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Most Annoying Grammar Mistakes in English

by Karen Bond

Which of the following grammar mistakes annoys you the most?

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1. Third conditional

"If I would have known about the party, I would have gone to it."

This is INCORRECT, although commonly used, especially in American English.

The correct form is:

If + had + past participle, would + have + past participle

* "If I **had** known about the party, I would have gone."

This is CORRECT.

2. Don't vs Doesn't

"He don't care about me anymore."

This is INCORRECT.

Doesn't, does not, or does are used with the third person singular - words like he, she, and it.

Don't, do not, or do are used for other subjects.

* "He **doesn't** care about me anymore."

This is CORRECT.

3. Bring vs Take

"When we **go to the party** on Saturday, let's **bring** a bottle of wine."

This is INCORRECT.

When you are viewing the movement of something from the point of arrival, use "bring":

* "When you **come** to the party, please **bring** a bottle of wine."

This is CORRECT.

When you are viewing the movement of something from the point of departure, use "take":

* "When we **go** to the party, let's **take** a bottle of wine."

This is CORRECT.

4. Fewer vs Less

Sign at the checkout of a supermarket: "**Ten items or less**".

This is INCORRECT.

You can count the items, so you need to use the number word "fewer". These nouns are *countable*.

* "Ten items or **fewer**."

This is CORRECT.

If you can't count the substance, then you should use "less". These nouns are *uncountable*.

* "You should eat **less** meat."

This is CORRECT.

5. However

"We were supposed to go to the dance last night, **however**, it was cancelled because of lack of interest."

This is INCORRECT.

A semicolon, rather than a comma, should be used to link these two complete sentences:

* "We were supposed to go to the dance last night; **however**, it was cancelled because of lack of interest."

This is CORRECT.

It should be noted that there ARE situations in which you can use a comma instead of a semi-colon:

- * "The match at Wimbledon, **however**, continued despite the bad weather."

This is CORRECT.

There is only one complete sentence in this example. It is not a compound sentence.

6. Have vs Of

"I never **would of thought** that he'd behave like that."

This is INCORRECT.

It should be **would have**:

- * "I never **would have/would've** thought that he'd behave like that."

This is CORRECT.

It's the same for **should** and **could**:

"He **should of** come with me."

This is INCORRECT.

- * "He **should have/should've** come with me."

This is CORRECT.

"She **could of** had anything she wanted."

This is INCORRECT.

- * "She **could have** had anything she wanted."

This is CORRECT.

7. Double negative

"I'm **not** speaking to **nobody** in this class."

This is INCORRECT.

Since 'not' is a negative, you cannot use 'nobody' in this sentence:

- * "I'm **not** speaking to **anybody** in this class."

This is CORRECT.

8. Present perfect

"He **has took** the train."

This is INCORRECT.

The correct form for the present perfect is:

would + have + **past participle**

* "He has **taken** the train."

This is CORRECT.

9. Went vs Gone

"I **should have went** to school yesterday."

This is INCORRECT.

The correct form is:

should + have + **past participle**

* "I should have **gone** to school yesterday."

This is CORRECT.

10. Its vs It's

"**Its** going to be sunny tomorrow."

This is INCORRECT.

It's is the contraction of It is:

* "It's going to be sunny tomorrow."

This is CORRECT.

"What's that? I can't remember **it's** name."

This is INCORRECT.

Its is a possessive pronoun that modifies a noun:

* "What's that? I can't remember its name."

This is CORRECT.

Which of these grammar mistakes annoys you the most?

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What's your Pet Peeve?

Do you have a pet peeve? Email me with the grammar mistake that annoys you the most, and I will add it to the list: teacherkarenb@hotmail.com.

Leticia wrote:

"lay" instead of "lie" (Like Kris, I shout at the television when I hear this one)

Here's one that really bothers me (and makes me shout at the television...maybe I shouldn't watch so much television...): "I couldn't help but think/laugh/worry, etc." instead of "I couldn't help thinking/laughing/worrying, etc." Or, more formally, "I could not but think". Few people realize that using "help" and "but" together creates a double negative.

Also (this one is often heard on cooking shows): "Let the sauce reduce down." How else can it reduce but down? Just say "reduce" and be done with it!

Elizabeth wrote:

*While sharing a book with a group of four year olds, the teacher asked, "How many stomachs **do** Barney have?"*

Honee wrote:

- 1) When people say/write "Happy 5th year anniversary". Year and anniversary! That's redundant!
- 2) When people say "for who?" instead of "for whom?"

Bteaungu in Ottawa wrote:

How about the vanishing adverb: "He drove real good". (er ... um ... might I suggest "really well"?). The adverb now appears to have disappeared entirely from American (and Canadian) English. I hear adjectives used all the time where adverbs are needed. My example is merely my chosen worst case, selected out of hundreds over many years because this quote actually strings two of them together.

"How are you?" "I'm good". My bitten-back response is "Are you VERY good?" To me this error smacks of the similar French error commonly made by Anglophones "Je suis chaud" intending to say "I'm feeling hot" (temperature-wise), when what they really meant was "J'ai chaud", As far as I know "Je suis chaud" means something like "I'm hot to trot" - probably not exactly what the speaker meant to say! "I'm good" gives me the same impression. "I'm well" is what they probably meant - as if anyone cared anyway to hear the response to this automatic greeting. "How are you?" "Well my haemorrhoids are really playing me up". I don't think they really wanted to hear that!

- 2) Or how about the redundant "of". I think this is a pretty good OF a suggestion, outside OF the all the others. Why not "above of" or "below of"? But no doubt these will come too with time and we have only to wait. (The misuse of "only", an amazing word that can change the meaning of a sentence drastically depending on its placement, is another beef of mine but I shall forebear for this time.)

These two are my top peeves and I'm not sure which one gets my vote over the other, but there are many, many more. Malapropisms are so rife these days that I scarcely take note of them any more, merely laugh like a drain whenever someone issues a particularly good one whilst intending to be serious. I hear them all the time on the TV news, especially when reporters are interviewing the public. My favourite is from years ago. A multi-million dollar advertising campaign for Cher's admittedly wonderful movie Moonstruck blazoned proudly on the posters in front of several thousand cinemas: "See Cher's heart-rendering performance!". So when you've boiled up Cher's heart in a saucepan to release the fat, what then?

The split infinitive is now the norm rather than an error, and these days people actually distort sentences in order to create one, whereas they used to distort sentences in order to avoid one. Both are bad but today's examples are by far the uglier. I have indeed found split infinitives in my favourite authors Jane Austen and

George Eliot, but very few of them, and English is far better without them. How the language evolves - sigh! But my wonderful English teacher in the 1950s drummed this into me so thoroughly that I still cringe whenever I either hear or read a split infinitive. These days people are getting really creative about this, and it's not uncommon TO actually, if you want to read and digest the content of the pages carefully, allowing for your own preferences and checking the references, if you are really interested in the topic, SEE the "to" separated from the verb by several lines. Well that was a rather pathetic effort concocted rapidly off the top of my head, but I have seen even worse. This is the German influence, where the participles automatically go to the back of the sentence and may even be on the next page! Yes I've studied German and I really like it as a language, and I get along with it better than I do in French except for the vocabulary - I can often guess the French word for something but hardly ever the German.

The unrelated participle always leads to the funniest errors of course. My favourite (apart from the grim content) is a news report in a local radio station from years ago that "after being reported missing a month ago, Nepean police have recovered the body of a young girl". I've often wondered how anyone could manage to mislay a complete police force for an entire month!

Then there is the misuse of the adjective "literal" or the adverb "literally" (this was from the days when adverbs still existed). A report on an F1 motor race said that "he literally scooped him up by diving inside him at the last bend." The mind boggles.

The it's/its thing is certainly number three on my list although it's only number 10 on yours. But it's the entire misuse of the apostrophe for plurals that still that gets me ranting. I can still remember vividly from the 1960s (most people would say the 1960's) seeing a gorgeously artistic and professionally produced sign in a shopping mall in Calgary. It said "Lock's and Key's". ATMs, ATVs, SUVs, RRSPs - none of these need an apostrophe. And neither do the Smith's or particularly the Jones'es. And I frequently see those on rural roadside signs.

As an aside - and spelling mistakes are not grammar, but talking of professionally produced signs - there used to be a downtown bakery here in Ottawa, Canada (I don't know where you are located) that proudly announced for many years that all its goods were "baked from scratch"! I used to ride past this in the bus every day on the way to work. But I digress. Nevertheless I now wish I'd taken a photo of it.

There are many more grammatical errors that I see every day. In fact the world is becoming totally illiterate, and the English language, which is capable of so many subtleties of thought, is rapidly losing this capacity, thanks to sports commentators, brain-dead paparazzi and lousy English teaching in schools. In my view, woolly expression leads to woolly thinking. I certainly find it hard to grasp concepts I can't put into words, and I can only conclude that other people's thinking is also becoming woolly through defective command of their own language.

A few more of my pet peeves, chosen at random:

"Disinterested" is not the same as "uninterested". A disinterested person is aware but impartial, but an uninterested person just doesn't care about the subject.

"Alternate" does not mean the same as "alternative". "Do you have an alternate route?". "No, I don't have a route I take Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and a different one I take Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays."

Escalators go down as often as they go up, so the verb "to escalate" is utterly meaningless (does anyone actually think any more?).

"Decimate" means to reduce by 10% (check your Roman history), and does not mean a near wipe-out, which is the way it appears to be interpreted these days.

On a pub quiz or an oral exam :- "Can you tell me the name of the president of Papua New Guinea?" Answer: "No." And that is 100% correct and should get me full marks. Another of my pet peeves.

So by now you should realize that I have many grammatical peeves and you have probably gotten a picture of where I am coming from. And yes, I DO occasionally end sentences with prepositions, and I have Winston Churchill on my side. As he once said: "That is the kind of English up with which I will not put!" I have copies of Sir Ernest Gowers' famous no-nonsense book "Plain Words" along with other books on English grammar. And I refer to Fowler's "English Usage" as my main reference source all the time.

I'm not an English teacher thank God, or I might just have topped myself before now, but I think I was taught really well back in the 1950s in those halcyon days when schools actually taught you something - amazing concept! Well at least my English Grammar School in Cirencester, Glos. taught me something, but grammar schools were obviously too good and they might give others an inferiority complex so they were all swept away in Britain in the 1960s in favour of mass-mediocrity. I'm just lucky that I was young enough to benefit while they were still around. These were the far off days when your teachers were allowed to penalize you if you acted up in class or didn't do your homework. Nowadays it seems that a teacher can be sued (or beaten up) if he doesn't give the little darling straight A's, but the truth about the little monster will emerge eventually I hope. I have no children myself (and how did you guess?) Had I any then I would have taught them far better than any schools do these days. And that reminds me - another peeve is that the subjunctive has now disappeared too. "If I would of done it, then da da da . . ." (etc. -- Ugh!!!)

I adore the diversity and the sheer scope of the English language compared with all the others, and I take it almost as a personal affront that this brilliant subtlety of expression is constantly being eroded by misuse. I hate the fact that all the subtlety of it is being massacred in common speech and that nobody even seems to care (because of course they don't even know because of inferior English teaching in schools). I strongly believe that fuzzy grammar leads to fuzzy thinking. I still believe that one basically thinks in words, and that one can think only what one can express. For me the English language is the best of all languages for allowing subtlety of expression, but in today's increasingly illiterate and dumbed-down world it is losing that edge, and I worry a lot about this.

I had a friend at university (that was Pembroke College Oxford actually, but I was reading physics not English and I don't really brag about it much because with no thanks to my early education I actually ended up with my real career as a librarian!) who insisted on the correct usage of words. He is the only man I've ever known who referred to a "homosexual group" with its true meaning - i.e. a group of humans (or indeed animals) all of the same sex. And now homosexuals have usurped the perfectly good word "gay" - I feel gay sometimes but I daren't say so any more.

On a lighter note, I get a real kick out of the English habit of stringing together nouns to provide meaning. I take great pleasure in misinterpreting these, especially in news headlines. Only this morning I saw an ad recommending a "small business consultant". Is she/he only 3 foot 6 inches high? A hobbit perhaps? This is only today's small example, still vivid in my memory. The Germans do the same but they string the words together without spaces - it's the same deal! "Fernsprecher" (i.e. distant speaker) is a telephone and "Eisenbahnhof" (iron road yard) is a railway station to give two examples. But get into abstract concepts like the subconscious (das Unterbewusstsein), and I am lost. And Landwirtschaftlichesproduktionsgenossenschaft has always been one of my favourites. This is the word for a collective farm in the former East Germany.

I love misinterpreting headlines and if one of the nouns can be interpreted as a verb then a headline is in real trouble! Sorry but I can't come up with an example at the moment. Sometimes I can't interpret it at all because I don't know WHICH word is actually a verb. As an aside "Parrot in court next month" is an all-time favourite of mine. But this referred to Jean-Claude Parrot, the head at the time of the postal workers' union in Canada, and this does not really illustrate my point.

Sorry to sound off but you appeared to invite this. I hope at least that I entertained you. Please feel to write to me. I have a sympathetic ear.

Earl wrote:

Although I find it very funny every time I hear it (I am a boy in a man's body), "do do" has got to be incorrect. For instance, "I do, do that" would be served just as well by "I do that", wouldn't it? I still love interrupting the speaker with an accusing finger and shouting, "YOU SAID DO DO!!!" I'm so immature.

Frank wrote:

*Incorrect: Each person should have their own car.
Correct: Each person should have his own car (or her own car).*

Kirk wrote:

My pet peeve is shown in my email signature. Many people believe it is more sophisticated to use "myself" in place of me. Is it sophisticated to be wrong? I don't think so.

"Myself" is no better than "I" as an object. "Myself" is not a sort of all-purpose intensive form of "me" or "I." Use "myself" only when you have used "I" earlier in the same sentence: "I am not particularly fond of goat cheese myself." "I kept half the loot for myself." All this confusion can easily be avoided if you just remove the second party from the sentences where you feel tempted to use "myself" as an object or feel nervous about "me." You wouldn't say, "The IRS sent the refund check to I," so you shouldn't say "The IRS sent the refund check to my wife and I" either. And you shouldn't say "to my wife and myself." The only correct way to say this is, "The IRS sent the refund check to my wife and me." Still sounds too casual? Get over it.
 from:<http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/myself.html>

David wrote:

The use of "there's" in place of "there're" is rampant. I hear well-educated people say, "There's two reasons ..." and "There's some children at the door" and "There's sandwiches on the table." (I also hear poorly educated people say, "It's some children at the door" and "It's sandwiches on the table.").

Annette wrote:

I was looking at grammar this morning and hit your website. I was researching instances when people say, "He did real good." This is most annoying when it is used by my son's teacher!

Judy wrote:

I hear people saying things similar to "I am so not doing x, y or z." My friend was looking for an internal medicine specialist last year. When I visited my doctor at that time, I inquired whether she might be taking new patients. Her response was "I am so not taking any new patients." Why do people use the word "so" to emphasize the word "not"? Why not simply say, "I am not taking new patients," or "I am not taking any new patients," for a little emphasis?

Matthew wrote:

Of course, every error I find makes me cringe, but the most egregious error that I have noticed occurs mostly in advertising. So often a company claims its product to be some number of times better, stronger, faster, etc. than another product. In reality, the product is some number of times as good, strong, fast, etc. as the other product. For example, "This product makes your tooth enamel two times stronger." Really? In that case, how much is one time stronger? It should be "twice as strong."

Even worse is when a company claims a product is a number of times less, smaller, slower, etc. than another. For example, Comcast claimed in one of its television ads that DSL was "up to four times slower" than Comcast internet service. That is an impossible claim: One time slower is completely stopped; four times slower is three times the speed IN REVERSE. Sadly it's false advertising few people even notice.

Grace wrote:

1. **Woman/women used as an adjective rather than "female".** This seems to have become standard usage. No one would think of saying "man lawyer" or "men doctors". Why is it acceptable to say "women lawyers?"
2. **"Waiting on" rather than "waiting for".**

Natalie wrote:

Without a doubt, it would have to be **the random apostrophe** - in fact I'm thinking of starting a "Save the Apostrophe" group because it is in danger of dying out altogether because of mass prostitution of usage. How about "Tomato's For Sale" or "Pizza's Half-Price", "50% of on all dress's." I can sympathise with those who say "I saw it's face", because they are actually applying a correct rule and not realising that this is one of English's millions of exceptions to The Rule. But you'd think that people who spend thousands on billboards and glossy magazines would get it right!!! I usually scrub out an incorrect apostrophe if it is written in chalk on a blackboard, but it is harder (and probably illegal) to do anything to an official sign. Why is this rule so hard to grasp???

Tamara wrote:

It drives me nuts when people (usually newscasters) use the phrase "begs the question" to mean "prompts the question" or "leads to the question." To beg the question is a logical fallacy which entails presupposing the intended conclusion in the argument presented. In other words, to beg the question is to make a circular argument.

Miriam wrote:

I find it so frustrating to hear people use the adjective "real" (meaning true, genuine etc) instead of the adverb "really" (to show the degree of the adjective). For example: "That person over there is real good-looking". It makes my skin crawl!

Scott wrote:

I often hear a radio announcer say something like this, "... and Johnny Bench, he hit a triple..."

Is that only a grammar mistake or merely a speaking "helper" so as to not say "Um?"

Matt wrote:

The double or triple "is." Regrettably, this has become so common that we hear newscasters and pundits use this over the airways almost every day. "The point is, is that..." or even "The point is is..is that..." Worse: "The thing of it is is is that..." This grates on my soul.

When living in Minnesota, I never got used to the phrase, "Wanna go with?" With whom???

Waiting on. "What are you waiting on?" A waiter waits on a customer. We don't wait "on" things to happen.

(Another) Matt wrote:

As a Brit who emigrated to the USA fairly recently, I have had to endure a lot of "American English", which comes with its own brand of grammatical errors, many of which have already been covered on this site. However, just a few minutes ago I heard yet another example of one of my pet peeves on the television and couldn't resist posting this comment!

The point is this: in the USA there is an overwhelming tendency to treat collective nouns as singular entities, rather than plural (as in the UK) - for example, "The audience is clapping" vs "The audience are clapping". In itself, I don't have a problem with this, since I think both ways are OK. Another example: "My team is doing well" vs "My team are doing well". Again, on their own, both statements seem fine. What annoys me, makes me gnash my teeth, curl my toes, etc., is when I hear something like "My team HAS scored THEIR first point", or "The government HAS passed THEIR new law". If I feel like being facetious, I want to answer with "Has they?". SURELY, YOU CANNOT MIX SINGULAR AND PLURAL FORMS LIKE THIS? (The one I just heard on TV was "Now, the next generation tries THEIR luck at singing...").

Wouldn't it be more accurate to say:

*"My team HAS scored ITS first point"
"The government HAS passed ITS new law"
"The next generation tries ITS luck at singing" ?*

Or, alternatively, and more like what one would encounter in the UK:

*"My team HAVE scored THEIR first point"
"The government HAVE passed THEIR new law"
"The next generation TRY their luck at singing" ?*

If you're going to refer to a group (usually of people) with the pronoun "they", or possessive pronoun "their", then use the plural form of the verb in the same sentence. If you prefer to use singular pronouns, then that's OK too - so long as you use the singular form of the verb! That's what I does! :-)

Virginia wrote:

*I'm in high school and, often times, a teacher will ask a student about how the student thinks he did on the test or quiz. The student will then say, "I think I did good." Or how about this common conversation: "Hi, how are you doing?" "I'm doing good." Yuck! Those sentences sound like nails on a chalkboard to me. **Good** is an adjective, not an adverb, so to modify how you did, you would have to use the adverb **well**. So it should be "I think I did well," or "I'm doing well." If I'm 16 and I know that, I think everyone else should too!*

Rene wrote:

*My boyfriend drives me crazy with his horrible grammar. He consistently uses "**seen**" instead of "**saw**," and "don't" instead of "doesn't." The latter is already on your list, but I would love it if you would add "seen versus saw"!*

Wendy wrote:

Many of the pet peeves already listed have driven me crazy. A lot of them must have something to do with living in the Midwest because I have never been around an entire society that insisted on talking incorrectly (even in the newspapers!).

*One of my pet peeves is when people use "**irregardless**" instead of "regardless." It's redundant to say "IR-regardless". Now my husband uses it just to irritate me.*

Scott wrote:

*Since moving to the Midwest, I've noticed that people here say **acrossed** instead of **across**. For example, "I went **acrossed** the river for lunch today." I cringe every time I hear it.*

Jason wrote:

*My biggest pet peeve is the excessive wordiness of the phrase "to be doing/needing". For instance, "**We will be doing that tomorrow**"; AND*

*"This year we **will be moving** to a new room and we **will be needing** many new items as well." (This was written by a pre-school teacher with an elementary education degree!*

*Isn't the correct grammar like this?: "This year we will move to a new room and we **will need** many new items as well"?*

Stephanie wrote:

My pet peeve is something I've noticed recently, and it might only be in the Midwest (or Ohio), but it's rather irritating:

The car needs washed.

The package needs shipped.

Have people simply grown too lazy to insert "to be?"

Leanne wrote:

*What drives me insane is people who write "**alot**" instead of "**a lot**".*

Taur'essa wrote:

What annoys me the most about grammar mistakes is that I still make them myself! However, my most 'hated' pet peeve is when some people use 'Your' instead of 'You're'. For example:

Your not listening to me. [BAD]

vs.

You're not listening to me. [GOOD]

Of course, there is also the ever-popular 'Their', 'They're' and 'There'. For example:

Their over there unpacking they're stuff! [BAD]

vs.

They're over there, unpacking their stuff! [GOOD]

I aspire to being an English teacher one day so that I can help correct these common mistakes so that other people may have a better future. I have found a site that helps me learn, and it helps my grammar-less friends to realize their mistakes, too! It's called "BrainPOP" and they have a website. It's brainpop.com and they have many videos on the English language.

Felix wrote:

I hate it when people don't use the subjunctive in phrases such as "It is necessary that he is looked after" instead of "he BE looked after".

I constantly hear on news reports "Scenes like this one" instead of "Scenes like THESE".

It sounds so tatty to end a sentence with a preposition; as Churchill said: "This is a kind of English up with which I shall not put". A layman would just say: "which I shan't put up with".

A common but usually unknown error is using the word 'none' with a plural conjugation. "none of these are any good" is incorrect -- 'none' is short for 'not one', so should be treated as a singular noun, so "none of these IS any good" is correct.

John wrote:

I can't stand when people say "anyways" instead of "anyway."

Rob wrote:

The most annoying grammar mistake? For me, it's "between you and I." This is a classic case of hypercorrection, and it drives me crazy.

Aum wrote:

When I first came to this country in 1973, I stayed with my sister-in-law, a native speaker with multiple graduate degrees, born and raised in this country. In my first week, when I heard her use the expression 'lay down' for 'lie down,' I tried to point out to her that technically that was incorrect. But then I soon realized that the so-called 'incorrect expression' has actually permeated the American Language. That's how language changes. As we know, all languages are in the state of constant flux. I was in Australia for over 8 years. There speakers don't say 'lay down' for 'lie down' but their version of English is undergoing a different kind of change. They--and this includes those who are supposed to uphold the standards--would say 'hotting up' for 'heating up.' These gradual changes within two dialects of English into different directions eventually give rise to two different languages. It seems to me that more pervasive 'errors' in language use simply reflect the potential language changes to come.

Kris wrote:

"of" instead of "have" - How could anyone get "should of" from "should've" (a perfectly acceptable contraction)?

"lay" and "lie" - This blunder has been driving me insane for twenty years. I've been known to shout at the

television when a newscaster informs me that an accident victim was "laying" in the street.

Irresponsible apostrophe use - I actually saw this one at a preschool. One of the teachers had made a poster listing the children's "birthdays"!

"than" instead of "from" - I cringe when I hear "different than", as in, "My sweater is different than yours."

"into" and "in to" - This one always makes me laugh. "This form must be turned into Susan no later than Friday." Wow, I'd really like to see that happen.

"gave" and "given" - "They should have gave us that paperwork." They should have "gave" you a grammar lesson.

"with" and "with pronoun-of-your-choice" - During the last year or so, I've noted the increasing prevalence of such silly statements as, "John's going to the store, and I'm going with." This asininity drives me up the wall, across the ceiling, and out the window. Would it really require too much effort to say "with him"?

Jerry wrote:

I came upon your site looking for confirmation that the construction "If you would have done something, then I would have done something" is wrong (and should be "If you had done something, then I would have done something". It seems that EVERYONE does it wrong. Everyone also does the lie versus lay thing wrong (especially in hospitals and doctors' offices, where they use it many times a day -- you'd think they could learn it right!); and there's the ubiquitous "with Sue and I" mistake, made by most educated people. ARRGGHHH!

My biggest peeve, however, is the signs in stores that advertise things for less than one cent when they are meant to sell for less than one dollar (such as ".49 [cents symbol]" per pound for bananas, when the intent is either \$.49 or 49 cents). I've gotten into arguments about this many times with the merchants who insist that their sign is correct.

Diane wrote:

TV newspeople, as well as commercials, are guilty of substituting "less" for "fewer" all the time. I just don't see how young people will ever get it straight if they are surrounded by constant mis-use. Is anyone old enough to remember, "Winston tastes good 'like' a cigarette should?" At least there was an uproar over it, which called it to our attention and made us aware it was incorrect, even though its use continued!

And.....what about the fact that "it's" is mistakenly used for "its" in packaging, publishing, signage....all over the place!! For that mistake, there is no excuse!! I recently ordered some materials and circled the mistake on the order blank, not that anyone noticed.

Angelica wrote:

Suppose to - I cringe when I read something like "I'm suppose to call home." Why can't anyone put a "d" on the end of "suppose"?

"of" instead of "have" - I shudder when I hear "I should of called home". Where did anyone get the idea that "of" was a verb or that it was permanently affixed to the end of the word "should"? Why can't they say "I should HAVE called home"?

"lay" and "lie" - I gnash my teeth when I hear "I will lay down for a nap" (as opposed to "I lay down for an hour early this morning").

Irresponsible apostrophe use - I go totally crazy when I see plurals formed with apostrophes (apostrophe's?). That used to be considered an error. Now it's completely commonplace, even in advertising and signage.

"fewer" and "less" - I feel like taking a magic marker, driving around to all the grocery stores, and changing "8 items or less" to "8 items or fewer" at the express counters. But nobody would understand my fervour and I would be arrested, so I guess I just have to grin and bear it (or never go through the express counter).

Jerry wrote:

Isn't the improper use of the reflexive pronoun one of the most rampant errors today? People who say "I am fine ... and yourself?" or People who say "Please email the information to myself?", etc.

Jacob wrote:

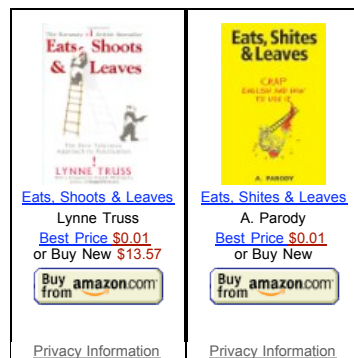
Subjunctive mood! The worst! People never use it. Instead, you have people saying "If I was in a different situation, ..." Subjunctive mood should always be used for future, if's, and wishes.

Chaucey wrote:

My pet peeve is when people write "Your" when they should have written "You're".

Kris wrote:

The phrase that most bothers me is: "I could care less". I wish this expression could be wiped off the face of the earth. People sound so illiterate when they say this.



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