

That Was My Fault: 3 Natural Ways to Own a Mistake

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

74 lines

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

Julia, I have sent the old version of our document to the whole team.

The version without the meeting notes, Martin?

Yes.

I need to explain it without sounding as if the document sent itself.

Then today is useful already.

Welcome to Your English Toolbox.

I am Martin.

And I am Julia.

Today, three natural expressions for taking responsibility and putting a mistake right.

Not a dramatic confession.

Just an ordinary mistake that needs an honest response.

Start with: That was my fault.

That was my fault.

I sent the old version.

Clear and direct.

My fault means that I am responsible for what went wrong.

You can use it with colleagues, friends or family.

Could I just say: There has been a mistake?

You could, but that does not say who was responsible.

It may be useful when you genuinely do not know.

If you know you caused the problem, That was my fault is more direct.

And saying it does not mean I am a terrible person.



Exactly.

You are identifying one action, not describing your whole character.

Our second expression: I should have checked.

This looks back at something it would have been better to do.

I should have checked the attachment before sending the email.

The important check did not happen, or did not happen properly.

Right.

The pattern is should have, followed by a past participle.

I should have checked the date.

I should have read the instructions.

Is that different from I should check?

Yes.

I should check is advice about what to do now or next.

I should have checked looks back at the missed opportunity.

I do not want to stop at explaining the mistake.

Let me put it right.

That is our third expression.

Put it right means correct the problem or take action to repair it.

It is common in British English.

Let me fix it is another natural option.

Let me put it right.

I will send the correct document and clearly mark the version everyone should use.

Much stronger than making a vague promise.

Tell the other person what the repair will actually be.

Here is the whole response.

That was my fault.

I should have checked the attachment.

Let me put it right: I will send the correct file now.

And I can reply: Thanks for sorting that out.



Notice that you are not asking me to reassure you for five minutes.

We can focus on solving the problem.

Now your turn.

You booked a table for the wrong date, and you know you made the booking.

Start by taking responsibility.

That was my fault.

Now explain the check you missed.

I should have checked the date.

Finally, offer to contact the restaurant and try to change the booking.

Let me put it right.

I will call the restaurant and ask whether we can change it.

Good: you promise an action, not an outcome you cannot control.

One last challenge.

Someone says: I should check the document.

Are they looking back at a missed check?

No.

For that meaning, say: I should have checked the document.

Our three steps: That was my fault, I should have checked, and Let me put it right.

The episode page has five extra expressions and practice, only on the web.

Find them at [yourenglishtoolbox.com](https://yourenglishtoolbox.com/resources/episode-180-transcript/) through the link in the description.

I will send the right file now.

And check it first!

See you next time.

