

GOOD GRAMMAR IS

HOT

13

GRAMMAR MISTAKES

BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE **DON'T** MAKE

1. THERE, THEIR, & THEY'RE

"There" refers to a **place**, "their" is a **possessive adjective**, and "they're" is the contraction of "they are."

Example



HOMONYMS

are words that sound alike. They are responsible for many of the most common grammar mistakes.

"They're not happy that their drink order is still on the bar over there."

2. LITERALLY

Somehow, "literally" has become one of the most misused words in the English language.

"Literally" means "actually, without exaggeration", but today the word is often used where the writer or speaker is exaggerating.

Example

"When I saw Janet Jackson I **literally** died."

Is that Janet Jackson... "dies"?



If the speaker has literally died, she wouldn't be speaking in the first place. She would be dead.

3. IT'S NOT NICE TO SPLICE

A comma splice is where the writer connects two things that could be two independent sentences with a comma alone.

It's considered a heinous grammar crime.

Example

"The teacher asked a question about comma splices, the student was truly baffled."

Should be

"The teacher asked a question about comma splices. The student was truly baffled."

4. IT'S vs ITS

If you're not sure which spelling to use, try replacing it with "it is" or "it has".

If neither of those phrases make sense, then "its" is the word you're looking for.

Example

"It's clear that a zebra can't change **its** stripes."

"Its", without an apostrophe, is the possessive of the pronoun "it." "It's", with an apostrophe, is a contraction of "it is" or "it has."



5. THE SPLIT INFINITIVE

Adverbs are a beautiful thing, as long as they're in the right place, and the right place is usually right after the infinitive form of the verb.

Example

Correct

"To study diligently."

Incorrect

"To diligently study."



Yes, there are some very famous examples of this rule being broken, most notably when Star Trek's Captain Kirk stated that his crew's mission was "to go boldly where no man has gone before." Down on earth, though, it's better to keep your adverbs in place and don't break up the infinitive party.

6. YOUR vs YOU'RE

This is another example of the "sound alike follies".

"Your" is the possessive adjective. "you're" is the contraction version of "you are."

Don't let the apostrophe lure you into thinking it's the possessive one.

7. WHETHER vs IF

Many writers seem to assume that "whether" is interchangeable with "if". It isn't.

"Whether" expresses a condition where there are two or more alternatives.

"If" expresses a condition where there are no alternatives.

Example

"I don't know **whether** I'll eat pizza tonight."

"I can eat pizza tonight **if** I have enough money to pay for it."



8. PASSIVE VOICE

Passive voice occurs when the writer turns the object of the sentence into the **subject**, instantly weakening the impact of the action.

Example

Passive

"A huge bag of chips was eaten by me."

Active

"I ate a huge bag of chips."

See the difference?

Passive voice is a common grammar crime and it is easy to fix.



9. IMPROPER USE OF THE APOSTROPHE

The apostrophe may be the most abused punctuation mark in the English language.

There are only two ways to use apostrophe correctly.

1 For contractions such as **don't**, **can't** and **won't**.

2 To show possession such as "**Jessie's** apostrophe means the apostrophe belongs to **Jessie**."

10. LOSE vs LOOSE

What a difference an "o" makes.

Lose

To "lose" means to be without something. You can "lose" your wallet, your job, or your mind.



Loose

"Loose" means the opposite of "tight" - or it may refer to something which isn't bound together.



11. AFFECT vs EFFECT

Most people confuse them when they're talking about something changing another thing.

When you're talking about the change itself, the noun, you'll use "effect."

"That music had a great **effect** on me."

When you're talking about the act of changing, the verb, you'll use "affect."

"That music **affected** me greatly."

This one can be tricky



12. FEWER vs LESS

There's a simple rule for this one.

If you can **count** it, use "**fewer**". If you can't, use "**less**".

Example

"Jane has **fewer** CD's in her car than Jenny."



"Jane has **less** appreciation for Beethoven than Jenny."



13. WHO vs THAT

For the most part, writers should use "who" to refer to human beings and "that" to refer to inanimate objects.

However, using "that" in reference to people is not technically wrong.



That's right. We're rounding out the list with something that you're really not doing wrong at all. It's always nice to end on a positive note.