

ROD CAMPBELL

GRAMMAR SKILLS
HANDBOOK

Advanced
Grammar, Style
and Vocabulary



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Introduction

Knowing how written English works is at the mind and heart of writing and reading. *Mastering Grammar and Punctuation* (Campbell, 2023) introduced you to the patterns of syntax and the functions of the parts of speech as well as detailed information about punctuation. This book provides you with other sets of knowledge and skill areas for writing.

To bring your own voice and experience to your writing, even for essays and assignments, there is the use of figurative language (Chapter 1). The quality of your writing will also be enhanced through considered choices of words and expressions, information and hints to be found in Chapters 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7. Information about spelling and hints for spelling are available in Chapter 5.

Of course, ChatGPT, Grammarly, other grammar check programs and predicted spelling can help, but these programs are limited to the formulas and algorithms of the program writers. Artificial Intelligence (AI), of course, is developing ways to alter algorithms. Yet your own knowledge, and what you learn about English and writing it, will determine the quality, style and voice of your own creativity.

This book is not for *tasting*, nor for *swallowing in a gulp*. As Francis Bacon wrote in 1624, this is a book for *chewing and digesting*, revisiting it as your skill as a writer develops. This book will enhance your writing beyond the stylistic limitations of AI programs because you will gain knowledge and opportunities to demonstrate the quality of your own voice.

Rod Campbell

“I’m talking about two different issues. One is craft, the other is attitude. The first is a question of mastering a precise skill. The second is a question of how you use that skill to express your personality.”

~ **William Zinsser (2006)**

CHAPTER 1

Figurative Language



Figurative language, also known as figures of speech, is not literal language. Figurative language is metaphorical language, and these symbolic representations are used by all writers, not only poets. In 1962, Arthur Quinn offered a simple definition of a figure of speech as an “intended deviation from ordinary usage” (page 6). Of course, he also meant that a figure of speech is much more. The use of various figures of speech provides writers with a wonderful range of language instruments that enhance meaning as well as delighting the eye, ear, mind and heart.

Figurative language is used along with the entire range of literary devices available to the writer, speaker and debater. These literary devices include the descriptive procedures provided in Chapter 4 of Campbell (2023), plus the use of evaluative, modal and other devices found in Chapter 2 of this book.

The following table contains the definition and some examples of different types of figure of speech.

Figure of speech	Definition and examples
alliteration	Repetition of the same initial consonant sound; for example, <i>The furrow followed free</i> (from ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’ by Samuel Taylor Coleridge).
assonance	Repetition or correspondence of vowel sounds (usually long vowels); for example, <i>The brown clowns aroused the crowds.</i>
dramatic irony	The use of language with one meaning for a privileged audience, and another for those addressed or concerned (<i>Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary*</i> , 2004). *ACOD

Figure of speech	Definition and examples
hyperbole	<p>A figure of speech in which something is heavily overstated for emphasis, emotion, effect or deceit (from Treble & Vallins, 1936). An exaggerated statement not meant to be taken literally (ACOD, 2004); for example: <i>A thousand thanks, a thousand pardons, and may all your days be filled with joy.</i></p>
idiom	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expressions whose meaning is not literally carried in the words; for example: <i>Neither here nor there.</i> 2. A construction or mode of expression peculiar to a particular language, and acceptable in formal literary speech ("<i>It's chockers in there!</i>"); though it may not necessarily be in strict accordance with the 'rules' of grammar; for example: <i>It ain't necessarily so; we got done.</i> (Note: the last item is also an example of <i>enallage</i>, figurative language for using incorrect grammar for effect.)
irony	<p>An expression of meaning, often humorous or sarcastic, by the use of language of a different or opposite tendency (ACOD, 2004).</p> <p>A message to the coach of a losing football team: <i>They don't have much to learn, do they?</i></p> <p>A student commented on the work habits of some builders on-site: <i>They should take more notice of the school motto: Progress through effort.</i></p>
metaphor	<p>Metaphor is the application of a name or a descriptive term to an object or action to which it is imaginatively but not literally applicable (ACOD, 2004); for example: <i>Bury the hatchet; the last straw; from thin ice into hot water; playing second fiddle.</i></p>

Figure of speech	Definition and examples
onomatopoeia	<p>Sounding like the thing itself; for example: <i>ping-pong; cuckoo, whisper, pop, buzz, whine, susurrus. The moan of doves in immemorial elms, And murmuring of innumerable bees</i> (Tennyson: 'Come Down, O Maid').</p>
oxymoron	<p>A figure of speech in which two words or phrases of opposite significance are set together for effect (Treble & Vallins, 1936); for example: <i>He was unaware of the insult so <u>thoughtfully thoughtless</u> in its delivery.</i></p> <p>Shakespeare: <i>Do that <u>good mischief</u>...</i> and: <i>jumbo shrimp; pretty ugly; deafening silence.</i></p> <p>Note: sometimes irony can be added to oxymoron: <i>military intelligence, civil war.</i></p>
personification	<p>A figure of speech, and also a particular kind of metaphor, in which the attributes of a person are transferred to animate, inanimate or abstract things (Treble & Vallins, 1936); for example: <i>Disaffection raised its ugly head. Raindrops danced on my umbrella. Fear knocked on the door.</i></p> <p>The characters in the novels <i>The Wind in the Willows</i> and <i>Peter Rabbit</i>.</p>
simile	<p>A figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another of a different kind (ACOD, 2004); for example: <i>The cold wind felt like piranhas biting my ears.</i></p> <p><i>Water can be as hard as rock.</i></p> <p>A figure of speech in which two things or actions are likened to each other either for clearness and ease of explanation or for rhetorical and poetical effect (Treble & Vallins, 1936).</p>

Figure of speech	Definition and examples
sustained metaphor	<p>Use of metaphor to prolong or sustain the representation or symbol. For example: A camel may be described as <i>a ship of the desert</i> (metaphor). An example of a sustained metaphor could be one describing the camel's progress across a desert:</p> <p><i>Forging through vast distances between and over waves of sand, blinded on the crests by spindrifts of grit and lost in the vastness of a dry ocean, the ships of the desert carried their cargo to ancient markets.</i></p>
symbolism	<p>The use of symbols to represent ideas; also an artistic and poetic style that uses symbols and indirect suggestion to express ideas, emotions and reflections (ACOD, 2004), usually carried in figurative language.</p>
synecdoche	<p>Figure of speech where part of an expression is used for the whole expression or vice versa; for example: <i>Australia</i> for the <i>Australian Olympic Team</i>; <i>bread</i> for <i>food in general</i>; <i>bat</i> for <i>responsibility</i>; for example: <i>He did it off his own bat</i> (where synecdoche meets metaphor, idiom and cliché).</p>
trope	<p>Another term for figure of speech</p>

Source: Campbell & Ryles (2018)



CHAPTER 2

Evaluative and Emotive Language, Modality and Qualification



Writers bring elements of evaluation, emotion, argument, bias, probability and qualification into their writing. The combined use of some or all of these elements is paramount in persuasive texts and argument. However, reports make careful use of these elements; any attempt to use emotive language immediately establishes writer bias. This latter approach is great for argument but not for information.

Evaluative language involves comparison and contrast in order to rate, assess and judge some action, behaviour or text. Such writing can be direct, as in the following example, where intensity is added by the parallel use of three direct words.

The effects of the tornado were immediate, devastating and long-lasting.

Evaluative writing is often softened by the subtle use of adjectives and adverbs and related phrases and clauses.

The wild storms of recent years have created conditions that may be beneficial for some, but would be less so for many.

Emotive language is used to stir emotions, appealing to emotional responses. For example:

Shark nets have become the silent killers of the ocean, decimating turtles, dolphins, sharks and whales. People do not need to be protected by such nets; the sea, after all, is the home of these endangered animals.

The three underlined expressions add to the emotion of the message. Interestingly, there is a hidden message in that statement, a message about the relative worth of animals and humans. Emotive writing is also assisted by the use of loaded definitions and indicator words.

A **loaded definition** contains emotion and bias, and may have implied meanings:

The health of an ocean environment is determined by the quality of administration of the marine park and the absence of commercial fishing interests.

Indicator words act as subtle signals to indicate the direction and feeling of a statement. Conjunctions and text connectives are therefore brought into play to indicate the emotive links established by a writer. For example:

Social media has evolved into a powerful instrument for good because everyone has access to expressing their ideas on a platform where all are equal. Although there are some few who abuse this freedom, nevertheless, most social media influencers and participants benefit from the democratisation of language and thought in this brave new world.

The argument could be indicated differently:

Social media has degenerated into a monster that threatens the lives of individuals, weakens the foundations of civilised society, and provides a haven for trolls, orcs and troglodytes. Significantly, social media has seen the rise of influencers who pander to a population of likers.

Finally, there are **intensifiers**, adverbs used to add punch to the verb:

The team performed magnificently, losing only in the last few minutes to an equally gallant rival that triumphed when needed at the last minute.



There are many other expressions used in evaluative writing, and most examples are used in argument. Newspapers are a wonderful source of practices in using language to make one's point. Here are some examples:

Opinion statements: *The Ashes represents the pinnacle of the best and worst in cricket rivalry.*

Bare assertions: *Hasn't a hope in Hades, he hasn't. No hope.*

Assumptions: *People who wear blue business shirts are privileged.*

Subjective language: *Old drivers should not have a licence to drive.*

Objective language: *Annual medical checks assist older drivers.*

Subtle references: *Doing the right thing is how you can contribute to the welfare of all. (Message from a political party.)*

Evocative language: *Well, may he say, "God save the Queen," because nothing will save the Governor-General!*

Qualifying statements: *If the crowd is strongly behind the local team, the ladder-leading visitors may not get their expected easy victory.*

Summarising verbs: These are strong verbs, active voice and used to present a point of view. For example, a general manager to senior staff: *To be the leading supplier of such products to customers and clients everywhere, we must endeavour to be the best, demand great sacrifices of ourselves, cooperate consistently with our suppliers, and consolidate, grow and support a growing client base.*

Modal adjuncts: Using an adverb to join another verb or adverb. For example: *almost always, completed carefully, believing implicitly.*

Allusion: A passing or indirect reference to something or someone in another context. For example: *His story had more characters with complex names than a 19th-century Russian novel.*

Metaphor: Applying a name or description to an object or action to which it is imaginatively but not literally applicable (*Australian Concise oxford Dictionary, 2004*). For example: *playing second fiddle, rat race, the slippery slope.*

Juxtaposition: Placing contrasting words side by side for effect. For example: *The mindless sanity of the party machine and its unwritten decision-making processes ensured her expulsion.*

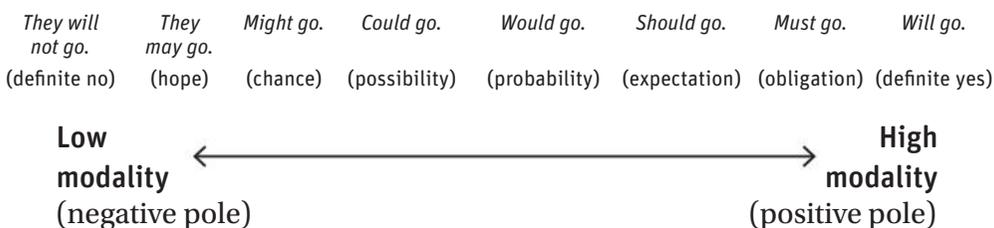
What readers and writers need to keep in mind is that these language behaviours signal that the content of the message is not to be taken at face value. That is, recognising any of these language behaviours is an exercise in knowing the difference between fact and opinion, the fundamental element of critical thinking.



Modality

The term 'modality' is derived from the word 'mood', the subjunctive or wishing mood of the verb. So, modality is the use of words to express some wish in a statement. The level of intensity of those wishes can be expressed along a continuum between the two poles (polarity) of negative and positive.

Modality is often carried by using modal verbs, which can be arranged in a continuum from low modality (hope) to high modality (obligation). In the model below, I have incorporated modality within the notion of polarity, the negative pole (*will not go*) and the positive pole (*will go*). The areas between those poles are the modal zones from hope to obligation. Modal verbs, in italics below, show a shift in the intensity of the wish from the hopeful *may* to the obligatory *must*.



Modality is that part of the line, the zone, between the negative pole (*will not go*) to positive (*will go*).

Modality is also carried by modal nouns, adjectives and adverbs, for example:

possibility, possible, possibly
probability, probable, probably
certainty, certain, certainly

Qualification scale

Writers provide variety by qualifying information with the use of adverbs, determiners and text connectives. The following table sets out the forms and expressions for qualifying statements. Note that there is a change as you read down each list; for example, in the list for **Quantity**, *all* eventually becomes *none*. Such writing with statements and expressions that qualify your writing can be used in most texts.

Quantity (number involved)	Frequency (how often occurs)	Probability of the action occurring	Probability as adjective	Probability as noun	Probability in verb use
All Each Every	Always	Certainly Definitely Undoubtedly Surely	Certain Definite Undoubted Sure	Certainty	Will Is/are
Most A majority Many/much Lots of A lot of	Usually Normally Generally On the whole Regularly Often Frequently Almost Constantly	Probably Likely	Probable Likely	Probability	Must have
Some A number of Several	Sometimes Occasionally	Possibly Perhaps	Possible	Possibility	Should Ought Would
A minority of A few A little Few/little	Rarely Seldom Hardly ever	Maybe			Could Can May Might
No None Not any	Never	Unlikely			Will not Is/are not Cannot Could not

Using the table:

A majority of people regularly must have bad hair days.

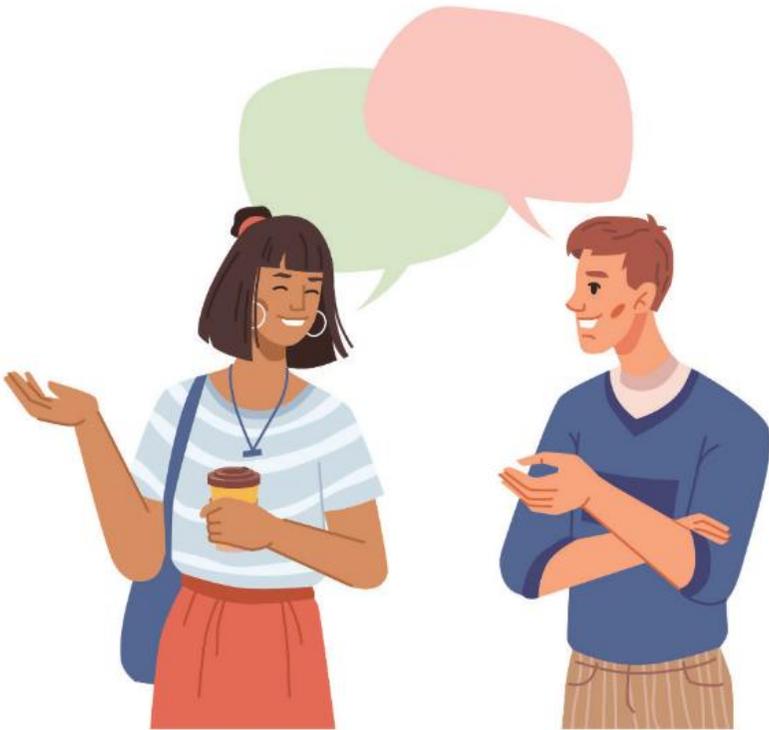
The usefulness of this table is to be aware that writers can qualify statements in terms of:

- Number of people involved
- Frequency of action
- Probability of something happening
- The type of verb used.



CHAPTER 3

Vocabulary



The information about vocabulary development and history, and the lists of affixes and Latin and Greek, will assist you to understand where English vocabulary comes from. English has such a rich variety and choice of words to use that selecting them for style and effect is as important in writing as is the construction of sentences and chapters.

History of the English language

The Romans invaded England in the first century of the Christian era and stayed for 400 years. Latin and a variety of Celtic languages were spoken, but only Latin had a written language. Following the withdrawal of the Romans after AD 420 (or CE 420) feuding British kings invited 'allies' from northern Europe, and over the next couple of centuries, these new Anglo-Saxon invaders colonised and displaced the Celts from most of what is now England, although Cornwall had wide use of its own Celtic language until a century or two ago. The Celtic language Welsh is now taught in Wales.

English vocabulary has developed from these Saxon, Frisian and Angle peoples whose language is Germanic. One of these peoples gave the name to the country and its language: Angleland, or England. Within a few centuries, these Germanic languages, known as Anglo-Saxon, became the common language of England and a written language began to develop.

Then came waves of invaders from Denmark and Norway, and these peoples settled around the coasts of the north and east of England, and around the coast of Scotland and Ireland. Their vocabulary was mixed into the Anglo-Saxon, or Old English, language that was developing a grammar of its own, while adding Norse words to the developing English language.

From the centuries of conflict in England, one king emerged in the late ninth century to lay the foundation of a Kingdom of England with a national language and a strongly established written English language. That king was Alfred (CE 848–899), whom the 19th-century Victorians called Alfred the Great.

The Normans from northern France invaded England in 1066, and Norman French became the official language. But most Anglo-Saxon, or English, were farmers and merchants and spoke English. By 1362, English became the official language of England.

As a result of 1,400 years of conquest, conflict and trade, English speakers can use many different words for the same thing, for example: *woods* (Old English) are also *forests* (French influence); and *look around* (Old English) can mean *reconnoitre* (French). But there was another language that also influenced English.

Latin had remained the language of the Church and the Courts of Law since the Roman times. A thousand years later, the development of movable type (a system learned from China) brought Latin and English into closer relationship as non-cleric writers and printers worked together. Many writers of the 16th and 17th centuries experimented with Latin and Greek words, making up many new words in English. For example, soldiers can *take* (Old English) prisoners, but they also *capture* (Latin) them.

Throughout those thousand years, the Christian Church had maintained learning in its monasteries and church schools, and much learning was conducted in Latin. The Magna Carta, one of the most important documents in the development of democracy in England and elsewhere, was written in Latin. Educated people in England could speak many languages, with Latin the language for international use and learning.

So, from the 15th century, writers developed new words, and the most famous of these writers was William Shakespeare. Another important influence was the development of The English Bible, the King James Bible, early in the 17th century. At the same time, printing was producing an explosion in reading and learning. More and more people could read, and more and more people were going to school. Learning through reading books and from non-cleric teachers became widespread activities. By the mid-19th century, governments in all the English-speaking countries introduced universal and compulsory primary education for all children.

Yet another major influence on the development of English vocabulary was a consequence of the growth of trade and empire from the 17th century onwards. By the early 20th century, the British Empire had spread around the world, and the influence of an English-speaking trader extended beyond the boundaries of the British Empire. English is also a flexible language, and it easily accommodated an enormous growth in new words taken from languages all over the world: judo, barbeque, tomato, courgettes, samovar, dinghy, yacht, khaki, cha. There are thousands of words taken from many languages, and which are frequently used by English speakers.

But what has ensured the continuing importance of English has been the fact that English is the official language of North America. And as the trading and financial influence of England waned with the collapse of its empire throughout the 20th century, the financial, trading and military leadership of the world was taken by the United States.

English is now firmly in place as the most important international language ever. Spanish, Mandarin Chinese and Hindi will become increasingly used globally. Arabic maintains its position by virtue of its centrality in Islam. All languages are important, yet there has always been a need for one language to become the language of international use, the lingua franca English.

In the process of becoming the lingua franca, the globally used language between speakers of other languages, English has gained from the languages with which it has been in contact.

But in keeping with an early theme in this book, the grammatical parts of speech are from Old English, the language of the Anglo-Saxon settlers of the first millennium BCE. The vocabulary parts of speech are drawn from hundreds of languages, but Old English, Norman French, Latin, Norse and Greek have had the most influence on the development of English vocabulary.

How words are formed

Words are changed and formed in two major systems: **inflection** and **formation**. A third system of increasing the vocabulary is by **borrowing** words from other languages. The fourth system is **affixation** (prefixes and suffixes).

Inflection is used when particles are added to inflect or change the meaning of a word, mainly plurals of nouns, tense of verbs and degree of adjectives and adverbs.

1. Inflecting words

In English, the inflections are:

Plural: add **'s'**, **'es'**, **'en'**, **'x'** after the singular noun (*trains; boxes; oxen; plateaux*)

Verb: add **'s'** for present tense singular (*we run; she runs*)
add **'ed'** for past tense or participle of regular or weak verbs (*we walked*)

add **'ing'** for present participle (*walking, running*)

Adjective: add **'er'** for comparative degree (*light, lighter; hot, hotter; safe, safer*)

add **'est'** for superlative degree (*lightest; hottest; safest*)

Note: **'most'** and **'more'** are used with some adjectives of two syllables and with all adjectives of three or more syllables (*more wary; most wary; more beautiful; most beautiful*)

Adverb: add **'more'** for comparative degree and **'most'** for superlative degree (*more carefully; most carefully*)

2. Word formation

Words are formed according to the following systems:

Compounding: *bedroom; cupboard; football; footpath; thermonuclear; sergeant-at-arms; long-range; editor-in-chief; fairy tale; school student*

Clipping: *amp(ere); ad(vertisement); (violin)cello; chimp(anzee); fridge; gent; hippo; photo; phone; pram (perambulator); bike; pro(fessional); specs (spectacles or specifications); telly; fax (personal names are often clipped: Tom, Liz)*

Blending: *camera recorder → camcorder
biologically degradable → biodegradable
breath analyser → breathalyser
moped; motel; sitcom; ginormous; telecast; smog*

Coining: totally new words: *jabberwocky*.
Most do not survive for long, but a few have become household words by virtue of brand name: *hoover; kodak; kleenex*

Acronyms: words made from abbreviations:
aids (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome)
laser (light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation)
radar (radio detection and ranging)
nimby (not in my backyard)
yuppie (young urban/upwardly mobile professional)
scuba (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus)

Analogy: words can be formed by analogy with other words or expressions; for example: *telethon* by analogy with *marathon*; *psychobabble* by analogy with *technobabble* (or vice versa)

Reduplication: words created by partial or complete repetition and may be rhyming, non-rhyming and/or repetitive: *willy-nilly; hanky-panky; choo-choo; hocus-pocus; knick-knack; ping-pong; dilly-dally; singsong; so-so; sin-bin*

3. Borrowing

This is one of the most important processes for increasing the number of words in a language. Words are ‘borrowed’ from other languages, and many remain in long-term use. (Another term for these borrowed words is ‘loan words.’) A few examples are listed below, and neither the list of languages nor the list of words is exhaustive!

Celtic: *peat; bog; trousers; whisky; galore; hooligan; clan; bug; eisteddfod*

German: *blitz; kindergarten; pretzel; waltz; yodel; hamburger; quartz; leitmotif*

French: *champagne; forest; captain; battalion; regiment; camouflage*

Norse/Scandinavian: *bloom; bleak; dregs; roof; saga; law; meek; nudge; acid; sky; slalom; squall; skewer; thrift; tungsten; ugly; window*

North American indigenous: *anorak; igloo; kayak; moccasin; caucus; caribou*

South American indigenous: *alpaca; llama; avocado; barbecue; cashew; chilli; quinine; tomato; potato; tobacco; poncho; chocolate; cocoa; hammock*

Caribbean languages: *canoe; hurricane; papaya; maize*

African languages: *kraal; chimpanzee; gnu; mumbo-jumbo; raffia; voodoo; zombie*

Dutch/Afrikaans: *apartheid; boss; bully; commando; drum; frolic; yacht; trek; spoor; smuggle; hunk; kink; landscape; loiter*

Australian indigenous languages: *kangaroo; willy-willy; peranti; goanna; wallaby; nulla-nulla; woomera*

Indian languages: *bungalow; veranda; dinghy; chutney; curry; mantra; lacquer; jungle; mango; sapphire; shampoo; sugar; yoga; jute; juggernaut; pundit; nirvana*

East Asian languages: *chop; sampan; tea; cha; tycoon; typhoon; judo; tae kwan do; yen; Zen; karate; futon; kimono; ginseng; kaolin*

Hebrew: *alphabet; camel; cinnamon; leviathan; hallelujah; messiah; rabbi; sabbath*

Yiddish: *schmaltz; schnoz; kitsch;chutzpah*

Arabic: *algebra; zero; tariff; almanac; apricot; cypher; assassin; azimuth; ghouel; hazard; monsoon; mohair; saffron; salaam; sherbet; sofa; syrup; jasmine; talisman; alkali; giraffe*

There are words from hundreds of other languages. Music takes many terms directly from Italian. Spanish, Malay and Russian have been as important as many of the languages presented in the above lists. The main principle is that the terms or expressions used for foods and items have been taken directly into English as well as into other languages.



4. Affixation

Affixes (prefixes and suffixes) are particles that represent morphemes, or units of meaning. They are from Old English, Norman French, Latin and Greek. Affixes are affixed or attached to a word or to the stem or root of words to form new derivations.

Prefixes

Prefixes are placed at the front of the word or root word and change the meaning of the new derived word. For example, note the prefixes **ex-**, **trans-** and **re-** and their effect upon the word **'port'**:

portere = to carry (Latin) (→ 'port' and 'porter' in English)

ex- = out, out of *export* = to carry out of

trans- = across *transport* = to carry across

re- = back *report* = to carry back

Here are some examples with the meanings of each:

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
Old English		
a	on, at, to, of	afloat, aground, afoot, afire, akin
after	following	afternoon, afterthought, aftermath
by	beside	byway, bylaw
down	down	downstairs
fore	front, in front of, before	forefather, forearm, forenoon, forehead, forewarned
mis	badly, wrongly (negative)	mistake, misunderstand

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
un	not, the reverse of, contrary, absence of a quality	unfair, unlock, unofficial
Latin		
<i>ad (ac, af, ag, al, an, ap, ar, as, at)</i>	to, at	adhere, accede, affirm, allude, assume, attenuate
<i>amb, ambi</i>	on both sides	ambidextrous, ambitious
<i>ante</i>	before	antemeridian, antecedent, anteroom
<i>bi, bis</i>	two, twice, double	bicycle, biennial, biscuit
<i>circum</i>	around, round	circumnavigate, circumstance, circumspect, circumscribe
<i>com, con, col, co, cor</i>	with, together	combine, collaborate, connect, collect, cooperate, correspond
<i>contra, contro, counter</i>	against	contradict, controvert, counteract
<i>extra</i>	beyond, outside	extraordinary, extracurricular, extraterrestrial, extravagant
<i>in, il, im</i>	in, into, on	include, illuminate, immure
<i>in (il, im, ir)</i>	not	insecure, illegal, impossible, irrational
<i>post</i>	after	postmeridian, postpone, postmodern

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
<i>pre</i>	before, in front of	precede, predict, preside, prepare
<i>pro</i>	before, forth, forward, in favour of	propel, proceed, propose, promote, proactive, proponent
<i>re</i>	back, again	revert, reduce, redeem, rehearse, relate, renovate, recognise, report
<i>sub</i> (<i>suc, suf, sug, sup, sur, sus</i>)	under	subway, submarine, succour, suffice, suggest, support, surrender, suspect
<i>super</i> (<i>sur</i>)	over, above, beyond	supersonic, superhuman, surfeit
<i>trans</i> (<i>tres</i>)	across, through	transport, transmit, transverse, transform, transatlantic
Greek		
<i>a</i> (<i>an, am</i>)	no, not, without	apathy, anaesthetic, amnesia, anarchy
<i>anti</i>	against, opposed to	antiseptic, antipathy, antagonist, anti-slavery
<i>auto</i>	self, oneself	autograph, automobile, autobiography
<i>cata</i>	down, through	catastrophe, catalytic, catapult, catalyst
<i>di</i>	two, double	dimeter, divergent, dizygotic, divalent

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
<i>dia</i>	through, between	diameter, dialogue, diaphanous, diatribe
<i>dys</i>	bad, ill, difficult	dyslexia, dysentery, dysfunctional
<i>e (ex, ec)</i>	out, out of, forth	eccentric, eclipse, ecstasy, exodus
<i>homo</i>	same	homogeneity, homonym, homosexual
<i>hyper</i>	over, above, beyond,	hyperbole, hypertension, hypercritical, hypersensitive
<i>hypo</i>	under, below	hypotension, hypotenuse, hypothesis, hyphen
<i>mega</i>	large	megalitre, megawatt
<i>mono</i>	one, alone	monoplane, monotonous, monologue, monolith
<i>nano</i>	very small	nanogram
<i>neo</i>	new	neophyte, neoplasm, neoclassical, neologism
<i>ortho</i>	straight, right, correct	orthodox, orthography, orthodontics
<i>oxy</i>	sharp, acid(ic)	oxygen, oxidise, oxopia

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
<i>pan</i>	all	panacea, panoply, panorama, pan-American, panchromatic
<i>para</i>	beside, beyond	parallel, paragraph, paraphrase, paramedic
<i>peri</i>	round, around	perimeter, period, periscope
<i>poly</i>	many	polygon, polysyllabic, polygamy, polyandry, polynomial, polyester
<i>tele</i>	far	telescope, television, telephone
<i>tri</i>	three, thrice	triangle, trinomial, trifocal



Suffixes

Suffixes are placed at the back of the word or root word and change the grammatical function of the new derived word, as well as changing the meaning accordingly. For example, note the suffixes **-er**, **-able** and **-ity** and their effect upon the word **'port'**:

porter = a person who carried

(**-er** = one who, and functions as a noun)

portable = able to be carried

(**-able** = able, and functions as an adjective)

portability = the quality of being able to be carried

(**-ity** = quality or condition, and functions as a noun)

Suffixes are organised, firstly, according to grammatical function.

Within that organisation, the suffixes are organised according to the language from which they derive. Here are some examples:

(Note: derivation shown in brackets – OE = Old English; L = Latin; G = Greek; NF = Norman French; OF = Old French)

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
Nouns		
-er, -ar, -or, -ier (OE)	person who does something (one who)	baker, pedlar, sailor, farrier, fletcher, cooper, turner, butcher, chandler
-er (OE)	instrument	poker, computer, header, reaper
-er (OE)	person from some place	foreigner, villager, Londoner
-or (OE)	condition	error, horror, tremor
-hood (OE)	state or quality of being	statehood, childhood, manhood

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-ness (OE)	state or quality of being	happiness, friendliness
-ship (OE)	state or quality of being	hardship, friendship, kinship
-craft (OE & OF)	of a skill or ability	woodcraft, witchcraft
-dom (OE)	state of being	kingdom, serfdom
-fare (OE)	state of being	warfare, welfare
-stead (OE)	place	homestead, Hampstead
-wright (OE)	a maker, a worker	wheelwright, cartwright, shipwright
-en, -kin, -ling, -ock (OE)	the diminutive (little)	chicken, dovekin, duckling, hillock
-ant, -ent (L)	person who does something (one who)	dependant, servant, student
-ice (L)	state of being	justice, service, malice, jaundice
-ory, -ery (L)	place where	dormitory, observatory, presbytery
-age (L)	a number of...	acreage, peerage
-age (L)	function, condition	beverage, personage, marriage, courage
-age (L)	action	breakage, spillage
-age (L)	fee	postage, portorage

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-age (L)	place	orphanage, anchorage
-age (L)	product of action	wreckage
-an, -ain (L & NF)	person connected with (one who)	artisan, publican, chaplain
-al, -el (L & NF)	having the quality of	hostel, animal
-ary, -ry (L & NF)	place for keeping	granary, aviary, armoury, apiary
-ment (L)	state of being	agreement, contentment
-ance, -ence (L & NF)	state of being	arrogance, independence
-et, -ette (L & NF)	the diminutive (little)	coronet, puppet, mignonette
-ery, -ry (L)	class of goods	drapery, stationery
-ery, -ry (L)	employment	archery
-ery, -ry (L)	condition	slavery
-ery, -ry (L)	place	piggery, brewery, eatery
-ery, -ry (L)	condition	foolery
-mony (L)	state or quality	matrimony, testimony, acrimony
-tude (L)	state of being	exactitude, pulchritude, verisimilitude, attitude, altitude
-ty (L)	quality, condition	cruelty, plenty, safety

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
<i>-ity</i> (L)	quality, condition	authority, purity, monstrosity
<i>-um, -ium</i> (L)	metallic element	sodium, uranium, platinum, aurum
<i>-um, -ium</i> (L)	part of the body	cranium, pericardium
<i>-um, -ium</i> (L)	miscellaneous words	symposium, pandemonium
<i>-ure</i> (L & OF)	result of action	failure, seizure, scripture
<i>-ure</i> (L & OF)	function, office	judicature, legislature, prefecture
<i>-ure</i> (L & OF)	effecting action	closure, ligature
<i>-ion, -tion, -ation, -ition, -sion</i> (L)	state of being or action	destruction, nation, translation, station transition, occasion, delusion
<i>-ism</i> (G)	state of being or action	baptism, organism
<i>-ism</i> (G)	condition	heroism, barbarism
<i>-ism</i> (G)	of a system or principle	conservatism, socialism, capitalism
<i>-ism</i> (G)	of the peculiarity of language	archaism, Americanism
<i>-ism</i> (G)	of pathological condition	alcoholism, aneurism
<i>-asm</i> (G)	state of being	chasm, enthusiasm

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-y (G)	state, condition, quality	courtesy, fury, glory, monarchy, melancholy
-y (G)	of action, or its result	subsidy, remedy
-isk (G)	little	asterisk, basilisk
-ist (G)	of a person	antagonist, atheist, fatalist, cyclist, dentist, violinist
Adjectives		
-en (OE)	state of being	wooden, drunken
-ern (OE)	noting direction	western, southern, eastern
-ful (OE)	full of	wonderful, beautiful, harmful
-less (OE)	without, not having	careless, pitiless, hapless
-some (OE)	being, adapted to	troublesome, wearisome
-ward (OE)	in the direction of	westward, seaward, wayward
-wise (OE)	meaning, matter	likewise, otherwise
-al, -ial, -ine, -ary (L)	belonging to	legal, fatal, consequential, necessary, budgetary, military, asinine, equine
-lent, -ory, -ose, -und (L)	full of	pestilent, violent, illusory, bellicose, rotund
-ent (L)	of action, being	consequent, effluent, dependent, affluent, confluent, congruent
-ic (G)	belonging to	aromatic, philanthropic

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
Verbs		
-en (OE)	to make	fatten, harden, soften
-fy, -ify, -ish (L)	to make	satisfy, magnify, finish

Word origins: Latin

In the following table, the original Latin word shows the part of speech as noun (n), adjective (adj) or verb (v). Two forms of the verb are shown: the first person singular (for example, *ago* = *I act*); and the infinitive form (for example, *agere* = *to act*), or some other form of the verb.

Selected examples are provided to demonstrate how the Latin word can be seen as the root or stem of the English word, and to demonstrate how affixes are placed in relation to the root word.

Latin word	Meaning	Examples
<i>ago</i> (<i>agere</i>) (v) <i>actus</i> (n)	I do, I act (to act, to do) of a play	actor, agent, reaction
<i>anima</i> (n)	wind, soul, breath, life	animal, animate
<i>annus</i> (n)	year	annual, anniversary, biennial
<i>audio</i> (<i>audere</i>) (v)	I hear (to hear)	audience, audit, audition, audible
<i>bene</i> (adj)	well, good	benefit, benevolent, benediction (nota bene = note well)

Latin word	Meaning	Examples
<i>cedo</i> (<i>cessus</i>) (v)	I go, move, yield (to go, move, yield)	proceed, procession, recede, recession, cede, accede, accession, excess, ancestor, intercede, secession, successor
<i>cogito</i> (<i>cogitatus</i>) (v)	I think (to think)	cognate, cogitate, cognition (<i>cogito ergo sumus</i> = I think therefore I am)
<i>dico</i> (<i>dictus</i>) (v)	I say (to say)	diction, dictator, contradict, predict, dictation, indict, edict, verdict, dictum
<i>dominus</i> (n)	master	dominant, dominion, domineer
<i>duco</i> (<i>ductus</i>) (v)	I lead (to lead)	duct, ductile, conduct, introduce, education, reduce, produce, conduit
<i>ego</i> (n)	I (self)	egoist, egotist, egotistical
<i>facio</i> (<i>factus</i>) (v)	I make (to make)	fact, factory, manufacture, facsimile
<i>finis</i> (n)	end	finish, final, definition, define, refine, refinery
<i>fortis</i> (adj)	strong	fort, fortify, force, reinforce, comfort, comfortable
<i>frango</i> (<i>fractus</i>) (v)	I break (to break)	fracture, fraction, fragile, fragility
<i>frater</i> (n)	brother	fraternal, fraternity, fratricidal
<i>jungo</i> (<i>junctus</i>) (v)	I join (to join)	junction, juncture, adjunct, conjugal, conjunction

Latin word	Meaning	Examples
<i>lego</i> (<i>lectus</i>) (v)	I read, gather, choose (to read, etc.)	elect, elector, election, intellect, collect, legible, selection
<i>liber</i> (adj)	free	liberate, liberal, deliberate
<i>magnus</i> (adj)	great	magnify, magnificent, magnate, major, majority, magnanimous, maximum
<i>malus</i> (adj)	evil, bad	malady, malice, dismal, malign, malignant, malefactor, maladjusted
<i>manus</i> (n)	hand	manual, manufacture, manager, manuscript
<i>mater</i> (n)	mother	maternal, maternity, matron
<i>mentor</i> (adj) <i>mens</i> (n)	mindful mind, opinion, intellect	memory, commemorate, mentor mental, mentality, demented
<i>multus</i> (adj)	much, many	multiple, multiplication
<i>nomen</i> (n)	name	nominal, nominate
<i>nox</i> (<i>noctis</i>) (n)	night (of night)	nocturnal, nocturne
<i>nullus</i> (n)	nothing	null, annul, nullify
<i>opus</i> (n)	work, labour	opus, operation
<i>pater</i> (n)	father	paternal, patron

Latin word	Meaning	Examples
<i>populus</i> (n)	the people	populace, popular, population, depopulate, public, publication, publicity
<i>porto</i> (<i>portere</i>) (v)	I carry (to carry)	porter, port, transport, report, deport, export, import, importance, transportation
<i>qualitas</i> (n) (<i>quails</i>)	quality, property (of what kind)	quality, qualitative
<i>quantitas</i> (n) (<i>quantis</i>)	quantity (how much)	quantity, quantitative
<i>scribo</i> (<i>scribere</i>) (v)	I write (to write)	scribe, scribble, script, scripture, postscript, inscribe, transcription, describe, conscript, proscribe
<i>sequor</i> (<i>secutus</i>) (v)	to follow, to accompany	sequence, sequential, consequence
<i>stella</i> (n)	star	stellar, constellation
<i>struo</i> (<i>structus</i>) (v)	I build (to build)	structure, construct, destruction, deconstruction, indestructibility, instruct
<i>tango</i> (<i>tangere</i>) (v)	I touch (to touch)	contact, tangible, contagious, contagion, detach
<i>venio</i> (<i>ventus</i>) (v)	I come (to come)	event, prevent, invent, convention, circumvent, intervene, adventure, adventurous, eventual, advent, adventitious

Latin word	Meaning	Examples
<i>verto</i> (v)	I turn	vertigo, revert, inversion, subvert, subversion, convert
<i>video</i> (<i>visus</i>) (v)	I see (to see)	vision, view, visible, visibility, revise, advise, supervisor, provide, provision, vista, visit, visitor, evidence, visual
<i>vivo</i> (<i>victum</i>) (v)	I live (to be alive)	vital, vitality, vivid, survive, convivial, vivacious, vivacity
<i>voco</i> (<i>vocare</i>) (v) <i>vox</i> (n)	I call (to call) call, voice	voice, vocal, vocalise, vocabulary, revoke, invoke, vocation

Word origins: Greek

Whereas much of the Latinate vocabulary is used in everyday speech, much of the Greco-English vocabulary is highly specialist.

Greek word	Meaning	Examples
<i>aster</i> (n)	star	asterisk, astrology, astronomer
<i>biblion</i> (n)	book	bibliography, Bible
<i>bios</i> (n)	life	biology, biosphere, biography, autobiography
<i>chronos</i> (n)	time	chronology, chronometer, chronicle
<i>demos</i> (n)	people	democracy, democrat, demography, demagogue

Greek word	Meaning	Examples
<i>ethnos</i> (n)	nation	ethnic, ethnocentric, ethnography
<i>hudor</i> (n) (<i>hydro</i>)	water	hydrated, dehydrate, hydrant, hydroelectric, hydrofoil
<i>logos</i> (n)	word, reason, account, study	logic, biology, zoology, monologue, dialogue
<i>pathos</i> (n)	feeling	pathos, sympathy, sympathetic, empathy, pathology
<i>philos</i> (n)	loving	philology, philosophy, philately, philanderer, anglophile
<i>phobos</i> (n)	fear	phobia, photophobia, arachnophobia, claustrophobia, xenophobia, Anglophobe
<i>phonos</i> (n)	sound	phonetic, phonology, telephone, phonograph, symphony, euphonium, euphony
<i>phos</i> (n)	light	photograph, photon, photophobic, phosphorus
<i>therme</i> (n)	heat	thermal, thermometer, thermostat, thermodynamics
<i>zoon</i> (n)	animal	zoo, zoology, zoomorphism

Numbers

No.	Latin	Greek	Examples
1	<i>unus</i>	<i>mono</i>	unique, monopoly, monoplane
2	<i>duo</i>	<i>duo</i>	diode, duopoly
3	<i>tres</i>	<i>treis</i>	trident, tricycle
4	<i>quatuor</i>	<i>tetra</i>	quadrilateral, tetrahedron
5	<i>quinque</i>	<i>penta</i>	quintuple, pentagon, pentameter
6	<i>sex</i>	<i>hexa</i>	sextant, sextet, hexagonal
7	<i>septem</i>	<i>hepta</i>	September, heptathlon
8	<i>octo</i>	<i>okta</i>	October, octagon
9	<i>novem</i>	<i>nona</i>	November, nonagenarian
10	<i>decem</i>	<i>dekem</i>	December, decathlon

1 2 3
5 4
9 8 6
7 10

CHAPTER 4

Using the Right Word



Writers constantly seek for two things associated with the words they select. Firstly, are they using the correct word, because there is a big difference in meaning between *continual* and *continuous*. Secondly, they seek the best and most effective word that brings style to their individual writing. The list over the following pages has been provided for you to browse through from time to time, and to refer to when faced with a choice between the wrong word, the right word or a better choice of word.

The list is not exhaustive, and you can find the complete lists in any of the editions of *Fowler's Modern English Usage (MEU)*.

Word	Correct and best usage
Adopt/adapt	Adopt: to choose, take up, accept; to take on, to accept responsibility. Adapt: to change, alter, modify, fit.
Affect/effect	Affect: to assume or pretend (to affect enthusiasm) → affectation (n); to influence, have an effect on → affection (n); (affect as a noun is used only in psychology). Effect: to make, bring about, produce, result in → effect (n); efficacious, efficient, effective.
All right	NEVER alright; ALWAYS TWO WORDS: all right.
All together/ altogether	All together: at one time; all in one place. Altogether: entirely. <i>You are wrong altogether; having them here all together is a problem altogether.</i>
A lot	NEVER alot; ALWAYS TWO WORDS: a lot.

Word	Correct and best usage
Among/ between	<p>Among: concerning more than two; always followed by plural.</p> <p>Between: usually a 'choice' or placement re two things: <i>between him and me; the choice is between them</i> can be extended to more than two: <i>Between (two) friends; among (more than two) friends.</i></p>
Antidote/ anecdote	<p>Antidote: medicine to counteract poison.</p> <p>Anecdote: recount or simple narrative of an incident.</p>
Assume/ presume (see MEU)	<p>When meaning <i>suppose</i>, both words are interchangeable. But:</p> <p>Assume: take for granted as basis of argument; <i>assumed support.</i></p> <p>Presume: to presuppose; to count upon: <i>presumed innocence.</i></p>
Can/may	<p>Can: implies ability to do something: <i>he can run in that race.</i></p> <p>May: implies permission to do something: <i>he may run in that race.</i></p>
Compliment/ complement	<p>Compliment means praise: <i>give a compliment to.</i></p> <p>Complement means to add something; to complete something: <i>the school now has its full complement of teachers.</i></p>
Contemptible/ contemptuous	<p>Contemptible is passive: <i>a contemptible person is one who is to be contemned (despised).</i></p> <p>Contemptuous is active: <i>that person is contemptuous of (despises) him.</i></p>

Word	Correct and best usage
Continual/ continuous	Continual: going on indefinitely but with intermittent stops: <i>continual rain throughout the day with brief sunny spells.</i> Continuous: unbroken action: <i>continuous heavy rain throughout the night caused local flooding.</i>
Council/ counsel	Council: assembly or group of people. Counsel: advise, advice; seeking legal counsel. <i>The council is seeking legal counsel.</i>
Credible/ creditable	Credible: believable; convincing; worthy of belief: <i>a credible story.</i> Creditable: that which brings credit or honour: <i>creditable behaviour.</i>
Decidedly/ decisively	Decided: unquestionable: <i>a decided person</i> (fixed in intention). Decisive: bringing (issue) to decision: <i>decisive goal, battle.</i> (Note: decisive is not used to refer to persons.)
Defective/ deficient	Defective: implies unsatisfactory quality; faultiness. Deficient: implies insufficient quantity; lack: <i>there was no deficiency.</i>
Definite/ definitive	Definite: defined, clear, precise, unmistakable. Definitive: final; quality of finality. <i>This is a definite offer; and it is also a definitive one (so don't try to change anything or argue about it!).</i>

Word	Correct and best usage
Delusion/ illusion/ allusion	<p>Delusion: false impression: <i>under the delusion that...</i></p> <p>Illusion: deception; delusion (misapprehension or illusion).</p> <p>Allusion: a covert or indirect reference to something.</p> <p><i>The leader of the opposition said: I am under no delusion that the Prime Minister's allusion to the terms of the treaty is anything else than an illusion, developed by someone in his own office.</i></p>
Dependent/ dependant	<p>Dependent: depending, supported by.</p> <p>Dependant: a person who depends upon another (dependent is now acceptable, but dependant is the preferred spelling for the person).</p>
Disinterested/ uninterested	<p>Disinterested: lacking bias or prejudice (and can still be interested).</p> <p>Uninterested: lacking any interest whatsoever.</p> <p><i>The disinterested spectator enjoyed the match while his uninterested partner complained of boredom throughout the second half.</i></p>
Distinct/ distinctive	<p>Distinct: well-defined; separate in identity.</p> <p>Distinctive: marking separation from others of its kind.</p> <p><i>There is a distinct possibility he is lying; all the distinctive characteristics of his body language mark that possibility.</i></p>
Economic/ economical	<p>Economic: use for technical purpose: <i>an economic recovery.</i></p> <p>Economical: cheaper; not extravagant: <i>an economical meal.</i></p>

Word	Correct and best usage
Elicit/illicit	<p>Elicit: to draw out; to educe: <i>to elicit his reasons and argument.</i></p> <p>Illicit: illegal, unlawful: <i>his reasons were illicit.</i></p>
Eligible/illegible	<p>Eligible: fit to be or able to be chosen.</p> <p>Illegible: unable to be read.</p> <p><i>Even though the doctor's handwriting was illegible, she was still eligible for the top doctor award.</i></p>
Emigrate/immigrate	<p>Emigrate: leave one country to settle into another.</p> <p>Immigrate: enter one country as a permanent resident.</p> <p><i>The immigrants to Australia had emigrated from Sudan.</i></p>
Eminent/imminent	<p>Eminent: distinguished; exalted; noted: <i>eminent physician.</i></p> <p>Imminent: impending; soon or about to happen: <i>a storm is imminent.</i></p>
Euphemism/euphuism/euphony	<p>All three have something to do with how an expression 'sounds':</p> <p>Euphemism: substitution of a 'softer' expression for a harsher one: <i>liquidated for killed; resting in peace for dead; 'we'll do for him this time', said the murderer.</i></p> <p>Euphuism: high-flown and very affected style of writing.</p> <p>Euphony: pleasantness or smoothness of sound; easy on the ear.</p>

Word	Correct and best usage
Exceedingly/ excessively	<p>Exceedingly: implies VERY much: <i>exceedingly intelligent</i>.</p> <p>Excessively: implies TOO much: <i>excessive drinking</i>.</p>
Expedient/ expeditious	<p>Expedient: advantageous, suitable (politic rather than just).</p> <p>Expeditious: prompt; done speedily.</p> <p><i>'It is expedient that we remove the Minister from that position as expeditiously as possible,' said the Premier.</i></p>
Explicit/ implicit	<p>Explicit: stated in detail; leaving nothing implied; very clear.</p> <p>Implicit: implied, hinted, contained within, but not plainly or openly or clearly expressed.</p> <p><i>The CEO's reasons were explicitly stated, yet somehow the listeners were aware of other implications arising from those vert statements.</i></p>
Farther/ further	<p>No difference in meaning; FURTHER is preferred in formal English.</p>
Feasible/ possible	<p>Feasible should not be used if possible can do the job; feasible means 'able to be done', NOT 'could be done possibly'.</p> <p><i>A meeting would be feasible; changes become feasible over time.</i></p> <p>In summary, use possible, and then decide if the change to feasible is worth the worry.</p>
Hanged/hung	<p>Hung is used for most purposes: <i>Ned's picture was hung in the gallery.</i></p> <p>Hanged is used for people only: <i>Ned was hanged in Pentridge.</i></p>

Word	Correct and best usage
Historic/ historical	<p>Historic: famous, or likely to be famous: <i>an historic battle; St Paul's is an historic cathedral.</i></p> <p>Historical: based on or vouched for, by history. <i>The writer gathered historical evidence for her historical novel, which included a number of historic events and characters.</i></p>
Human/ humane	<p>Human: belonging to man/mankind: <i>the human condition.</i></p> <p>Humane: benevolent; compassionate; merciful: <i>They are humane human beings.</i></p>
Incredible/ incredulous	<p>Incredible: hard to believe; surprising.</p> <p>Incredulous: unwilling to believe. <i>Thomas was incredulous; he found the events to be incredible.</i></p>
Infer/imply	<p>Infer: to deduce or conclude from: <i>I infer from your letter that there is a problem in the company; that is: to make an inference.</i></p> <p>Imply: signify, hint, insinuate (not state explicitly): <i>your letter implies that there is a problem in the company.</i></p>
Ingenious/ ingenuous	<p>Ingenious: clever: <i>an ingenious invention, idea, person.</i></p> <p>Ingenuous: artless, frank: <i>an ingenuous response or remark.</i></p>
Innate/ instinct	<p>Innate (in): (inborn, natural): <i>this behaviour is innate in human beings.</i></p> <p>Instinct (with): an innate propensity to displaying certain patterns of behaviour; imbued with: <i>their presentation was instinct with confidence.</i></p>

Word	Correct and best usage
Inquire/enquire	<p>Inquiry is used in almost all instances.</p> <p>In American English, inquiry is pronounced with the accent on the first syllable (and enquiry does not exist).</p> <p>In British English, enquiry is used only in terms of asking a question: <i>she enquired after his health</i>.</p> <p>An investigation is always an inquiry.</p> <p>Safety? Always use INQUIRY.</p>
Lend/loan	<p>In formal English, loan is a noun; lend is a verb: <i>I lent him the book; I lent the money at six per cent interest</i>.</p> <p><i>She asked for a loan; the book is on loan</i>.</p> <p>NEVER: I loaned it to him.</p>
Less/fewer	<p>Less: is used for/with quantity, size, amount: <i>less money; less bread; less credibility; less traffic</i>.</p> <p>Fewer: is used for/with number: <i>fewer children; fewer people; fewer cars</i>.</p> <p><i>Fewer cars means less traffic</i>.</p>
Libel/slander	<p><i>Libel is written or published false statement that injures another's reputation</i>.</p> <p><i>Slander is a malicious, false and injurious statement spoken about another person (MEU, 1996)</i>.</p> <p>However, modern systems of publishing via email and the web have completely blurred the legal implications. In a litigious society, there is no real difference between the legal outcomes of libel, slander and defamation.</p> <p><i>Defamation is the general term to mean an attack on another's reputation (COED, 1976)</i>.</p>

Word	Correct and best usage
License/ licence	License is the verb; licence is the noun; cf practise and practice.
Lie/lay	To lie: strong verb, with simple past tense <i>lay</i> , past participle <i>lain</i> and present participle <i>lying</i> : <i>to lie down or rest</i> . To lay: <i>to place or put or lay down</i> . Simple past tense <i>laid</i> , past participle <i>laid</i> ; present participle <i>laying</i> .
Literally/ figuratively	Literally: <i>use and meaning of a word or expression to be understood in the exact sense</i> ; without any weakening by connotation (if that could ever be possible). <i>MEU (1996)</i> advises that literally be used as exactly that. Figuratively: <i>metaphorical, or representationally emblematic</i> ; the meaning is not literal, but heavily connotative.
Lose/loose	To lose: to be deprived of; to misplace or have stolen or taken from (antonym is to gain or to win). To loose: to untie, to set free, to release (antonym is to bind, to restrict).
Luxuriant/ luxurious	Luxuriant: its use is restricted to abundance, particularly foliage, flowers, etc.: <i>luxuriant greenery formed the backdrop for the patio</i> . Luxurious: expresses human luxury or indulgence: <i>luxurious tastes, surroundings, food, etc.</i>
Moral/morale	Moral (adjective): meaning related or connected to manners, ethics, conduct, etc. Morale (noun): meaning condition or state, general conduct, feeling: <i>low morale of the staff because of poor working conditions</i> . <i>The moral conduct of the troops reflected the high level of their morale.</i>

Word	Correct and best usage
Mutual/ common/ reciprocal	<p>Mutual: a give and take relationship between two persons: <i>William and Mary had a mutual relationship based upon fear and self-interest.</i></p> <p>Common: a shared feeling or thing between two people about a third person or thing: <i>William and Mary had a common fear of the Stuarts.</i></p> <p>Reciprocal: can be used in the same way as mutual, but has the extra possibility of non-mutuality: <i>William did not always reciprocate Mary's concerns about the brutality of the undertakings in Ireland.</i></p>
Older/elder	<p>Older: is the usual comparison for age: <i>older than</i>. NEVER elder than; elder is used exclusively in families, as an adjective: <i>elder son</i>, or as a noun: <i>Church elders; an elder of the community</i>.</p> <p>The same for oldest and eldest.</p>
Parameter/ perimeter	<p>Parameter: the quantitative constant, even measurable, characteristic or feature of something (varying according to item and context): <i>the parameters for this discussion are...</i></p> <p>Perimeter: the boundary, circumference or outline of an enclosed figure or area: <i>the perimeter of a rectangle; the perimeter of the airfield; the length of the boundary.</i></p> <p>(Perimeter has more to do with definable and physical boundaries, while parameter has more to do with limitations or sets of limits upon an activity, thought or interaction.)</p>

Word	Correct and best usage
Passed/past	<p>Past: as adjective and noun, gone past in time: <i>the past; past history</i>; as preposition and adverb, beyond in time or place: <i>past the post; he went past the gate; time had gone past eons before</i>.</p> <p>Passed: past participle of verb to pass: <i>time has passed them by</i> (hint: verb use only).</p>
Perspective/prospective	<p>Perspective: (noting or taking) a position relative to something else or some other point on a plane (art, design), or in an argument (point of view): <i>The artist's perspective accords with my perspective of the surreal element of his work</i>.</p> <p>Prospective: concerned with or applying to the future: <i>a prospective client</i>.</p>
Practice/practise	<p>Practice is the noun; practise is the verb. <i>The student had to practise at a hospital in order to gain a practice as a doctor.</i></p> <p>(In US English, practise is used for noun and verb.)</p>
Precede/proceed	<p>Precede: to go before; to walk in front of.</p> <p>Proceed: to go on with; to continue.</p>
Precipitate/precipitous	<p>Precipitate (adjective): rash, hurried, unconsidered (action).</p> <p>Precipitous (adjective): steep (precipitous path). <i>As they clung to the precipitous way along the mountainside, the hikers soon realised the consequences of their leader's earlier precipitate decision during their argument.</i></p>

Word	Correct and best usage
Principal/ principle	<p>Principal (adjective): chief, main, most important, first.</p> <p>(When used as a noun is always elliptical: principal means principal teacher; interest on the principal means on the principal sum of money or capital.)</p> <p>Principle (noun): fundamental rule; general law or theory for understanding something; general guide to action; tenet.</p> <p><i>Galileo stood by his principles; but the Church wanted him to retract his principal observation about the position of the Earth in the solar system.</i></p>
Repel/repulse	<p>Repel: drive back, push away.</p> <p>Repulse: drive back by force of arms; rebuff; refuse. The real issue concerns the use of the past participles.</p> <p>Repelled: feeling repulsion.</p> <p>Repulsed: rejected.</p> <p><i>The attack was repulsed with great loss of life.</i></p> <p><i>The soldiers were repelled by the carnage.</i></p>
Reverend/ reverent	<p>Reverend: deserving reverence; therefore, used in the title Rev. for Reverend.</p> <p>Reverent: feeling reverence: <i>the children's behaviour in the chapel was anything but reverent.</i></p>
Rise/raise	<p>Rise (intransitive verb): to get up from a position; to grow. <i>When you rise from your bed, please check to see that the dough is rising in the bread maker.</i></p> <p>Raise (transitive verb): to lift up; to construct; to rear. <i>The farmer raised oats and corn while his wife raised goats and chickens. Together they reared their children.</i></p> <p>(FYI: rise will always be followed by a preposition and the indirect object.)</p>

Word	Correct and best usage
Sew/sow	<p>Sew: to use needle and cotton to stitch and repair material.</p> <p>Sew, sewing, sewed, sewn (past participle: sewed; has sewn.)</p> <p>Sow: to plant seed or ideas.</p> <p>Sow, sowing, sowed, sown* (*past participle: sowed; has sown.)</p>
Spoiled/spoilt	<p>Spoiled: plundered, stripped, possessions taken (taking spoil).</p> <p>Spoilt: damaged; harmed.</p> <p><i>The city was spoiled by the invaders, but it was the rain that spoilt his new hat.</i></p>
Stationery/ stationary	<p>Stationery (noun): paper, envelopes and office requirements.</p> <p>Stationary (adjective): standing still.</p>
Stimulant/ stimulus	<p>Stimulant: restricted meaning to alcohol and drugs.</p> <p>Stimulus: anything that stimulates to action.</p> <p><i>The stimulant Ritalin is a stimulus for most adults.</i></p>
Storey/story	<p>Storey: a floor of a building; plural is storeys.</p> <p>Story: a tale or narrative; plural is stories.</p> <p><i>The children listened to stories on the fifth storey of the auditorium.</i></p>
Substitute/ replace	<p>Substitute: act in place for another; fulfil a role in place of another.</p> <p>Replace: put back in place.</p> <p><i>The torte was substituted for the profiteroles, but the profiteroles were replaced by the torte.</i></p>

Word	Correct and best usage
Take/bring	Usage depends upon movement towards (bring) or away from (take) the speaker. Therefore: <i>Bring a plate, but take away the rubbish.</i>
Transient/transitional	<p>Transient: not permanent; quickly passing away: <i>transient hopes and dreams.</i> (Transitory means the same, but is restricted to the abstract notions, such as <i>transitory life of mankind.</i>)</p> <p>Transitional: marking the change, passage, transition from one time or thing to another: <i>the renaissance was a final transitional period between feudal economic systems and the rise of capitalism.</i></p>
Unique/unusual	<p>Unique: one of a kind (and the only one at that).</p> <p>Unusual: not usual; exceptional (but there may be others).</p> <p><i>Einstein was an unusual intellect, but each person is a unique individual.</i></p>
Urban/urbane	<p>Urban: of, belonging to, a city (urban council).</p> <p>Urbane: of the city, as applied to manners and custom. Now means courteous, refined, elegant, suave, polished. (As opposed to rustic... of the country; rough, unpolished, unrefined, etc.)</p> <p><i>'One does not need to live in an urban environment to be urbane,' wrote Phillip Adams, the farmer.</i></p>
Valuable/invaluable	<p>Valuable: of great price or worth.</p> <p>Invaluable: above evaluation; inestimable.</p> <p><i>She wore a valuable necklace, but the Crown Jewels are invaluable.</i></p>

Word	Correct and best usage
Virtual/ virtuous	<p>Virtual: in effect, but lacking form (not real).</p> <p>Virtuous: possessing moral goodness (a virtuous person).</p> <p><i>Lara Croft is a virtual being, but scarcely a virtuous one.</i></p>

Source: From Burchfield (1996), and Treble & Vallins (1936)



CHAPTER 5

Spelling



Students at secondary schools are expected to be able to spell, but older students need to know what constitutes spelling rather than relying upon memory and the spellchecker. The purpose of this chapter is to provide some background and suggest ways in which any myths and fears of spelling can be defused.

Spelling involves five sets of knowledge and awareness, all based on the theory that spelling itself is a cognitive activity that also relies upon visual memory, and to a lesser extent among older students and adults, auditory memory. There is a developmental order to these skills, starting in the preschool years:

1. **Phonemic awareness:** knowing how to separate the sounds and syllables in words. The word *cat* contains the sounds /c/ /a/ /t/ and rhymes with *mat*. Syllable awareness is important. The word *separate* has three syllables: *sep-ar-ate*.
2. **Grapho-phonetic knowledge:** knowing the letter names in the English alphabet, the sound-symbol relationships, and that sounds can be represented by different letters. 'c' says /k/, 'at' says /at/; and that *cat* rhymes with *mat* as well as *chat*.
3. **Morphemic awareness and knowledge:** using the meaning of words as clues to their spelling and realising that meaning units (morphemes) are often spelt the same in different words: *sign*, *signal* and *signature*.
4. **Etymological awareness and knowledge:** using the origins of a word as a clue to its meaning and spelling. *Geology* is from the old Greek words *geo* (the Earth) and *logos* (a word for the study of), and so *geology* means *the study of Earth*.
5. **Visual awareness:** using familiarity with how words look in order to determine the correct way to spell them: ***if it doesn't look right, check it.***

For most secondary school students, knowledge of items 3 and 4 above is important, as long as you are able to apply some knowledge of phonics, particularly sounds of consonants, consonant blends and digraphs, and syllables, and you have developed visual awareness of common words and words from your subject areas or interest areas.

Some realities

1. Good spellers are usually good readers. (They regularly see words correctly spelt.)
2. Spelling uses all dimensions of the language: sounds, patterns and meanings.
3. Better spelling contributes to more fluent writing.
4. Spelling errors are very useful guides for learning to spell.
5. Becoming a good speller requires care, attention to detail and the development of a good visual memory.
6. Spelling knowledge and skills are used to help reading and writing.
7. Spelling is firstly a VISUAL activity: does it **look** right?
8. There is a system of preferred spelling in English for some words. (When two spellings are provided in the dictionary, the first is preferred.)
9. Your word processor can be set for UK, US and other forms of spelling.
10. It is hard to use a dictionary unless you know the order of the first three letters in a required word. The same applies to the use of the Spellcheck program.
11. Spellcheck will help if the first three letters are in sequence.
12. Spellcheck will not protect you from homophones.
Eye tolled hymn sew. (I told him so.)
Wear are ewe wen eye knead yew? (Where are you when I need you?)
13. So you must know when to use *too*, *two* and *to*; and *their* and *there*.
14. Abbreviations of all kinds, many idiosyncratic (i.e. misspellings), are used in texting.

Below is a list of words that someone, many years ago, deemed problems for spellers of all ages.

Problem words at high school, university and workplace levels:

accept	accommodate	ache
across	address	already
apologise	Arctic/Antarctic	argument
article	athletics	bachelor
balloon	bicycle	biscuit
buried	business	calendar
ceiling	cellar	century
cereal	challenge	colossal
deceit	deceive	decision
describe	description	diary
disappoint	eighth	enrol
expense	expensive	explanation
extremely	familiar	fascination
February	fierce	fiery
forty	foul	fourteen
fourth	gauge	governor
grammar	guarantee	height
honourable	hoping	humorous
humour	immediately	label
language	leisure	library
literature	lovable	metaphor
miniature	minute	mischief
missile	movable	murmur
necessary	nephew	niece
nineteen	ninety	noticeable
obligation	oblige	occasion
occurred	omitted	opposite
originally	parallel	parliament
pastime	peculiar	performance
persuade	pigeon	poisonous
possess	preference	preparation
principally	principles	privilege
probably	propeller	pursue
quarrel	queue	quiet/quite
really	rebel(lion)	receipt

receive	recipe	religious
remembrance	rhyme	rhythm
route	satellite	scenery
secretary	seize	separate
sergeant	severely	similar
sincerely	skilful	surprise
terrific	therefore	thoroughly
tongue	travelled	truly
umbrella	unnecessary	until
usually	vegetable	vehicle
vengeance	vertical	wallaby
weird	whether	wholly
whose	woollen	written
yacht		

For your interest, here are a number of words about words:

Anagrams are rearrangements of the letters of a word, phrase or sentence to make a new word or phrase:

contaminated → *no admittance*

Western Union → *no wire unsent*

Antigram is a word or phrase of near-opposite meaning to the original word:

funeral → *real fun*

Conundrum is a riddle or tricky question, usually involving a pun:

When is coffee like soil? When it is ground.

Homonym has the same sound/pronunciation; same spelling; different meaning:

port (suitcase; harbour); *shore* (coast; to support)

Homophone has the same pronunciation/sound; different spelling and meaning:

there, their; heir, air; two, to, too

Mirror words are words that are mirrors of each other:

live and evil; desserts and stressed

Oxymorons are expressions that are self-contradicting; contradictions in terms:

pretty ugly; conspicuous by absence; giant shrimp; clearly confused; plastic glasses

Some oxymorons have an ironic twist:

military intelligence; civil war

Palindromes are words spelled the same way, backwards and forwards:

deed; level; eve; madam; kayak; don't nod; Dennis sinned

Puns are plays on the meanings of words, sometimes producing double meanings:

A spoon for a dog would be a paw choice.
Knock Knock jokes/riddles are mostly puns.

For interest...

1. What words in English have all five vowels in the order *aeiou*?
facetious; abstemious
2. What word has the letter 'i' seven times and one other vowel?
indivisibilities
3. What do the following words have in common:
month, orange, silver, purple?
They do not have other words that rhyme with them.

CHAPTER 6

Expectations of Written English



Throughout the process of writing, from drafting the initial script through modifications and editing to make sentences and words more effective for purpose, writers keep in mind and apply a number of conventions or expectations about written language. The reason for these rules is the same as the rules for punctuation and spelling. Having a common set of expectations about written language use, spelling and punctuation helps readers.

1. Subject-verb agreement

There are three sets of rules for agreement or concord...

Rule 1. A singular subject takes a singular verb; a plural subject takes a plural verb.

Example: *A cat drinks milk.* *Cats drink milk.*
 The cat is purring. *The cats are purring.*

Troubles begin with the following instances:

- a. **Collective nouns** such as: *flock, herd, school, team, side* and *group* are all singular, and take a singular verb:

The team is winning.

(*The team are winning* is US or American English.)

- b. **Everyone, everybody, anybody, anyone, none, no one:** are always singular. But use of inclusive language allows the plural pronoun*:

Everyone loves their cats.*

- c. **Each, every, one:** are always singular:

Each is to have a piece. Each tries to give their gifts away.*

- d. **Number:** the hard rule is always singular: (plural usage is creeping in)

The number is immaterial.

- e. **Some:** always plural:
Some (birds) are singing.
- f. **Majority/minority:** always plural:
The minority are sometimes right.
- g. **Any:** may be used with a singular or a plural verb, depending on the number in the group to which *any* refers:
Because any may play, she is invited.
Because any may play, they are welcome.
Any person is welcome; any ideas are welcome.
- h. **None:** is singular, but increasingly used as a plural:
None is coming. (None are coming is acceptable, but No one is coming.)
- i. **Agenda:** is singular and takes a singular verb.
- j. **Correlatives:** *Either... or; neither... nor* depends on the number of the second noun.
Either that chicken or those ducks are to go.
Neither those chickens nor that goose is to go.
- k. **Summation nouns:** such as *scissors, binoculars, glasses* are plural:
These scissors are very sharp.
- l. **Aggregate nouns** such as *media, data, news* may be either singular or plural. Use the plural verb if data or media seems to be more than one. As a general rule:
data takes plural verb in American English
 In Australia, *data* is singular; *news* is singular

Rule 2. Agreement when there is more than one subject

Type 1

- a. The train and the bus are coming.
- b. A knife and fork is used for cutting steak.

Reason: how many items are involved in the subject of the sentence? Train and bus are two different forms of transport. Knife and fork is a set of cutlery items, therefore singular.

Type 2

The number of the second subject determines the number of the verb.

- a. Only one or two copies are available.
- b. Several small drinks or one large drink is enough.

Type 3

Locating the correct subject:

- a. The children, not the teacher, are responsible for their books.
- b. One of the parents is coming.

The writer asks *who* is responsible? *Who* is coming? (Test with the verb.)

Rule 3. When subject and verb are separated by other information in the clause

Fabulous cheetahs with long legs that move quickly speed across the grasslands.

The difficulty is finding the verb. The subject or main noun is usually at the beginning of the sentence, so ask the question: fabulous **cheetahs** do what? They **speed**.

2. Agreement of noun and pronoun

The general rule or principle is that the pronoun must agree with its referent noun in person, gender and number. Avoid most problems by using plurals as much as possible.

In modern inclusive English, it is now permitted to use the plural pronoun *their* to refer to a singular noun which is not specific. For example:

A student should be aware of their responsibilities in handing in assignments.

Students do the job better.

3. Preposition at the end of the sentence

This is a rule that some people like to expound. In reality, few serious writers are concerned about the position of the preposition. Clarity and message are the main considerations. Consider this gem to explain clarity with the preposition at the end of the sentence: *What are you going to cut down on?* How does it compare with *Down on what are you going to cut?*

Choice of style can be problematic. For example: *I won't put up with that situation* can be restated by using post-positioning to gain some effect, as in *That is a situation I won't put up with*. The often-quoted Churchill putdown about ending the sentence with a preposition is based on this style: *That is a situation up with which I will not put*.

Fowler has stated in 1933 that if the final preposition is 'sounding comfortable', leave it there. Burchfield (1996, p.618) offers this delightful anecdote to show the robust nature of the preposition in living English. A little girl complains to her mother who has brought the wrong storybook for the bedtime reading session: *What did you bring that book I don't want read to out of up for?*

Note: prepositional phrases are often misplaced in a sentence or statement. For example: *He wants to buy a table for a friend with large legs*.

4. Split infinitive

The infinitive form of the verb is signified by the use of *to* with the verb: *to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield* (the final line of Tennyson's poem 'Ulysses').

The term **split infinitive** refers to placing an adverb (*constantly* in the following examples) or other adjunct between the *to* and its verb.

The children wanted to constantly play marbles.

The sentence could be stated as:

The children wanted to play marbles constantly.

or

The children constantly wanted to play marbles.

The meaning shifts as the adverb is shifted. The generally accepted principle about the application of this old 'rule' is to avoid splitting the infinitive unless its placement there 'sounds comfortable'.

5. Between you and I/me

Between you and me is grammatically correct and should be used in formal English, both written and spoken. (Reason: pronoun case after a preposition is objective.) *Between you and I* is very widely used in spoken English in general conversation.



6. I/me

Pronouns in English are inflected to show whether they are subjective (*I*) or objective (*me*) or possessive (*my*) case.

I like to play football with my friends.

My friends like to play football with me.

It is easy to confuse the use of *I* and *me*, but most writers manage sentences with direct and indirect objects; *me* is correctly used as the object (objective case) of a verb or preposition. The problem arises when the various forms of the verb *to be* are used. See 7...

7. It's I/me

The correct form is *It is I.* or *It's I.*

BUT general usage, for almost 90 years, applies.

The more widely accepted and used expression is 'It's me'.

Since the expression is spoken, it never appears in written English, except in dialogue. Usage rules this one... **definitely 'It's me'!**

8. Could have/could of

Could have is correct. Always.

9. Must have/should have/would have

These modal verbs are followed by **have**. Never by *of*.

10. Different to/from/than

Use ***different from*** in all instances. NEVER use *different than*. ***Different from*** avoids any problems.

Different to is used when two comparisons are contextually connected.

The music of Spain is different to the music of Moldova.

11. Try to/and

Try to every time.

12. Kind/sort/type

When any of these words are used, all contingent words must keep the same number.

This kind of music is wonderful.

These types of rhythms are catchy.

13. Its/it's

See section on pronouns. ***It's*** always means ***it is***.

Its is a **possessive pronoun**, and possessive pronouns do not have an apostrophe.

14. Only

Place the adjunct/adverb *only* as near as possible to the word that it modifies, or that you as writer want it to modify.

*I wanted **only** to know the name.*

***Only** I wanted to know the name.*

*I wanted to know **only** the name.*

*I wanted to know the name **only**.*

15. However

However can be a text connective or a conjunction. As a text connective, *however* is used to signal strong contrast. Note that *however* is a word that is overused; *but* will do just as well in most instances.

1. **However used as a strong contrasting link between two ideas:**

The food looked insignificant; however, it was incredibly delicious.

(Hint: whenever *however* is used as a strong contrastive, there is an item of punctuation before and after *however*.)

2. **However used as a subordinating conjunction:**

However insignificant the food looked, it was wonderfully scrumptious.

16. And/but/or at the beginning of a sentence

Writers can choose to use these coordinating conjunctions at the beginning of a sentence for effect. Use them sparingly in order to get and maintain the effect.

17. Because at the beginning of a sentence

Writers need the freedom to choose between the use of loose and periodic sentences. Use *because* at the sentence beginning sparingly, and for effect.

18. Dangling participle/hanging phrases/ unattached phrases and words

Waiting on the footpath, a car smashed into a post near me.
*Wanted, a table for a strong person **with thick legs.***

These examples show the classic misplaced phrase.

Where the sentence is introduced by the participle, the phrase is known as a misplaced incomplete clause, hanging phrase or dangling participle. (The terms are for the same construction.)

The participial phrase or incomplete clause can be rewritten as a complete clause:

As I was waiting on the footpath, a car smashed into a post near me.



19. *Myself* and reflexive forms of pronouns (see pronouns)

The reflexive form of the pronoun should be used sparingly and appropriately.

Reflexive pronouns refer back (reflect back) to an earlier pronoun:

She told me about it herself.

Reflexive pronouns are sometimes used for emphasis:

I told him myself, just yesterday.

Reflexive pronouns are used to emphasise lone, solo or group action or an event.

They rebuilt the village themselves.

He poached the eggs himself.

Reflexive pronouns are **NOT to be used in the objective case**.

I gave it to myself → ***I gave it to me*** is correct.

20. *Who/whom/whose* (relative pronouns) (*which, that*)

These words are relative pronouns, and also refer or relate to nouns or pronouns used earlier in the sentence. Relative pronouns are used as special forms of conjunctions to join a dependent adjectival clause to the referent noun, the related noun immediately before it.

Who (subjective case), *whom* (objective case) and *whose* (possessive case) are also inflected for case (in brackets). The following examples show the correct use of each:

1. *The police officer [subject] **who arrested the dangerous criminal** is [verb] here.*

Police officer is the subject of the verb *is* in the main clause. The adjectival clause (in bold) is used to provide some information about the police officer and begins with the relative pronoun *who*, the subject of the verb *arrested*.

2. *The dangerous **criminal*** [subject] ***whom the police officer arrested*** *is* [verb] *here*.

Criminal is the subject of the verb *is* in the main clause. The adjectival clause (in bold) is used to provide some information about the criminal and begins with the relative pronoun *whom*; but the adjectival clause already has a subject (*police officer*) for its verb (*arrested*). *Whom* is the object of the arresting police officer, and therefore the objective form of the relative pronoun, *whom*, is required.

3. *The police officers* [subject] ***whose bravery is admired*** *are* [verb] *here*.

Police officers is the subject of the verb *are*. The adjectival clause (in bold) provides further information about the police officers and uses the relative pronoun *whose* to show the possessive function of the adjectival clause's subject, *bravery*.

That and *which* are relative pronouns that do not inflect for case.



21. Sentence fragments

A sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop or other accepted boundary marker. A sentence also must express an idea, and/or its subordinate and other relationships, in a complete unit. Since a sentence contains at least one clause, there must be a verb. Leaving out the verb is one example of a sentence fragment.

Always remember to check that you no words out.

The problem in the following sentence fragment is caused by letting the adjectival clause (underlined) become a sentence in its own right:

The whole place was jumping. Which said a lot for the band playing its first gig.

The full stop after 'jumping' should be replaced with a comma, and the capital *W* with a lower case *w*.

22. Run-on sentences

The run-on sentence occurs when the writer does not use an appropriate boundary marker (for example, full stop, comma, semicolon) between clauses and sentences. Readers become confused because they rely unconsciously upon the conventional punctuation of sentences.

Don't use run-on sentences they are too hard to read they interfere with my automatic application of knowledge about the structure and look of written English.

23. Maintain verb tense

Recounts of events are usually spoken and written in the simple past tense.

*We **drove** to the city and **had** a great time.*

Reports about phenomena are written about in the present tense.

*Water **finds** its own level.*

24. Redundancy

Saying the same thing twice:

Amy is progressing well and making good progress.

I myself was the only one to think of the answer.

25. Tautology

Needless repetition: *powdery talc*. See the examples in the following:

The basic fundamentals of this ongoing process are to proactively look ahead to the needs and requirements of this particular instance so that the goals and objectives of experiential activity will have the same identical end result.

(This sentence is also an example of superfluity.)

CHAPTER 7

Preparation, Style and Polish



Writing an essay, academic paper, article, assignment or report requires care in planning, study, setting up the field map for the essay and writing it.

The most important rule for writers is to write the introduction as a rough draft, and when you have finished the paper, go back and rewrite the introduction. One of the greatest mistakes made by students is having an introduction that does not connect with the text that follows. Hence, the golden rule:

Write the final draft of the introduction last. In this way, your introduction will guide the reader into your essay.

Keep the following in mind when writing your piece:

1. In preparing to write an assignment paper, analyse the requirements of the assignment. **What is being asked of you?** If there is no obvious question, look for it in the assignment requirements so that you know what to do.
2. Study the requirements and question for **defining words and phrases**, the key words and concepts that have to be addressed in your essay.
3. **What is the problem or issue set by the question?** What position will you take in relation to the issue or problem?
4. **Study the determining words**, the verbs that tell you what to do: *discuss, evaluate, critically examine, compare, find causes, investigate, report.*
5. Gather your content from a few sources that you have read, reread and studied and made notes from. That is, choose a few books, articles and online sources that you can chew and digest.

6. Skim through a number of other related articles for content and possible quotes to be used directly.
7. Develop your reference list in a separate folder on your desktop, writing the details as you find and use them. Leaving this activity till later will cost time, so develop the reference list as you go. (There is software available to assist you.)
8. Set out a field map for the presentation of the content, using headings and subheadings to develop a sequence of information that addresses the question.
9. Importantly, make sure that the content is used to address the question and does not become a 'memory dump' or 'mere reproduction' from your source material.
10. And, most importantly, when you have finished your final draft, go back and revise that introduction so that it does what it is meant to do: introduce your essay.

Now to some thoughts on style.



Style

Writing style incorporates every aspect of grammar, usage, punctuation and word knowledge that writers have available to craft their message. The message or content of the writing becomes clearer when the elements of writing are used properly and effectively. Writing with good style combines knowledge of content with knowledge of writing.

Writing style cannot be defined easily, but there are elements that contribute to good style and therefore better reading. Choice of words and their careful arrangement in a variety of syntactic relationships is particularly important. Using the conventions of written English is also important, particularly punctuation.

Personal opinions, values, likes and dislikes are also major components of style, and part of the relationship that is subtly or imperiously established between writer and reader.

Style also is improved by maintaining the expectations of written English. So let's **first consider what should be avoided**, and how to remedy the errors.

1. **Ensure there are no spelling errors.** Using spellcheck is not sufficient as it will not discriminate between homophones. Also, there are some words that will not be picked up by the spellcheck because the error is still a correctly spelled word, such as *from* and *form*.
2. **Ensure that there are no errors in punctuation.** Sentences, and sometimes the clauses within them, need boundary markers such as capital letters, full stops, question marks, exclamation marks and commas. Apostrophes need to be checked carefully, particularly where plurals are used. A

very common error is to add an apostrophe to an item or year. For example, *In the 1980's, videotapes were replaced by DVD's*. Neither the 1980s nor the DVDs own anything, so an apostrophe is not needed. The correct way to make the plural of those items is just add the lowercase *s*. *In the 1980s, videos were replaced by DVDs*.

3. **Avoid using informal expressions** when writing assignments and essays. Informal terms and casual expressions can be used in dialogue in narrative, but the aim of academic writing is to present a formal tone to the writing.
4. **Reread for missing words.** *Make sure that no are left out.*
5. **Check that formatting**, spaces between paragraphs, headings and subheadings are consistent.
6. **Be careful about the amount of information in each sentence.** Having too much information in the same sentence presents problems for the reader, who has the extra task of unpacking the structure at the same time as trying to understand or to learn from the information presented.
7. **Check that pronouns are clearly referring** to the ideas and words you intend them to.
8. If you start a paragraph with a **demonstrative pronoun**, re-read the preceding lines to see that the **reference** is clear to the reader.
9. **Avoid using contracted forms and abbreviations.** Acronyms can be used as long as they have been explained or defined earlier.
10. Check that you have met the expectations, **the conventions**, of written English. (See Chapter 6.)

Good style depends upon:

1. Recognising the purpose for writing a particular item
2. Selecting and using chapters and paragraphs. How much is to be presented to the reader in these organisational units is the choice of the writer
3. A clear understanding of the ways clauses and phrases relate to each other in sentences
4. How the sequence of sentences contributes to the balance and variety of the sentences used
5. Varying sentence length
6. Considering what is placed first in the sentence, the theme
7. Adopting the general principle of using the active voice. Passive voice needs to be used on occasion, but again it must be used properly and without muddying the message
8. Being direct
9. Words, words and words: effective word selection and use.



Words are the most powerful tools for writers. The message is clearer when plain words are used, although a Latinate vocabulary brings a different precision in meaning. For example, *capture enemies* is more precise than *take prisoners* as it clarifies the status of the prisoners.

Repetition, redundancy and tautology are not helpful unless the writer carefully crafts their use.

Try to be as direct as possible. Qualified denials may not be the best way to get an idea across, and do not have the same communicative strength as *This is better than that*. For example:

It is possible that modern players may not be as great as players of past generations, perhaps because of the changing fortunes of modern professional football.

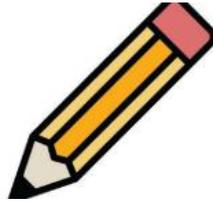
Modern players are not as great as players of the past because modern players have amenities and money never available to players of past generations.

The main principles of good style are to have **respect for the language** by presenting information without the problem of poor writing. Writing that does not conform to the practices and conventions of written English presents problems for readers.

There is also the principle of **respect for the reader**, who has made the effort to learn from the writer.

And finally, there is **respect for oneself as a writer**.





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