DO YOU HAVE A GRAMMAR GENE?

According to an Associated Press article in the Pensacola News Journal on February 11, 1992, "a single dominant gene controls the ability to learn grammar... People lacking the gene... must continually struggle with verb tenses and noun plurals. People with a normal grammar gene naturally learn language rules, while people lacking the gene must learn through another intellectual process how to make verbs past tense and turn nouns into plurals. Do you have a grammar gene?"

Is your memo littered with grammatical errors? Whom are you gonna call? The Grammar Checkers - at the UWF Writing Lab. We will undangle your modifiers, unsplit your infinitives, make your subjects and verbs agree, and separate your run-on sentences.

TEST YOURSELF!

So, as a professional, you think you already know grammar, huh? Well, test yourself on your knowledge of on-the-job writing skills by labeling each of the following sentences as Correct or Incorrect. Watch for errors in grammar, word choice, capitalization, sentence construction, and punctuation. Use the requirements for standard written American English. If you miss none or one, you should be the Office Grammarian. If you miss more than one, you should call the UWF Grammar Hotline at (850) 471 2128.

1. We have no record of you having sent this information.
   Correct
   Incorrect

2. Please contact the officer manager or myself if you need additional information.
   Correct
   Incorrect

3. The responsibilities will be divided between you and I.
   Correct
   Incorrect

4. If there is a problem, please discuss it with the supervisor of I.
   Correct
   Incorrect

5. The Court will mail the subpoena to whoever is on the witness list.
   Correct
   Incorrect

6. The district administrator will appoint whoever the board chooses.
   Correct
   Incorrect

7. Each physician should review their appointment schedule for the week.
   Correct
   Incorrect

8. Our corporate office must accept responsibility for it's behavior.
   Correct
   Incorrect

9. Please pass this information to others whom you know may be interested in attending.
   Correct
   Incorrect

10. No other candidate is more qualified for the job than her.
    Correct
    Incorrect

11. It's going to take a while for we reporters to do a thorough investigation.
    Correct
    Incorrect

12. At the Help Center, they have given away several food boxes this past year.
    Correct
    Incorrect

13. Her sole support are her parents.
    Correct
    Incorrect

14. It is important that all employees are on time.
    Correct
    Incorrect

15. Neither the County nor the City have supervisory responsibility for the Commission.
    Correct
    Incorrect

16. There's many new treatments available.
    Correct
    Incorrect

17. The Pensacola Pain & Injury Clinic focus on treating car accident victims.
    Correct
    Incorrect

18. Each of the cars are in need of repair.
    Correct
    Incorrect

19. The prognosis of both patients are exactly the same.
    Correct
    Incorrect

20. A growing number of studies confirms that drivers who use their cell or car phones while driving are frequently distracted.
    Correct
    Incorrect

21. The number of cosmetic surgery patients have grown over the past four years.
    Correct
    Incorrect

22. Recycling telephone directories help save landfill space each year.
    Correct
    Incorrect

23. If either your phone number or your address have changed, please let us know.
    Correct
    Incorrect

24. The proposal as well as the budget are enclosed.
    Correct
    Incorrect

25. Neither of the passengers were hurt in the accident.
    Correct
    Incorrect

26. The date is not accurate.
    Correct
    Incorrect

27. The seminar is for anyone who want to learn computer skills.
    Correct
    Incorrect

28. The candidate has ran for public office before.
    Correct
    Incorrect
29. The company has not begun its investigation.
30. Stock prices have gone up considerably this year.
31. He is one of those people who does not follow company policies.
32. Your generosity makes it possible for students, regardless of their financial situation, to attend college.
33. Due to the heavy call volume at this time, you may experience a twenty-minute delay.
34. In regards to traffic rules, law enforcement officers are bound by the same rules as private citizens.
35. The applicant has a MBA degree from NWF.
36. Our principal concern is each employee's safety.
37. On the application, please list your principle area of expertise.
38. Our president is an alumni of one of the local high schools.
39. The CEO effected several changes that had a positive affect on morale.
40. So far, our newspaper has not been affected by the suffering economy.
41. The Heritage Society is currently accepting donations for its capital campaign drive.
42. The reason he was not made senior partner is because he is an inexperienced litigator.
43. To apply for this position, your application must be submitted by Friday, March 13.
44. We suggest many new tips that can help you quit smoking on our website.
45. After getting all the signatures, your forms must be turned in.
46. Most of our executives write very good.
47. We feel badly about the company's loss.
48. Someone from our office will return your call as quick as possible.
49. I'll try to make the directions more clear than they are.
50. We are real excited about the expansion.
51. We accept neither credit cards or checks.
52. Teachers are negotiating to get a raise higher than last year.
53. We must abide by the loan officers decision.
54. Our loan offices will be closed Monday, September 2nd in observance of Labor Day.
55. We hope that you too, will consider supporting this worthy organization.
56. We offer fast, secure, online payments.
57. Items that can be financed include: roofing, heating and cooling systems, and aluminum siding.
58. Two main online, interactive leave reporting systems are now available, one for physicians and one for support personnel.
59. The job was advertised, however, no one applied for the position.
60. Our company has branch offices in Portland, Oregon, Portland, Maine, and Palm St, Joe, Florida.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 12 OF THIS NEWSLETTER
Leave Your Mark

Initialisms vs. Acronyms

By Brian Hansen

To the uninitiated, *ACT* is an acronym. After all, the initial letters form a word; and, as we all know, acronyms are words formed by the first letters or syllables of each of the words of major words that make up the acronym. Thus, *NOW* and *SCUBA* are examples.

Of course, grammar is never that simple, and those of us "in the know" have coined a newism to cover these quasi-acronyms that are not pronounced as words: *initialisms.* *KID, ISBN, URL, GOP, UK, CPA, NPD, DSN, OR, ERA, CPR, CIA, UN, and ROC* are easily recognizable as initialisms, and even though *ACT* does form a word, it is not pronounced "act" but "a-c-t." Thus, *ACT* is, alas, also an initialism. To further complicate matters, *ASAP, UN/CEFACT, NATO, OSHA, SIPS, AIDS, and UNESCO* are not initialisms but full- fledged acronyms even though they don't form intelligible words.

Familiar acronyms and initialisms contain no periods.

Because acronyms are pronounced as words, they are usually written without periods. Some common acronyms listed in *Real Good Grammar, Too* are as follows:

- COBOL - Common Business-Oriented Language
- SADCO - Students Against Drunk Driving
- NASA - National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- TV - television
- YUP - yea urban professional

When written lowercase, initialisms generally require periods; when written in uppercase, they don't:

- UPS - United Parcel Service
- ERA - Equal Rights Amendment
- IRA - Individual Retirement Account
- STD - sexually transmitted disease

*FYI*

From the Desk of Mamie Webb Hixon, the Grammar Guru

As long as acronyms and initialisms are universally recognizable, such as *B.S., MA, MD, JD, PhD* and *UNICEF,* or as long as they are used by people working together on specific projects (LPDs), these abbreviations are easily understood. One kind of problem arises when a familiar abbreviation like *AIM* could mean *Alcoholics Anonymous* or *American Indian Movement,* depending on the context. If the writer doesn't provide a parenthetical explanation, then the reader is confused.

Acronyms such as *NASA, NATO, CIA, TV Guide, CAD, ICD, and UNIX* are so commonplace as words in the English language that hardly anyone remembers that they are indeed words formed from the initials of other parts of several words (especially if the acronym is applied with lower-case letters). These kinds of abbreviations don't need parenthetical explanations.

When acronyms and initialisms are not recognizable (i.e., the ANSWER Columnist, they might not be understood by the reader.

Some initialisms such as *NV, VCR, DVD, IRS, USA, RSIV, ETV, DNA, EU, UFO, EPC, MAC, IBM, and Xerox* are more easily decoded than the others. Similarly, when we acquire closer knowledge of foreign languages, the permutations and combinations of letters are more easily understood. Other common abbreviations include *ASAP, DNA, SCUBA, EO, CISO, FMA, NASA, NATO,* and *DWP.

A good rule of thumb is that: use abbreviations only when your audience knows what they mean, when using unfamiliar acronyms and initialisms, first spell out the multiword term and place its initialism or acronym in parentheses. Thereafter, use the abbreviation.

GRAMMAR TRIVIA QUESTION

What do the acronyms *NNN* and *sucks* stand for?

Call the Grammar Hotline at (850) 472-2129 for the answer.

*Italics vs. "Quotation Marks"

By Jennell McCollough

Which of the following is correct?

1. Benjamin Franklin said, "Remember that time is money."
2. Among the reference books on the chairman's bookshelf is The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.

Answer: neither.

When quoting directly, use quotation marks to differentiate between your words and those from a source. Use a comma to introduce a quotation, and always place periods inside the closing quotation marks, even if the quotation is only a single word. So sentence one should read as follows:

*Benjamin Franklin said, "Remember that time is money."*

Notice that the first word of a complete quoted statement begins with a capital letter. Quotation marks are also used to enclose titles of articles, chapters in a book, songs, short stories, essays, poems, and speeches.

*Italics* is used primarily to identify certain kinds such as books, plays, newspapers, magazines, paintings, sculptures, movies, ships, and specific names of aircraft. Therefore, sentence two should be written as follows:

*Among the reference books on the chairman's bookshelf is The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.*

According to Mamie Hixon's *Real Good Grammar, Too,* *italics* (underlining) is also used to identify foreign words or phrases that have not been adapted to English usage. It is in doubt as to whether a word has been adapted to English, consult a dictionary. Some common foreign words, phrases, and expressions that have become anglicized are as follows:

- the status quo
- de facto
- ad hoc committee
- ex officio
- coup
- laissez faire
- cum laude
- double entendre

Use *italics* to set off words used as words, and use quotation marks to set off definitions as in the following:

**According to the dictionary, *audit* simply means "verification or examination of financial accounts or records."**

**ON-THE-JOB GRAMMAR TIP**

Always use *italics* for *e.g.* and *i.e.* for *for example* and *i.e.* for *for instance.*

- *Some terms of the contract, *e.g.* duration and job classification, were settled in the labor negotiations.*
- *Some terms of the contract, for example, duration and job classification, were settled in the labor negotiations.*
- *As is a formal abbreviation for *that is* and usually precedes a noun.*
- *We were a fairly heterogeneous group; i.e., there were managers, translators, and vice-presidents at the meeting.*
- *We were a fairly heterogeneous group, that is, there were managers, translators, and vice-presidents at the meeting.*
Punctuate for Clarity and Effect

Is It Time for a Colonoscopy?
By Mandy Harrison

The colon is the Paul Revere of punctuation. Just as Paul Revere ran around yelling, "The British are coming, the British are coming," a colon screams: "A list is coming, a list is coming!" The colon is a solid mark of punctuation that introduces information and connects that information to the rest of a sentence. Although the colon may be used to separate, combine, and introduce it is most commonly used to introduce a list. The following are important rules concerning using a colon to introduce a list:

RULE 1: A complete sentence must precede a colon.

- Therefore, do not use a colon after a verb or a preposition, even though the verb or preposition may precede a list.

The phrases the following and as follows are often used before a colon to make a word group preceding a colon complete.

RULE 2: In order to avoid redundancy, do not use phrases such as for example, namely, or that is after a colon because a colon means "namely."

RULE 3: One item may make up a list.

RULE 4: A colon may be used to introduce a vertical list if the information preceding the colon is a complete sentence.

When used correctly, the colon can improve the clarity and conciseness of a person’s writing. To verify that the above “colon usage” was successful, choose the correct sentence:

Grant applications should include: the organization’s mission statement, anticipated expenses, and an overview of the proposed project.

Those attending the meeting were: Dr. Lanza, Dr. Boyd, and Dr. Wright.

The University maintains official documentation of academic preparation such as: official transcripts for all faculty members.

ANSWER: None of the sentences are correct because there is not a complete sentence before the colon.

CONNECT USES OF THE COLON

Grant applications should include the organization’s mission statement, anticipated expenses, and an overview of the proposed project.

Those attending the meeting were: Dr. Lanza, Dr. Boyd, and Dr. Wright.

The University maintains official documentation of academic preparation such as: official transcripts for all faculty members.

The administrative division consists of three principal sections: resource management, finance, and customer service.

The critical problems in the company are:

- low employee morale
- insufficient capital
- incompetent management
- lack of training

The Numbers Game
By Brian Hansen

Figures (numerals) are used to express dates (August 13, since 1002), hours when they precede a.m. or p.m., times (1:30 a.m.), page numbers (page 666), numbers containing decimals ($2.5 million settlement), and chapter numbers (Chapter 11).

Write out numbers that can be expressed in two words or less (one hundred, twenty-six).

Use figures for those numbers that require more than two words (100; 3,201) unless the number begins a sentence.

In technical and business writing, use figures when expressing statistical tables, weights, totals, distances, speeds, sums, and percentages.

For more information, consult the ever-popular Real Good Grammar, Too! I did.

Contrary to popular belief, each punctuation rule was made with a logical and specific intent. In fact, punctuation rules are crucial in allowing a writer to convey his or her point unambiguously. For instance, when there is a series of items in a sentence, the items in the series must be separated by commas.

COMMAS: Stora Enso Paper has offices in Finland, Wisconsin, and Belgium.

However, sometimes when a list is embedded in a sentence, it is necessary to use semicolons, instead of commas, to separate the items that must be grouped together within the list.

SEMICOLONS: Stora Enso Paper has offices in Helsinki, Finland; Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin; and Brussels, Belgium.

If this rule is not followed, the meaning of some lists may be misconstrued.

WHICH TELEPHONE GRAMMAR DOES YOUR OFFICE USE?

TELEPHONE GRAMMAR I

DEPARTMENT OF CITY, COUNTY, AND STATE, CAN I HELP YOU?
HELLO, MY NAME IS . . .
WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPEAK TO?
ONE OF THE ADMINISTRATORS;
WHAT IS YOUR CALL IN REGARDS TO?
MAY I PLEASE SPEAK TO THE OFFICE MANAGER?
THIS IS HER/HIM;
ARE YOU AN ESCAMBIA COUNTY RESIDENT?
(CONVERSATION CONTINUES)
WE APPRECIATE YOUR CALLING.

TELEPHONE GRAMMAR II

DEPARTMENT OF CITY, COUNTY, AND STATE, MAY I HELP YOU?
HELLO, MY NAME IS . . .
WHOM WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPEAK TO?
ONE OF THE ADMINISTRATORS;
WHAT IS YOUR CALL IN REGARDS TO?
MAY I PLEASE SPEAK TO THE OFFICE MANAGER?
THIS IS SHE/HE;
ARE YOU AN ESCAMBIA COUNTY RESIDENT?
(CONVERSATION CONTINUES)
WE APPRECIATE YOUR CALLING.

ON THE JOB GRAMMAR TIP

The writer or speaker implies the reader or listener knows.

His memo implied that the project would be delayed.

The general manager inferred from the memo that the project would be delayed.
GrammarWatch®
WORDS THAT MAKE YOU GO "HMMMM?!
(IS THAT RIGHT?)"

There's a fine balance between people expressing themselves and their opinions.
—President Bush (from CNN Radio, 8/23/02 and 8/25/02)

1. We're in the business of loaning money.
2. This is the Smith resident.
3. It has been motioned and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.
4. All total, the averages are low.
5. We have already shown the video once.
6. He dove into the pool.
7. I moved them together.
8. contact lens
9. The cleaner shrank the shirt.
10. We snuck in through the side door.
11. The movers drug the couch to the patio.
12. I have strived to do well.
13. On the behalf of
14. My UWF transcripts
15. cool, calm, and collective
16. the significance to that number
17. I enjoy the travel
18. You need your driver licenses.
19. dressed to the nine
20. as a result
21. wreaked havoc
22. mistress of ceremony
23. raving review
24. I graduated UWF.
25. two jury summonses
26. gun-ho
27. whole 'nother issue

FROM THE GRAMMAR GURU'S DESK

1. lending
2. residence
3. moved and seconded
4. All told
5. Both shown and showed are correct past participle forms.
6. Both drove and drove are correct past tense forms.
7. Both wave and waved are correct past tense forms.
8. one — long two or more — countless
9. Correct. Also shrank
10. Both stuck and sneaked are correct past tense forms.
11. dragged
12. Both stricken and stricken are correct past participle forms.
13. On behalf of
14. one transcript
15. cool, calm, and collected ON calm, cool, and collected
16. the significance of that number
17. coming
18. one driver license ON driver's license
19. to the ninth, meaning 'to the highest degree'
20. as a result
21. wrecked havoc
22. mistress of ceremonies
23. rave reviews
24. I graduated from UWF.
25. Correct
26. gun-ho
27. Correct along expression (some use whole other idea)

ON-THE-JOB GRAMMAR TIPS

- Cannot help but is a double negative.
  INCORRECT: We cannot help but cut our staff.
  REVISED: We cannot avoid cutting our staff.

- Use fewer with countable nouns and less with uncountable nouns.
  Fewer members took the offer than we expected.
  Fewer calories and less fat.

- Do not capitalize working or professional titles such as principal, vice president, sales associate, data clerk, and credit manager unless they are used with a name.

- Periods and commas are always placed inside closing quotation marks. The sales associate presented her findings in an essay entitled "Marketing Strategies in the 21st Century."

- If you and a centurion with an abbreviation, do not use an exclamation point.
  INCORRECT: The seminar is from 8:30 a.m. till 4:30 p.m.
  REVISED: The seminar is from 8:30 a.m. till 4:30 p.m.

- Don't use the pronoun they without an antecedent.
  INCORRECT: In this office, they require you to type and edit all case studies.
  REVISED: In this office, employees are required to type and edit all case studies.

- When writing a comparison, use more for two; use most for more than two.
  INCORRECT: Of the three applicants, she is more qualified.
  REVISED: Of the three applicants, she is the most qualified.

- To make a compound noun plural, change the form of the word that is clearly the most important. Consult your dictionary.

  statutes of limitations
  passers-by
  attorneys general or attorneys general
  runners-up
  bills of sale
  sisters-in-law
  court martial

- Collective nouns such as team, committee, jury, group, band, choir, family, couple, faculty, and staff may be singular or plural depending on meaning: whether the members are considered collectively as a group (singular) or individually/individually (plural): singular.

  SINGULAR
  A team of nurses is treating the patient.
  The couple was married in 1955.
  The jury has delivered its verdict.

  PLURAL
  Our team of professionals are very experienced.
  The couple enjoy their children and grandchildren.
  The couple was married in 1955.
  The jury have gone their separate ways.

IF A PRONOUN FOLLOWS, USE IT AS A GUIDE.
The couple have renovated their apartment.
Switching Gears - Keeping It Real

By Mamie Webb Hixon
Writing 1ahn Director

I let's get rid of the notion that there's always a correct way—a fixed way—to talk. There isn't. Very few people speak the same way all the time. Most of us have one way to talk to our friends and family (Hey, y'all! or Ya, Wassup?) and a completely different way to talk to our colleagues and business associates (Hello, how are you?): one way to talk in the living room, another way to talk in the board room.

We have our home English and our office English, what the Reverend Jesse Jackson calls our "cash English." We switch gears—back and forth between the two, depending on the audience and the occasion. We switch gears because we know there's no one way that works in every situation. We use our T-shirt English in one setting and our Tuxedo English in another. And most of us do it with ease and dexterity. In the living room, we get the 411; in the boardroom, we research the information. In the living room, "this is on the down low"; in the boardroom, "this is confidential." We be down wit dat at home, and we are cooperative and agreeable at work. It's "what?" at home and "all right?" in the office. We "chill" at home and "relax" in the office. At work, "we are practical and realistic"; at home, "we keep it real." We describe a co-worker as "laid-back" to a friend, but in a letter of reference we describe the co-worker as "a person with a relaxed demeanor."

Just as we have a clothes closet with varied attire from casual to dressy, we should have a Language Closet, a language repertoire with language choices from informal slang and colloquialisms to formal, dressy English. According to language specialists, there are approximately 1,500 ways to utter any English sentence, giving us the ability to convey a message on any level—from informal to formal. A speaker or writer of English who is hopelessly locked into only one method of delivery (slang, for instance) is just as inept as the one who can communicate only on a strictly formal level. Our language repertoire should contain enough vocabulary from all levels to ensure that we can interact with kings, queens, and Presidents of the average Tom and Mary Olsen on the street. The ability to switch gears allows us to express the same idea in several ways:

- I ain't got no money.
- I'm broke/I'm busted.
- I'm financially unable to afford it.
- It's cost prohibitive.
- Pecuniary circumstances preclude me from such affordability.

The ability to switch gears allows us to make these distinct language choices depending on the situation:

T-shirt English - First Gear is our own familiar language that many of us use to relate to one another. It's the language we use during those informal, casual conversations, saying things like "You know what?" or "What's going on?"

Dressy English - Second Gear is the language of news print, textbooks, and formal correspondence. It is the language that's got universal acceptance and approval and is favored by public figures, television and radio announcers, and most professionals.

Tuxedo English - Third Gear is the language of formal documents and academic and business correspondence. It is an elevated and formal level of second gear and is favored by many legal professionals and some state and national public officials. Second and third gear speech offers us unlimited professional and academic access, while first-gear speech offers limited access.

Good evening. Would you recapitulate those occurrences? There's a civil disturbance in the vicinity.

I was real ticked off about not getting the promotion.
I'm displeased to learn that my promotion was denied.
I did everything I could to talk some sense into my boss's head.
I've exhausted all attempts to communicate reasonably with my supervisor.
By law, this company is supposed to make sure I keep this job.
It is the legal responsibility of this company to protect my rights as its employee.
I'm gonna punish everybody right now.
I will take immediate corrective action.
Telling our supervisor shouldn't get you fired.
Filing a complaint should not affect your employment status.
If you boss tries to get back at you, you'll ought to let her go.
If there's evidence of retaliation, then disciplinary action, including dismissal, should be taken.
I told the office assistant off.
I reprimanded the office assistant.
Don't let nobody know I talked to you.
This conversation is confidential.
I jotted down everything that happened before and after the incident.
I documented my job performance before and after the incident.
Switching Gears

Words, Phrases, and Expressions you Shouldn’t Take from Home to the Office

By Marnie Webb Hixon

I don’t know nothing about this meeting.

causing the problem.

• It’s not what you know; but who you know

• Who are you going to call?

• Usually, it’s not me that he calls.

• Who are you going to vote for?

• That’s us twenty years ago, and that’s me six years ago.

• The media has not responded.

• This bank wants to loan you money.

• Closed due to the hurricane.

• We’re here to better serve you.

• Everybody participated, didn’t they?

• The data is accurate.

• I’d like to suggest that it be me who is assigned to this command post.

• Less than ten items.

The sentences above do contain errors, but the errors don’t draw attention to themselves; they are subtle enough that even a trained professional would either overlook them or not notice them.

The “Real” Deal

By Marnie Webb Hixon

UWF Writing Lab Director

No real early, real late, or real soon

No real good, real bad, or real nice

No real fast, real slow, or real energetic

No real pretty, real smart, or real cute

No real easy, real hard, or real simple

Here’s the REAL deal.

Real, despite its popularity among speakers of English, as a qualifier is really an adjective meaning “genuine”:

• real leather

• real circumstances

• real people

• a real problem

In business and academic writing, when you need to qualify how professional, how dedicated, how reasonable, how responsible, how important, or how critical something or someone is, use an adjective—real is not an adjective. It is an adjective. Try using an adverb like really or very:

• a real disadvantage

• a real surprise

• a real crisis

• a real pleasure

• a real difference

• a real southerner

• a real profession

• a real support

• a real friend

BUT

• real disadvantageous

• really surprising

• really critical

• really pleasurable

• really different

• really southerner

• really professional

• really supportive

• really friendly

T-SHIRT

ENGLISH
Me, Myself, and I
By Mamie Webb Hixon

When you don't know whether to use I or me, don't use the reflexive pronoun myself. Myself is not a substitute pronoun for either I or me. Myself is a reflexive pronoun used as the object in a sentence when the word to which the pronoun refers is the subject of the sentence. The use of myself in these three sentences is correct.

As president of this company, I am giving myself a raise.
I am very proud of myself for having worked hard to receive this award.
On behalf of the orchestra and myself (or me), I welcome you.

The use of myself in the sentences below is incorrect:
The responsibilities will be divided between you and myself.
There is a big difference between my opponent and myself.
If you have any questions, contact the office assistant or myself.
The confidentiality agreement is between the company and myself.

Follow these basic pronoun usage rules when deciding whether to use I and me:

Rule 1: Ignore the conjunction and the other noun or pronoun.
If you have any questions, contact the office assistant or myself.

Rule 2: When there is no object, use the subject of the sentence.
I, you, we, and they refer to the same person.

Subjunctive Verbs: Verbs with an Attitude!
By Barry Bulleson, UWF Writing Lab Manager

Just as human expression and actions suggest the mood (attitude) of the person, the form of the verb indicates the mood (attitude) of the verb. That is, the verb form indicates the speaker's or writer's attitude towards the idea expressed by the verb. Instead of telling what is or what something is doing (the indicative mood), the subjunctive mood speaks of possibilities, desires, and requirements.

1. The subjunctive mood is used to indicate a possibility: If I were you, I would save my money. Since I am not "you," we have a hypothetical condition.

2. The subjunctive mood is used to express a wishful attitude: I wish I were the president of our company.

3. Finally, the subjunctive mood can express an incantation attitude in that clauses.

Grammaral Etiquette

If you are using a first-person pronoun (I, me, we, or we) with a noun or another pronoun, mention yourself last:
Contact the department chair or me. NOT Contact me at the department chair.
The office manager and I are in a meeting. NOT I and the office manager are in a meeting.

Subjunctive Verbs (continued)

The company requires that all employees be on time. It is important that the applicant submit the application by the deadline. I move that the meeting be adjourned. The attorney insisted that the witnesses be exonerated.

Remember, subjunctive verbs are verbs with an attitude! Watch out for these verbs in hypothetical conditions with implied consequence and in that clauses expressing requirements or recommendations.
Ly, -ly, -ly, -ly
By Mamie Webb Hixon
UWF Writing Lab Director

Singers tune up with the third tone of the diatonic scale: mi, mi, mi, mi.

At the beginning of a business week, I recommend that administrators, business executives, and office workers tune up with “ly, -ly, -ly, -ly.”

That way, their day will not run smooth. It will run smoothly.

Their well-organized office will not operate as efficient as possible. It will operate as efficiently as possible.

The staff will not read information carefully. They will read it carefully.

The boss will treat all employees fairly, not fair.

And all personnel will not perform their tasks as quickly as possible. They will perform their tasks as quickly as possible.

After all, these business execs and office workers are active. Therefore, their advantageous, as expressed by the verbs run, operate, read, treat, perform, etc., should be described accurately with an advorb.

As the Grammar Rock song says, “Lolly, Lolly, Lolly, get your advorbs here.”

"Lolly, Lolly, Lolly, Get Your Adverbs Here!"

TWO ADVERB DILEMMAS
In recognition of a company’s seventy-fifth anniversary in the city, a sign is printed. On it will be printed the company’s name, followed by the phrase “SERVING OUR COMMUNITY” and, in bold print, these three words:

SAFELY ECONOMICALLY FRIENDLY
Is the sign grammatically correct?

DRIVE FRIENDLY
Road signs sprinkled liberally throughout Oklahoma read DRIVE FRIENDLY. Probably because the word friendly ends in -ly, someone thought that it belongs with words like safely cautiously and carefully. DRIVE CAREFULLY works, so why not DRIVE FRIENDLY?

Can you make a case for “Drive Friendly”?

"Writing to Express, Not Impress!"

Anybody can sound impressive:

Members of an avian species of identical plumage congregate.

Abstention from any literary undertakings precludes potential escalation of any lucrative nature.

Philip Broughton makes this point of using writing to impress very clear with his “Systematic Buzz-phrase Projector.” To use it, randomly select any three-digit number from the list on the right — it’s like playing Ply 3 in the Florida Lottery.

Each number you select will produce a word from each column creating a tremendously impressive phrase. For instance, the number 330 produces “parallel reciprocal options,” a phrase which may sound very impressive in a business report, but doesn’t say anything. This kind of writing is writing to impress, however, professionals should write to express, not impress.

Your Term:

0. Integrated
1. Trial
2. Systematized
3. Parallel
4. Functional
5. Responsive
6. Optional
7. Synchronized
8. Comparable
9. Balanced

D. Management
1. Organizational
2. Managed
3. Organizational
4. Digital
5. Logical
6. Transitional
7. Incremental
8. Third-generation
9. Policy

0. Options
1. Flexibility
2. Capability
3. Mobility
4. Programming
5. Concept
6. Time-phase
7. Projection
8. Hardware
9. Contingency

THE APOSTROPHE: POSSESSED AND DISPOSSESSED
By Mimie Webb Hixson
UWF Writing Lab Director

THE FORMERLY POSSESSED
Veterans Day

The apostrophe disappeared.
Achilles heel

THE "UNPOSSESSED":
The apostrophe or the apostrophe and -s is unnecessary.
narrative age
honors classes
witnes's testimony
household pets
records clerk

Admissions Office
spangle page
Arts Council
Pikes Peak
the Welch sisters
auto insurance

THE DISPOSSESSED: Both the apostrophe and the -s have been eliminated,
thus giving emphasis to both nouns:
staff guidelines
the Roy Jones fight
employee benefits
student rights and responsibilities
deriver license (also driver's license)

university personnel
attorney fees
company policy
Pensacola tourists
committee report

THE TERMINALLY POSSESSED
Some expressions are always possessive; the apostrophe is fixed regardless of whether
the noun following the word is singular or plural.

Mother's Day
a man's world
rabbit's foot

bachelor's degree(s)
master's degree(s)
beggar's luck
traveler's check(s)

JUIN Joint Possession:
The apostrophe is required on the second noun only.

Ted and Jane's wedding
Men and Women's Day

THE PLURAL POSESSED: The apostrophe is added after the plural -s.

Annual Blue Angels' Homecoming Air Show
the Joneses' lawsuit
weeks' pay
six years' experience
workers' compensation
veterans' benefits

Annual Greyhound Bus Lines' passengers
Secretaries' Week
Presidents' Day
both parents' consent
Dossiers' Day

When the plural noun does not end in -s, add both an apostrophe and an -s.

Children's Telephone Number (Pay attention, BellSouth)

women's rights
men's department
the people's choice

THE SINGULAR POSESSED: An apostrophe and -s are added unless this

addition disrupts the pronunciation of the word.

the waitress's tip
the host's desk
the witness's testimony
Clifford Odets' play
Warley Sing's hometown
Bruce Willis' stunts
Superbowl's plays

Robert's Rules of Order
Dr. Seuss's stories
Bill Gates' millions
the judge's decision
company's policy
my husband's diabetes
Jesus' teachings

ON-THE-JOB GRAMMAR TIP
Hopefully is an adverb, meaning "in a hopeful manner." According to the
American Heritage Dictionary, Fourth Edition, the use of hopefully as a sentence
adverb in the sentences below is unacceptable to many critics and careful writers:
 Hopefully, the company's profits will increase this fiscal year.
 Hopefully, the temperature will be warmer tomorrow.

Careful writers and speakers prefer using hopefully in these instances:
 Hopefully, I'll receive my marriage license.
The hurricane victims waited hopefully for the arrival of relief and food.

Verbing Nouns

Did you power off the computer?
I will calendar the date.
After twenty-five years on my job, I was surplused.

A Message from the Editor

NEW WORDS

power nap • living will • outsource • downsize • delinquent

The fact that the Oxford Dictionary of New Words contains over 50,000 entries is an
indication that new words enter our language every day. According to Karen Wright in
her essay "Keepers of Words" in the March 2000 Discover magazine, "unheard of use
and 'staying power' are the two principal criteria Merriam-Webster editors use to
nominate new words.

Email is just one example of a word that entered the English language because of
computer technology. Now there's Webcasting (which my computer is highlighting
even as I type), Internet, word processor, spam, and computer mouse.

Then there's credentialize. And don't forget Enronize, annualize, athleticism, home
schooling; the list of neologisms goes on. What's amazing about the English language
is its creative capacity: once a new noun enters the language because of medicine,
technology, education, or politics, it is verbed and turned into an adjective as well. So,
if you are reading your Miranda rights, you have been Mirandaized. Right? When in
doubt, use a current, unabridged dictionary, or call the Grammar Hotline at (564) 474-2729.
We'll be glad to look up your new word for you.
What's in a Name?
By Mamie Webb Illson

What's in a Name? Everything including a comma—Jr. or Jr.—follows the name. If a Roman numeral designation follows a name, the comma is omitted:

Henry VIII  Adlai Stevenson III
Pope John Paul II  The Reverend Leon Rankins III

Roy Jones, Jr.  DR Roy Jones Jr.
The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  DR The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Lou Gossett, Jr.  DR Lou Gossett Jr.
Hank Williams, Jr.  DR Hank Williams Jr.
Sam Webb, Jr.  DR Sam Webb Jr.

The second option without the comma preceding the title Jr. is preferred since Jr. is considered a part of the person's name. If, however, the title is an adjective or a parenthetical element like a professional, descriptive, or working title, then the comma is required:

William E. Cooby, Ed.D  Gerald Motonzie, Attorney at Law
Sarah Wynder Haynes, Ph.D  Ross Goodman, Esq.
Percy Goodman, M.D.  Marie Young, County Commissioner

While commas separate a name from a title, commas are not used to set off nicknames or surnames (nicknames are, however, placed in quotation marks unless the nickname is the name the person is known or called by):

Catherine the Great  The Iron Lady
Michael "Air" Jordan  Honest Abe
General Daniel "Chappie" James  Ike

Commas are not necessary when a professional title precedes a name:

Secretary of State C. Colin Powell  Condoleezza Rice, National Security Advisor
President George W. Bush  Al Henderson, Engineer
The Honorable Nancy Gilliam  Newtie Eaton, Principal

When in doubt, consult a grammar handbook or stylebook.

Diction in the Real World
By Leslie Young

In the business world, proper use of written words can be the deciding factor between making a deal or not making the deal. Some business people may except the fact that they cannot write properly. However, they should be advised that proper grammar is a principle key to producing documents that will be read by others. If business people are not sure of their grammar, they should be sure and ask someone to help or simply look the information up themselves. Beside having proper grammar in writing, a person who knows how to use proper grammar when speaking has an advantage over those individuals who do not know their grammar rules. Should a businesswoman or businessman become a supervisor, he or she also needs to know proper grammar in order to help his or her personal. What good would a boss who didn't know grammar do if the worker were ran on him as a result? Being that the workers depend on their bosses, the boss needs to know correct grammar for writing and speaking purposes. If business people are not particularly great with grammar, they shouldn't become alarmed; they should be enthused because a place like the University of West Florida's Writing Lab exists.

Due to the highly trained "staff" in The Lab, business people will encounter "imminent" lab assistants ("Teabees") who will help them reach their grammar goals. Getting help from the Grammar hotline will have a profound affect on your writing. Professionals everywhere, have no fear; for the Writing Lab and its "grammar labbies" are here to council.

Did you notice that all of the bold-faced words above are incorrect? For future reference, know the differences between the two forms of each of the words above:

- **accept vs. except**: accept means "to take"; except means "to omit," or it can be the preposition "but.
- **advice vs. advise**: advice is a noun that means "tips or suggestions"; advise is a verb that means "to give advice.
- **principal vs. principal**: principal is an adjective that means "main or primary"; principal is a noun that means "beliefs or morals.
- **be sure and vs. be sure to**: Never use "be sure and.
- **beside vs. besides**: beside means "alongside"; besides means "in addition to.
- **personal vs. personnel**: personal is an adjective; personnel is a noun that refers to workers.
- **banked on vs. depended on**: Never use "banked on because it is colloquial.
- **being that vs. because**: Never use "being that.
- **enthused vs. enthusiastic**: enthused is a colloquial adjective.
- **due to vs. because of**: due to means "caused by" and must follow only a be-verb; because of means "as a result of" and is used to introduce an adverb phrase.
- **imminent vs. eminent**: imminent means "soon to happen"; eminent means "distinguished," or "elite.
- **affect vs. effect**: effect as a verb means "to change, alter, or influence"; affect as a noun means "consequence or result.
- **counsel vs. counsel**: counsel is a verb that means "to advise" and a noun meaning "lawyer"; counsel is a noun.
ANSWER KEY TO "TEST YOURSELF"

If you missed one, you have excellent On-the-Job Grammar, 2 to 7, Good On-the-Job Grammar, 8 to 14, Fair On-the-Job Grammar, 15 or more, Weak to Poor On-the-Job Grammar.

1. INCORRECT Change you having to your having. (Use a possessive with a gerund.)
2. INCORRECT Change myself to me. (Use a reflexive pronoun such as myself only when its antecedent is the subject of the sentence.)
3. INCORRECT between you and me (Use me, him, her, us, and them after between.)
4. INCORRECT Change her to me. (Use me, him, her, us, and them after between.)
5. CORRECT Use whatever as the subject of in on the list.
6. INCORRECT Use whatever as the object of the headed clauses.
7. INCORRECT Change their to his or her. (Each physician is singular; their is plural.)
8. INCORRECT It's a combination for it is. Use its.
9. INCORRECT Change whose to who may be interested in attending needs a subject.
10. INCORRECT Add plural word(s), than she(s).
11. INCORRECT Change we to us after the preposition for.
12. INCORRECT They has no antecedent; rewrite the sentence.
13. INCORRECT Change she to is. (The subject is singular, not plural.)
14. INCORRECT Change an to a (Use singular subject.)
15. INCORRECT Change have to has. (Singular subjects joined by neither, nor are singular.)
16. INCORRECT Change There's to There are. (The subject is plural, not there.)
17. INCORRECT Change those to those who agree with the singular subject The Pennsylvania Pain & Injury Clinic.
18. INCORRECT Change are to is. (The subject is each, not are.)
19. INCORRECT Change are to is. (The subject is singular, not plural.)
20. INCORRECT Change confirm to confirm. (Subjects preceded by a number of are singular.)
21. INCORRECT Change have to has. (Subjects preceded by the number of are singular.)
22. INCORRECT Change help to helps. (The subject is recycling, not directories.)
23. INCORRECT Change have to has. (Singular subjects joined by either, nor are singular.)
24. INCORRECT Change are to is. (The subject is singular, ignore the phrase as well as the budget.)
25. INCORRECT Change were to was. (Neither is a singular pronoun.)
26. INCORRECT Change is to is. (Date is plural.)
27. INCORRECT Change want to wants. (Refers to anyone, a singular pronoun.)
28. INCORRECT Change run to runs. (Run, runs, running, run, [has] run.)
29. INCORRECT Change began to begun. (Begin, begins, beginning, began, [has] begun.)
30. INCORRECT Change went to gone. (You, goes, going, went, [has] gone.)
31. INCORRECT Change done to do (If the people who do not follow policies, he is one of them.)
32. INCORRECT Regardless is a nonstandard word. Use regardless.
33. INCORRECT Change due to because of meaning "as a result of."
34. INCORRECT In regards to, nonstandard for in regard to.
35. INCORRECT Change a to an. (Use an before words or letters with an initial vowel sound.)
36. INCORRECT Principal in this usage means "major," "main," "most significant."
37. INCORRECT Change principle to principal to mean "major" or "main."
38. INCORRECT Always is plural; use either always or always.
39. INCORRECT Leave affected as is; affected as a verb means "to bring about." Change affect to affect; affect as a noun means "result," "consequence," "impact."
40. INCORRECT Change affect to affected meaning "altered," changed.
41. INCORRECT Capital is a building; capital is everything else.
42. INCORRECT Always write the reason...Is that.
43. INCORRECT "To apply..." is a dangling modifier. Reword: To apply, you must submit your application...
44. INCORRECT "On our website" is a misplaced modifier. Move to the beginning of the sentence.
45. INCORRECT Reward dangling modifier sounds as if the forms are getting the signatures.
46. INCORRECT Change go to well, adverb.
47. INCORRECT One feels bad, not badly, about something.
48. INCORRECT Use an adverb quickly.
49. INCORRECT The comparative form of clear is clearer, not more clear.
50. INCORRECT Change roof to really or very. (Real means "genuine,")
51. INCORRECT Use neither with nor, and neither with or.
52. INCORRECT Illogical: change year to year's for last year's (now)
53. INCORRECT Change loan officer to loan officer's. (Possessive form required.)
54. INCORRECT Add a comma after 2nd. (Place a comma after each component of a date.)
55. INCORRECT Omit the comma after too.
56. INCORRECT Comma after secure is unnecessary. (Fast and secure are the coordinate adjectives.)
57. INCORRECT Delete colon. (No colon after a verb or preposition.)
58. INCORRECT Change semicolon to a colon to separate the list.
59. INCORRECT Change comma preceding however to a semicolon to separate the two sentences properly.
60. INCORRECT Use semicolons to separate items in a series with internal commas.

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