a whole nother monster.

Lindsay: Yeah. So the core rule that you guys wanna (want to) remember here, or the core rule that we're gonna (going to) teach you today is with 'make', you're thinking about creating something...

Gabby: (Uh-hmm).

Lindsay: ...from the ground up. And with 'do', you're thinking about a duty or a responsibility.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: Okay.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: (Uh-hmm).

Gabby: Exactly. (Uh), I think that's a great way to distinguish the different meanings. So let's give some examples for 'make'. And keep in mind that we're creating something from zero, from scratch. So...

Lindsay: (Uh-hmm).

Gabby: ...(um), I asked Lindsay in the beginning of the episode, "Have you *made* any cookies lately?"

Lindsay: "I haven't *made* any cookies. I haven't." But (um), let's see...

Gabby: You can make it...

Lindsay: Sometimes... Yeah.

Gabby: Oh, sorry. Go ahead.



- Lindsay:** No, I was gonna (going to) say, sometimes I try to make dinner and it's usually not terribly successful either.
- Gabby:** Nice. (Um), yeah, you could make any kind of food. You could make a baked good. You could even make a drink. (Um) if there's something like a, a mixed drink that you could make, (um), something that requires different ingredients. That's the kind of drink that you would make.
- Gabby:** Yeah. So you can use 'make' to talk about food or drinks. What else could you use 'make' to talk about Lindsay?
- Lindsay:** Well, you could say that you 'make' friends, right. So Gabby you were saying...
- Gabby:** Oh, yeah.
- Lindsay:** ...that in Tokyo, you were making some new friends, (right). So in that case...
- Gabby:** Yeah.
- Lindsay:** ...you're creating friendships. So that does kind of...
- Gabby:** (Uh-huh).
- Lindsay:** ...follow the rule doesn't it. Make sense?
- Gabby:** Yeah. I like that.
- Lindsay:** Does that 'make' sense?
- Gabby:** That's a phrasal verb. Stop it. (Um), okay. Other things you can make. You make your bed, you make the table. So if you think about these chores like when you place dishes or silverware on the table, you're making the table...
- Lindsay:** (Uh-huh).
- Gabby:** ...make the bed. But other chores don't usually use 'make'. We just say (like), (you know), what? Mop the floor. Sweep the floor. (Uh)...



Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: ...clean the dishes. So, anyway, those are just two chores that use 'make'.

Lindsay: Yeah. And...

Gabby: (Um)... Yeah, go...

Lindsay: I wanna (want to) make distinction here. My god, we use it so much...

Gabby: Yeah, sure.

Lindsay: ...don't we? So just to compare these two rules. So we're talking about 'make', but just to jump over to 'do'. We talk about 'make' dinner, but we also say, 'do dinner', (right). "Let's *do* dinner on Wednesday."

Gabby: Oh, that's different meaning isn't it?

Lindsay: Ooh. So how's the meaning different?

Gabby: Yeah, so if I say, "Lindsay, let's *do* dinner", I'm inviting you to dinner. That's, that's a way to invite and that's interesting that you brought that up because we didn't even remember to include that when we were talking about invitation. So it just goes to show how many different ways there are to make invitations, but it's a great phrase, "Let's *do* dinner..."

Lindsay: (Umm). Yeah.

Gabby: "...next Wednesday." Or "Let's, let's *do* coffee" or "Let's *do* drinks".

Lindsay: (crosstalk) you can 'make' coffee.

Gabby: Or...

Lindsay: Or you can 'do' coffee, or you can 'make' drinks or you can 'do' drinks. So just to see the differences here to compare.

Gabby: Yeah, but the meaning, the meaning is completely different.

Lindsay: Absolutely.

Gabby: So let's not get confused.



Lindsay: (Uh-hmm).

Gabby: (Um), let's finish up talking about 'make'. I just had a couple other examples. (Uh), we can 'make' a call.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh), (uh-huh).

Gabby: So for example, "Oh, Lindsay. (Um), I'll be right back. I just need to *make* a quick call." Okay. Just kidding.

Lindsay: You're gonna (going to), you're gonna (going to) drop out of our podcast just to make a call. (I mean), Gabby, priorities here.

Gabby: Just for an example. (Um), and then one that you mentioned before we started recording was a big one: to 'make' a mistake.

Lindsay: Oh, yeah. So I have a lot of students who tell me they're having trouble with 'make' and 'do' and they say "I always do mistakes," but no.

Gabby: Oh, man that's funny.

Lindsay: No, we make mistakes with 'make' and 'do', right?

Both: Yeah. Yeah.

Lindsay: Okay. One...

Gabby: Because you... Sorry. You just wanna (want to) think about it as you're creating that mistake. Just associate the act of creation with mistakes, phone calls, (uh), your bed, the table...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh), (uh-huh).

Gabby: ...friends, food, drinks, cookies.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: It's all creation.

Lindsay: Right. And then beyond those (kind of) basic rules, there are tons of phrases that honestly, you guys just need to learn. For example, "Let's



make the most of it, (right).” We have a limited amount of time or money, but let’s make...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...the most of it. Let’s make the most of an experience. Let’s, (um)...

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: ...take advantage of. And that’s a great one. It’s really common.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: It doesn’t necessarily follow the rule. I suppose you could say, “Let’s create something great with the time we have or the money we have.” Okay. But it’s not as logical as ‘make’ food or, or ‘make’ dinner or ‘do’ dinner.

Gabby; I think we’re getting into advanced English, wh-which is great.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: I think that’s great, (um), for our listeners.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: You guys should know phrases like ‘to make the most of’, but just be aware that that’s an advanced idiom and what we’re talking about with ‘make’ and ‘do’ is more just a basic distinction. It doesn’t mean that it’s easy, it doesn’t mean that, (you know), you, you’ve got this because even at the advanced, (um), level, (you know), we do hear a lot of confusion...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: ...about ‘make’ and ‘do’. (Um), but yeah, there’s a lot of idioms that use the verb ‘to make’ or ‘to do’. (Uh), which, (you know) – and idioms don’t really have an explicit meaning. It’s not literal, (right). Like ‘to make the most of something’, it’s a figurative expression, right.

Lindsay: (Uh-hmm). (Uh-hmm). Exactly.

Gabby: Yeah.



Lindsay: But it's a good one to know. And it's – a lot of our...

Gabby: Totally.

Lindsay: I know a lot of our listeners wanna (want to) sound natural. That's what you guys want.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: You wanna (want to) be able to go out and not sound like you're speaking out of a textbook. So it would make sense if you are at the advanced or even upper-mediate level to spend time learning those expressions like 'make the most of it' and start to use them.

Gabby: Yeah. Totally. Well, let's talk a little bit about how do we use the verb 'to do'.

Lindsay: Right. Yes. So again, so an action or a duty, some type of duty, some type of job is the best way to remember that. (Um), a (cup-), a couple...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...of examples, (you know), here at All Ears English, we did a survey a few months ago to (s-), to learn more about you guys, about our listeners, (right). So...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...to do...

Gabby: Yeah, we did a survey and you guys completed the survey, but we could also say – instead of 'completed', we could say, you 'did' the survey.

Lindsay: Yeah, exactly. But we, but we also, we made the survey, we created the survey, didn't we?

Gabby: Yeah. So, (I mean), we could actually use either 'make' or 'do' and to be honest, there are situations where you could use either. Maybe that makes it even more confusing.



Lindsay: Right, but who, who made the survey? We made the survey. Our listeners didn't make the survey.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: Our listeners did the survey. So that's the difference there.

Gabby: Right. Right.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: So that's important. So you guys did the survey by doing the duty of – you did your job of giving us your information and we created the survey.

Gabby: Yeah, I think also – also we can say on our end that All Ears English did a survey...

Lindsay: Sure.

Gabby: ...with its listeners. So that's one we could do – we could do. We could, we could – now you've got me all confused. We could (um), we could say 'make' or 'do'.

Lindsay: Yeah. Agree.

Gabby: So, yeah. So, yeah. But you guys, the listeners, you didn't 'make' the survey.

Lindsay: You didn't create it. Yeah.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: Oh my god.

Both: Oh.

Gabby: Anyway, what are some other...?

Lindsay: Hey, (I mean), we're doing our best here Gabby. We're doing our very best. We are trying to make some great examples.



Gabby: That's another great phrase, "do your best." Yes.

Lindsay: Yeah, yeah.

Gabby: You do your homework...

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: ...if you're, (you know), in school, you do your homework, If you're working, you do your work.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh), (uh-huh).

Gabby: You might do a report.

Lindsay: You could do someone a favor. (Uh-huh).

Gabby: Yes. "Hey, *do* me a favor and..." I don't know.

Lindsay: "*Do* me a favor. Stop talking."

Gabby: Ouch.

Lindsay: No, I'm just kidding.

Gabby: "*Do* me a favor and help me with my English."

Lindsay: Oh. What seems to be the problem Gabby?

Gabby: I can't figure out how to use 'make' or 'do'. They're, they're so hard. No, it's – I think in, in this episode, we've been able to show some clear examples. And so this is a good start. So just realize that these rules of 'make' equaling creation and 'do' equaling a duty are good bases. They're, they're good general guidelines. But you might come across sometimes where you could use either 'make' or 'do' or you might learn some idioms and they might not follow these rules because idioms don't follow rules. That's what's so cool about them. They're the rebels of the language.

Lindsay: Yeah. And language isn't really about rules because we break the rules all the time anyways. The rules are a good starting point.



Gabby: Very true.

Lindsay: I think. This is my opinion. You can start with...

Gabby: Very true.

Lindsay: ...the rules as a foundation, but then don't get stuck in a mindset, "Oh, it doesn't follow the rule. It doesn't make sense. I can't learn that." No.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: A lot of natives don't follow rules. We make up our own phrases. So go out there and learn with native speakers.

Gabby: Yeah, totally. Totally. Very cool. So if you guys want to read more about 'make' versus 'do' and about the other TOP 15 FIXES for your English, you can go to AllEarsEnglish.com/TOP15. That's T-O-P15.

Lindsay: We'll see you guys over there. Thank you.

Gabby: See you.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: If you wanna (want to) put your ears into English more often, be sure to subscribe to our podcast in iTunes on your computer or on your smartphone. Thanks so much for listening and see you next time.

