

Употребление «to» в английском

Hello my dear friends! Today I'm going to tell you about a very important preposition in English — the word «to». Many people find it pretty difficult in the very beginning. And I remember myself. When I started learning I always asked my tutor to explain to me the rule of using «to» in English. I got confused with this word very often. So let's see when we must use «to» and when we can't do it.

1) We use «to» to make the Dative Case. But we must use it only for so called direct object (when it goes first). For example:

I'll send a letter to you tomorrow.

Give this book to me please.

I wrote a message to him last night, but he didn't respond.

We can't use «to» for indirect objects. For example we could say:

I'll send you a letter tomorrow.

Give me this book please.

I wrote him a message last night, but he didn't respond.

Just remember these structures:

to send smb smth / to say smth to smb

to give smb smth / to give smth to smb

to write smb / to write smth to smb

This rule is not related to the phrase «to explain to». With this word we should always use the preposition:

Could you explain to me this rule?

Could you explain this rule to me?

All the same with the verb «to listen». As a rule it always requires «to» as well:

Listen to me please.

Listening to music at work is not good.

Listen to him and say what you think.

I don't want to listen to you.

Please note that if you use just one word «explain» or «listen» without any objects, you can omit «to» in your speech:

Please listen! I don't want you to take offence at me.

Why have you done it? Please explain!

Beside «explain» and «listen» there are some more verbs in English which require «to» with them. A list of the verbs you'll find in the Russia part of this article.

2) We must use «to» before the infinitive.

I like to read.

I don't want to eat it.

I'd like to tell you about it.

3) We use «to» when we're talking about directions. For example:

I'm going to University.

He goes to school.

Let's go to the cinema.

I'll come to you tomorrow.

I moved to Moscow last year.

But we can't use «to» with the following words: to go home, to go abroad, to go underground, to go downtown, to go somewhere/anywhere, to go there/here, to go in/inside, to go out/outside, to go upstairs/downstairs:

I'm going home.

I'll go abroad next year.

Now we should go underground.

Let's go downtown tonight.

You can go anywhere you want.

I'll never come here again.

It's cold. Let's go inside.

Go upstairs and call Ann please.

4) We can't use «to» after the modal verbs except «have to» and «ought to».

You should talk to him.

Children must not smoke.

You can go.

She can drive.

May I come in?

I have to go, sorry.

You don't have to tell me about it.

He ought to leave us tomorrow.

5) We can't use «to» after «make» and «let». But we use «to» after the word «allow». For example:

Let me tell you about my trip.

I'll let you know.

His mother let him go for a walk.

His mother allowed him to go for a walk.

Don't make me do what I don't want to.

I'll make you work.

6) I already told you about using of «to» with the words «talk» and «say». I recommend you to read it.

I'd like to talk to you.

I said to him I wasn't his friend.

7) We also can use to with time-expressions in the meaning «till, until». For example:

I usually work from 9 a.m. to (OR till, until) 6 p.m.

8) Very often the preposition «to» can be used to indicate the purpose of actions. For example:

I have to work to earn money.

I came here to talk to you.

I moved to Canada to start a new life.

9) There are two great set expression which require «to» as well: to be honest, to tell you the truth.

To be honest, I don't like football.

To tell you the truth, I don't know where to go.

That's it my friends. I told you about the most common cases of using of «to» in English. Of course there are some more situations when we must use «to» as well. But the most of them are set expressions which you should only remember. I'll tell you about them in my next articles.

Keep learning English and take care!