ACCURATE
CREATIVE

GOOD TO KNOW 2

—A BOOK FOR CLEAR COMMUNICATION—

FIRST EDITION • 2018

WHY
GRAMMAR
IS IMPORTANT?

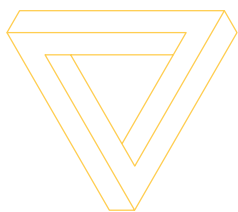**Grammar is the basis for effective communication.**

A strong foundation is essential for virtually everything from website design to urban planning. If it starts out weak, then it will become ineffective at best and nonsensical at worst.

What does this mean?

Meanings can be easily confused and become obscure when grammar errors occur. Sentence structure, subject/verb tense, punctuation, and spelling are common mistakes. An excellent example of a simple mistake is a missed comma: "Let's eat Lochlyn." Without the comma, this is cannibalistic, whereas with proper punctuation it is an invitation: "Let's eat, Lochlyn." No one needs to be eaten here.
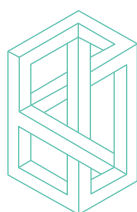
Within the following pages is a collection of rules and devices (mnemonic and technical) that will make your writing more readable and, thereby, more engaging and enjoyable.
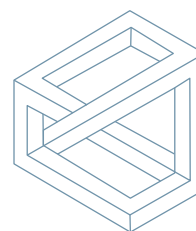
TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE OFT-CONFUSED

LATIN

ABBREVIATIONS

PUNCTUATION

This section deals with those pesky marks that separate letters and words within any written document. Without them, sentences would be incomprehensible, making paragraphs a mere headache-inducing mess. Thoughts and ideas need a break to allow the reader to discern the meaning. They guide your eye and clarify definitions. They help you communicate.

WHAT IS IN THIS SECTION, AND WHERE IT IS

PUNCTUATION

EN DASH VS. EM DASH

What are these!? Well, an em dash is longer than an en dash. Strange names, I know, but they make sense when you realize that, traditionally, the em dash is as wide as the typeset capital letter M and the en dash is as wide as the typeset capital letter N.

The em dash is the kind of dash you use mid-sentence. When people say, "Use a dash," they almost always mean the em dash. Use it whenever the sentence requires a pause or break between ideas.

The en dash is used much less frequently, usually to indicate a range or span of numbers, dates or locations.

If you can say "*to*" between two words, or digits, then an en dash should be inserted as a substitute. For example: *see chapters 8–12*, *Dec. 18–22*, and *Ottawa–London*.

Whether you are using the longer em dash in a sentence or the shorter en dash to indicate a range, there are no spaces between the dash and the words around it.

○   ○   ○   ○   example

en dash   em dash

The Georgantopoulos' took the Ottawa–London train—it was the most direct—to show the world their new signs.
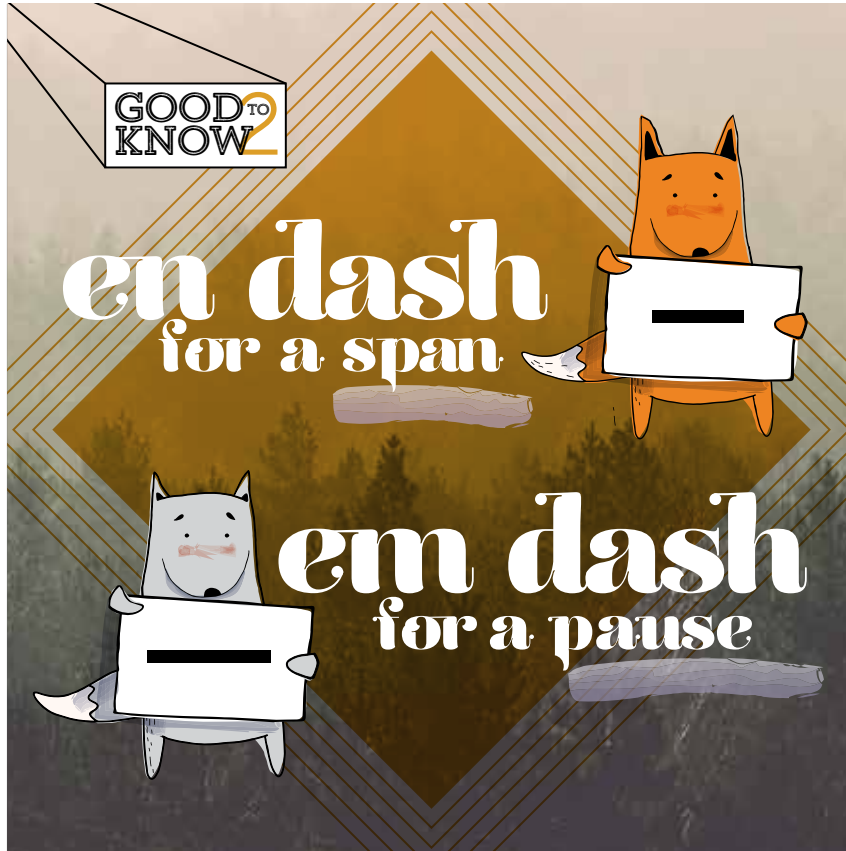
PUNCTUATION

APOSTROPHE VS. INCH MARKS

OK, so I know it really should be apostrophe vs. foot marks, but foot marks doesn't sound as good.

These have been interchangeable since the advent of keyboards. The traditional keyboard does not have a separate key for the foot mark (or prime symbol) and the apostrophe/quotation mark (or smart quotes). So, unless you insert the character using a glyph palette or particular key command, the keystroke will always either be an inch mark (") or an apostrophe (')/quotation mark (") depending if the software's preference is selected as smart quotes or not.

To tell the difference, just look at the tail. An apostrophe/quotation mark has a curly one whereas the foot/inch mark is straight. Traditionally, this mark should slope slightly. Most font families, however, do not provide this option.

Use apostrophes for possessive nouns and contractions like *I'm*, or *you're*.

Use quotation marks to punctuate a phrase or word or to indicate speech; there can be single and double quotations marks depending on the type of dialogue.

Use the inch mark (or prime symbol) for mathematics and measurements.

---

example

double quotation mark   apostrophe   foot mark   inch mark   double quotation mark

"It's time for the boy to stop growing, he is 6'5".", groaned Jamie's mother.

GOOD TO KNOW 2

apostrophes
like to twist

inch marks
are too grown up
for that

PUNCTUATION

COLON

The colon is the suspense master of the punctuation gang. Think of it as a signal in your sentence that marks an expectation or addition. It is used to direct attention to matter (such as a list, explanation, quotation, or amplification) that follows.

A colon should be added only after statements that are complete sentences. Never use a colon after a sentence fragment. For example, it is correct to say "Aaron has two favourite chew toys: his Kong® and his little sister." That is correct because "Aaron has two favourite chew toys." is a complete sentence on its own.

When separating two independent clauses, a colon functions much like a semicolon. The first word after the colon should not be in capitals.

When using a colon for emphasizing, it takes the place of an em dash. An em dash, however, is a stronger and more insistent mark.

Some non-grammatical uses for colons are: time, ratio, reference, and correspondence.

example

colon for time

colon before list

At 3:15, Ms. Chokly notices three things: a lone shoe, a mountain of pencil shavings and a giant pile of torn paper.

colon to separate

She had very little time to clean up: she had to pick up her daughter.

colon for emphasize

The worst thing for her: lateness.

PUNCTUATION

TILDE

The tilde has had a transition in the age of social media—a resurgence of sorts. The traditional usage has always been a tidy, mathematical one: it shows an approximation. For example: "~80% of readers understand the usage of tilde" would be read as "approximately 80% of readers understand the usage of a tilde".

It also has a more festive use in classical languages, where it indicates a nasality in vowels or a particular *n* sound. For example: *señor*.

The age of forum writing and instant messaging has increased the usage and altered the meaning of this wavy punctuation. Use it when accentuating the final syllable of a word, like when you need to hollarrrr~. Or, to denote a trailing off, as in *help meee~*. There is truly a renaissance in the usage of the tilde.

~

○   ○   ○   ○ | example |

tilde for approximation

The blogosphere has risen ~29% since 2010—readership

tilde for accentuating

has gone crazyyy~.

GOOD TO KNOW 2

Tilde
is used to show
an approximation.

BOOO~

MODERN USAGE IS TO DENOTE
TRAILING OFF OR ACCENTUATING
THE FINAL SYLLABLE.

PUNCTUATION

SLASH

A slash is the Leatherman of the punctuation world. But, like this multi-use tool, use it only in a casual environment. The various usages are:

- to replace these smaller words: *per*, *and*, *or*
- to replace the Latin preposition cum which means *combined with*, *also used as*, or *along with being*
- to represent a conflict or connection between two things. (e.g. The Paris/London train leaves in an hour.) *Note: an en dash can be used for a more formal approach*
- to indicate something spanning two years.
- to form abbreviations
- to separate the numerator from the denominator in fractions.

When using a slash, there should not be a space before or after the slash unless there are two or more words to separate it (e.g. Language and Society / Langue et société). Or, when quoting lines from a poem: "I love the part in The Tragically Hip's 'Fiddler's Green' when it says: 'You can hear her whispered prayer / For men at masts that always lean / The same wind that moves her hair'. It makes me sigh."

---

example

slash replacing per ↓ slash for connection ↓

The cheetah can run 120 km/h when running after his/her dinner. His

slash for connection ↓ slash for abbreviation ↓

office/dining room is in Africa. You can send fan mail c/o Cheetah's

slash for abbreviation ↓

fan club; make sure you include fresh meat w/ letter to ensure

slash for fractions ↓

delivery. While the first 2/3 of the tail are covered in spots, the

final part is marked with four to six dark rings or stripes.

GOOD TO KNOW 2

If there is more than 1 word then a space is needed before and after a slash.
(also called an oblique)

2 WORDS / 2 WORDS

PUNCTUATION

COMMA

The most popular or common punctuation is the comma. It is used to make you pause when reading a sentence, yet a comma is not as final as a period. The presence or absence of a comma can change the meaning of a sentence—sometimes dramatically. In extreme cases, an incorrect comma can make a sentence mean the exact opposite of what the writer intended. Lynne Truss explains this hilariously in her book "Eat, Shoots & Leaves".

Use a comma to:

- separate words and word groups in a list;
- join two adjectives when they are not interchangeable;
- join two independent clauses that are joined by connectors, such as *and*, *or*, *but*, etc.;
- separate the direct address to someone or something;
- separate month from the year when writing a date;
- separate geographic references;
- set off nonrestrictive or nonessential information;
- set the nonrestrictive pronoun *which*;
- separate introductory or an afterthought matter from the main clause.

,

example

comma   comma

Crossley**,** take those greasy**,** smelly burritos out of my

comma

sight**,** now! Please?!

PUNCTUATION

PARENTHESES

The word *parentheses* means *to put beside*—a lovely description of their function. Like a comma, they set aside a subordinate part of a sentence (i.e. text that adds clarification but is not necessary for the integrity of the sentence).

There is a range of parentheses, each with their specific jobs, shapes, and origins.

The "{}" and "[]" are called brackets and are considered a subcategory of parenthesis. Their usage is similar to the "()" parentheses and will be discussed within the next couple of pages.

The term "bracket" used in the curly bracket "{}" comes from the French term braguette, meaning *codpiece*, as it bears a resemblance to the side view of this amusing armour of protection. The *bracket* in the square bracket comes from shelf supports that resemble the symbol "]".

The meanings behind these two symbols help reveal that their function is mainly supportive.

( )

example

parentheses   parentheses

Henry VIII (famed for having six wives) popularized the

Tudor fashion of exaggerated codpieces as a symbol of

man's virility and masculinity.

GOOD TO KNOW 2

( )

Brackets
put information aside

PUNCTUATION

AREA CODES AND BRACKETS

On June 17, 2006, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) introduced 10-digit local dialing—the mandatory dialing of area codes followed by the seven-digit telephone numbers for local calls.

This measure has become necessary to make up for the lack of available telephone numbers, given increased demand for them in Canada. By requiring people to dial ten digits instead of seven for local calls, between Gatineau and Ottawa for example, the same seven-digit telephone number can be used with either the 819 or 613 numbers, thus making thousands of numbers available.

Not only telephone users but also those who write these numbers will be "called on" to make the changes. Make this small adjustment since the traditional parentheses around area codes indicate that dialing the code is not necessary for all calls.

The proper method in English and French, according to the Translation Board of Canada, is to have a non-breaking hyphen between the groups of digits in all telephone, cell phone, pager, and fax numbers.

example

hyphens only

1-800-555-5995
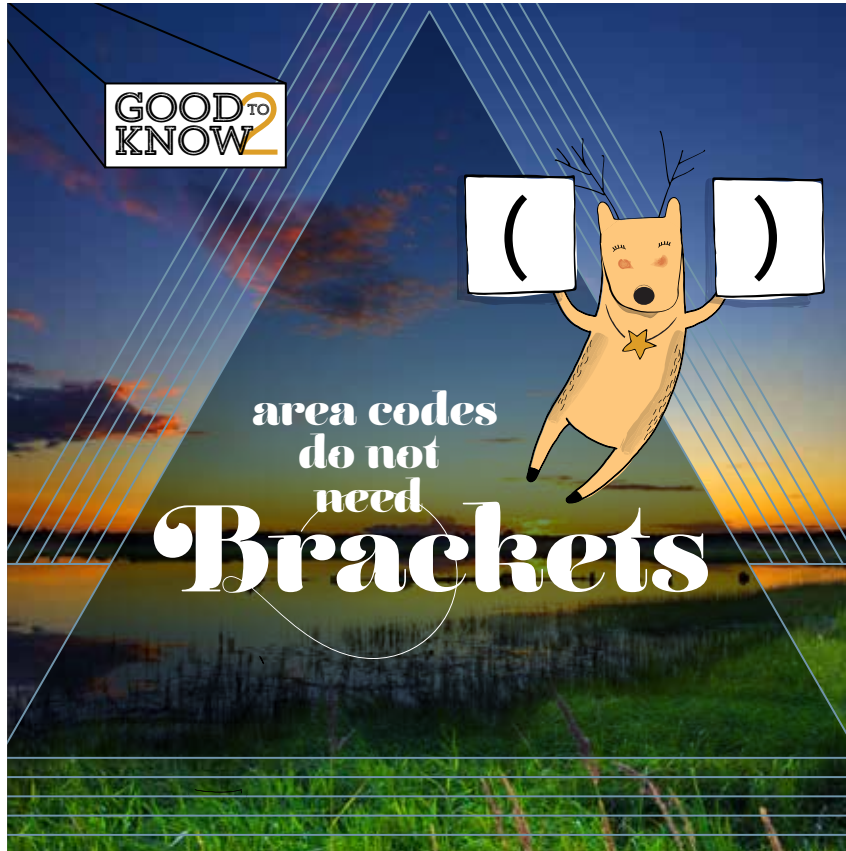
PUNCTUATION

SQUARE BRACKETS

We typically use square brackets when we want to modify or clarify another person's words. However, like most punctuation, there are several acceptable uses of this type of bracket:

- to add clarification:
  The witness said: "Lori [the police officer] grabbed me."
- to add information:
  The teams in the derby are from the same city [City and United].
- to add missing words from a quote or other sources:
  It is [a] pleasant restaurant.
- to add editorial or authorial comment:
  They will perish [my emphasis].
- Square brackets can also be nested (using square brackets [like these] inside round brackets).
- to indicate that a specific portion of a quote has been omitted:
  Gore Vidal is quoted as saying "Andy Warhol is the only genius I've met […] with an IQ of 60."
- to enclose the Latin word sic, which means "so, thus."
  In academic writing, [sic] is used to denote an error that initially appears in the source material and is not attributable to the author who is using the quote.

[]

○   ○   ○   ○   example

During a prolonged visit to the Bay of Fundy, Evyn and an assistant (George Squirrelly, who was later to make his own

Square bracket   Square bracket

study of sea-bound acorns [the most elusive of the acorns]

on Salt Spring Island) spent several difficult months observing the phoca vitulina concolor."
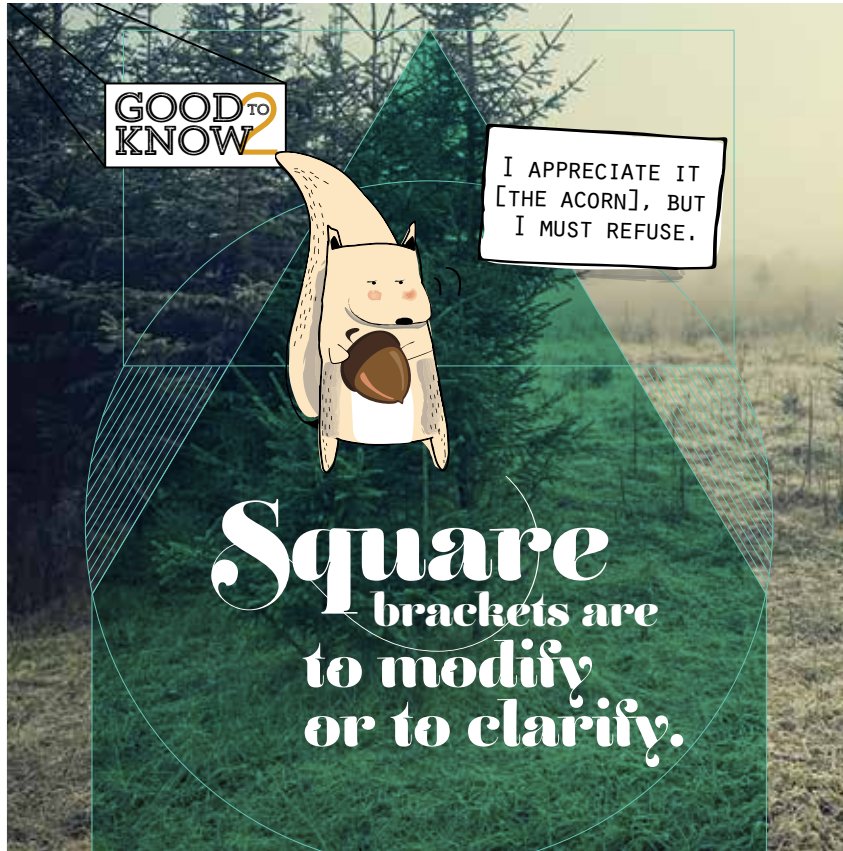
PUNCTUATION

CHEVRON BRACKETS

Also known as angle brackets, they frequently appear in mathematics and quantum physics but also occasionally to explain language. For example:

> The English word /kæt/ is spelled <cat>.

They are used to indicate internal thought. For example:

> Grace handed me a flower. "Smell it."

> I took a sniff. "It's lovely."
> <What a disgusting stench!>

Angle brackets are frequently used in comic books to denote someone speaking in another language. Double angle brackets are sometimes used instead of quotation marks.

< >

---

example

While walking through the mall singing a happy song, I knew

Chevron bracket

this was the best job ever. <If I keep saying it then it will be

Chevron bracket

true, right?>

PUNCTUATION

CURLY BRACKETS

This bracket is the winner for the most aliases: braces, curly brackets, squiggly brackets or even hugging braces (used in electronic communications). This punctuation is very elusive as well. In fact, there are very few correct uses of it. Curly brackets are used in poetry, mathematics, music and computer programming. The rare times that they can be seen in formal writing is when delimiting a list or when parentheses and square brackets have already been used. "There were 16 (of the big [red {but not spotted}]) birds seen above the baseball field."

{}

○ ○ ○ ○ | example

Curly bracket   Curly bracket

The stretching sequence {warm up, flow, standing, cool down}

is vital to overall relaxation in a yoga practice.

PUNCTUATION

AMPERSAND

The shape of the character (&) predates the word ampersand by more than 1,500 years. In the first century, Roman scribes wrote in cursive. So, when they wrote the Latin word "et" (which means "and"), they linked the e and t. Over time the combined letters came to signify the word and in English as well. The word ampersand came many years later when "&" was part of the English alphabet. In the early 1800s, school children reciting their ABCs concluded the alphabet with the &. It would have been confusing to say "X, Y, Z, and." Rather, the students said, "and per se and." Per se means by itself, so the students were essentially saying, "X, Y, Z, and by itself and." Over time, "and per se and" was slurred together into the word we use today: ampersand.
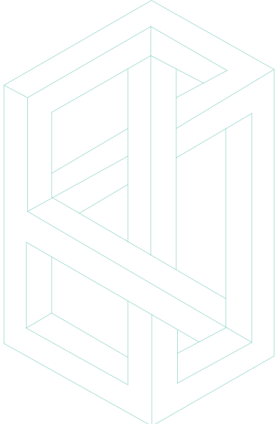
&

○   ○   ○   ○   example

WJW radio DJ Alan Freed used the 1940's slang word for a bar where the music was energetic, and folks were dancing, to introduce "Rock & Roll" as the name for raucous music that gets you moving and shaking.
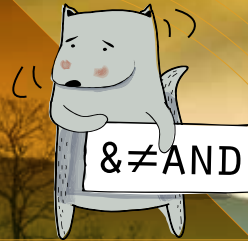
ampersand

WHAT EDITORS LOOK FOR

The title is pretty self-explanatory. But, to clarify, this section is a compilation of things to keep in mind when you are writing, tweeting, creating a website, laying out a report or communicating. Editors and proofreaders will look at these issues and cringe—and maybe even throw staplers—when they see the following grammar infractions.

WHAT IS IN THIS SECTION, AND WHERE IT IS

WHAT EDITORS LOOK FOR

EXTRA SPACE AFTER PERIOD

The story of spaces after periods began with typesetters, then solidified with typewriters. The monospaced typists (those who used manual typewriters) always used two spaces after a period to ensure readability. One space would make the letters and punctuation too close for comfortable reading and cause dreaded eye strain. Luckily, word processing programs with proportional type and multiple font choices have negated this two-space rule forever.

○ ○ ○ ○ example

In grade 9 typing class, Alex was taught that a period had to

one space only

have two spaces after it. That is outdated.

GOOD TO KNOW 2

'Extra spaces after a • period are only for typewriters...

and only hipsters use typewriters.

WHAT EDITORS LOOK FOR

DATA, PLURALIZE?

Is the word "Data" a mass noun—one with a singular verb—or a count noun, the plural of datum, therefore using a plural verb? There is, of course, no firm answer to this. It depends on for whom you are writing. The meaning of "data" has shifted over the millennium to be more singular. If written for the academic or scientific field, as well as many publishers and newspapers, then plural count should be used.

IS ARE?

example

used as a plural count noun

The **data**, founded by the Institute of Inchworm Mechanics, **are** compelling but irrelevant.

used as a singular mass noun

The **data**, compiled by Louis, **is** taken from websites and paper mats found in restaurants.
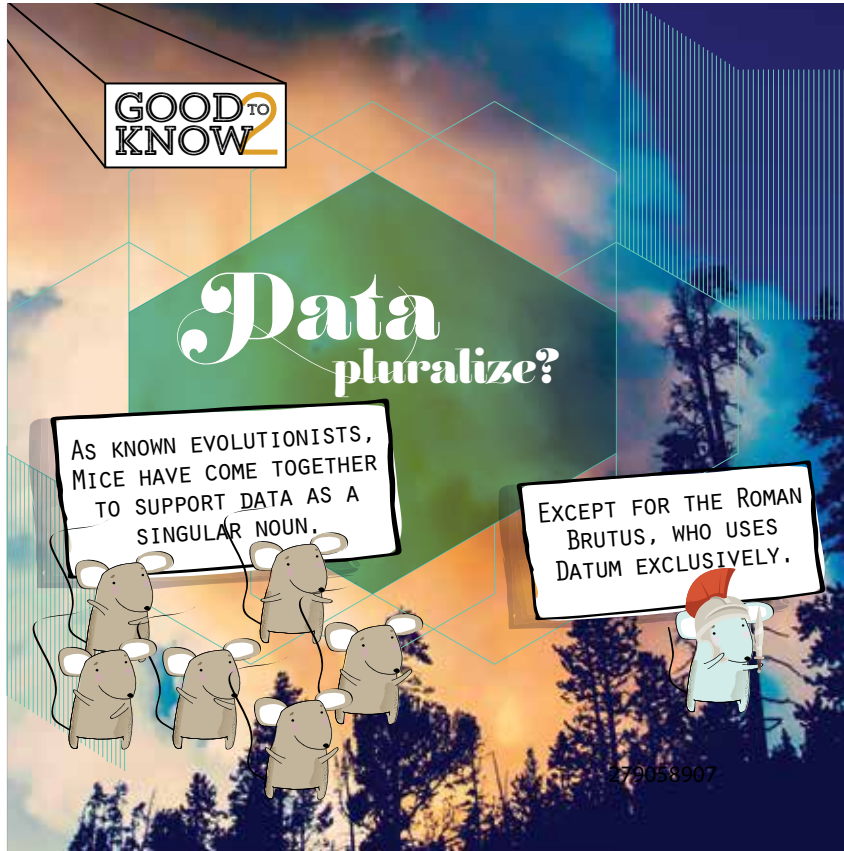
WHAT EDITORS LOOK FOR

INCOMPLETE COMPARISONS

Who else has seen this sentence? "The blue one is faster, better, stronger."

What is it faster, better or stronger than?

If you wish to assert your dominance over other products a comparison can be made, but you need to compare it to something.

SO: "Our product is faster, better, stronger than the red one."

-ER?

○ ○ ○ ○ example

Comparison made

Tina's greek salad is better, greener, tastier than Frankie's.

WHAT EDITORS LOOK FOR

DANGLING MODIFIERS

That title sounds terrifying, doesn't it? Those poor modifiers. Wait, what does this mean?

It occurs when a descriptive phrase doesn't apply to the noun that immediately follows it. It's easier to explain with an example:

"Sleeping my orchard, a serpent stung me." (Hamlet, Act 1, scene 5)

So Hammie, what are you trying to say? Is the serpent sleeping in the orchard or is Hamlet? Or was the orchard sleeping? Were there stinging serpents in England in the early 1600s?*

To make the sentence easier to understand, either change the sentence or add an explanation to it: "I was sleeping in my orchard when a serpent stung me."

*I was never able to deteremine the status of stinging serpents.

WHAT?

○ ○ ○ ○ | example

this sentence needs some clarification
on who is sipping cocktails

Sipping cocktails on the balcony, the moon looked magnificent.

WHAT EDITORS LOOK FOR

ORPHANS AND WIDOWS

In typography, you want to avoid having single words as the last line of a paragraph as well as a single line of text at the beginning or the end of a column or page.

Why? A lonely single word at the end of a paragraph creates a visual interruption in the flow that breaks the reader's focus. This break caused by the unexplained white space that calls more attention than necessary to that single word. Similarly, a line or word of text that jumps to the next page/column or starts a page/column should be avoided for the same reason.

A widow is a very short line—usually one word, or the end of a hyphenated word—at the end of a paragraph or column. A widow is considered poor typography because it leaves too much white space between paragraphs or at the bottom of a page.

ALL ALONE

○ ○ ○ ○ example

orphan
Andy
liked to walk away with all the
widow
sauerkraut.

GOOD TO KNOW 2

An orphan starts alone, a widow ends alone.

THESE ARE TYPESETTING TERMS AND NOT SOME EVIL NURSERY RHYMEY THING WE SING TO BE MEAN. ;)

WHAT EDITORS LOOK FOR

DIGITS

The simple rule, the one illustrated on the right, is not the only rule for this predicament. The rule is pretty controversial, and style guides differ when trying to nail it down. The Chicago Manual of Style recommends spelling out numbers from zero to one hundred and, after that, any whole numbers (like eighty-five thousand or one billion). The manual then recommends numerals for anything in between (like 4,578 or 735).

The Associated Press Style book, on the other hand, says zero to nine should be spelled out, then digits used after—until one million is reached.

Here are some other rules to remember:

- spell out if beginning a sentence
  Twenty-six casualties

- hyphenate all compound numbers until ninety-nine

- hyphenate all fractions (usually fractions are expressed as figures except when beginning a sentence)
  Seven-eighths of the job is complete

- figures over a thousand use a comma
  3,009 ants are crawling toward me

- sum of money under a dollar should be written out
  not as *$0.74 but seventy-four cents*

- time of day: usually digits except when using noon or midnight (which is preferable to 12:00). Some writers prefer to spell out the time, particularly when using o'clock.
  Elias goes home at three o'clock.

- decimals are usually expressed as figures. Many put zeros in front of decimals as a courtesy.
  That guy grew 0.6 m last year.

- use the simplest word choice to express large numbers
  Use eleven hundred guests **not** *one thousand and one hundred guests*

- do not capitalize decades except when they begin a sentence
  During the seventies, hair bands became popular.

- sometimes when writing about a decade, a writer will choose to use figures, a apostrophes can be used either before or after the number but not in both places.
  During the '50s, the Big Bopper had a huge hit with "Chantilly Lace".
  not *During the '50's, the Big Bopper had a huge hit with "Chantilly Lace".*

GOOD TO KNOW 2

write out numbers

one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight & nine.
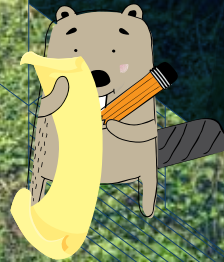
NUMERALS AFTER THAT.
(10 LOGS TO GNAW,
11 LOGS TO GNAW...)

WHAT EDITORS LOOK FOR

KERN VS. LEADING

Have you ever looked at a phrase in an advertisement and wondered where one word started and the other ended? Or seen a word with its letters so close together you feel like you should mumble when you say it? That is all kerning, baby. The space between letters is measured in points and has a range between -25 and 25 are ideal depending on the font. Try not to have too many words kerned differently in a sentence. It just looks weird.

Leading is the space between the lines of text in a paragraph. Use too much, and you lose the idea of a paragraph; use too little, and the letters may mingle too close and muddle the words.

○   ○   ○   ○ | example

Kern = 0
Can you read this? Nice.

Kern = -25
How about this? A little squished.

Kern = -100
Now this? Too tight too tight, aaaagh.

Leading = 18/8
Can you read this?
A little close.

Leading = -18/2
How about this?
Too close! Too close!!!

Leading = 18/33
Can you read

this?

WHAT EDITORS LOOK FOR

RGB VS. CMYK

Proofreaders or editors do not check colours but forget this rule and a printer will get cranky.

RGB means the red, green and blue model of colour. These colours are added together in various ways to reproduce a broad array of colours based on the human perception of colors. It is mainly used to display images in electronic systems, such as televisions and computers. Use only for online images.

CMYK means cyan, magenta, yellow and key (black—as it is usually used as an outline and printed first). It works by partially or entirely masking colors on a lighter, usually white, background. The ink reduces the light that would otherwise be reflected. Such a model is subtractive because inks "subtract" brightness from white. This method is used by printers to make vibrant reproductions therefore when printed use the CMYK colour model.

example

on-line colour

Providing the printer images in RGB has made the colourful piece look muddy and lackluster. The CMYK images are clearly defined and vibrant.

printer colour

WHAT EDITORS LOOK FOR

FOOTNOTES

Footnotes are the acceptable method of acknowledging material which is not your own when you use it in an essay. Basically, footnoted material is of three types:

1. Direct quotations from another author's work. (These must be placed in quotation marks).

2. Citing authority for statements which are not quoted directly.

3. Material of an explanatory nature which does not fit into the flow of the body of the text.

Text that is footnoted should be marked with a raised number (or to use the technical term, superscripted) immediately following the words or ideas that are being cited.

Footnotes should be placed after the punctuation sign to make sure the footnote will be understood as concerning the whole sentence. Otherwise, it would be considered as concerning the word or phrase directly beside where it is placed.

2.2

○   ○   ○   ○   example

footnote for full sentence

The theory was first put forward in 1987.[1]

footnote for "recent studies"

The 1987 theory was refuted by several recent studies[3].

WHAT EDITORS LOOK FOR

VOICE

PASSIVE VOICE

We all want our writing to be read and enjoyed, right?

It helps to use an active voice instead of a passive one.

What does this mean? It's kind of a complicated thing to describe. Active voice means having the object of your sentence at the beginning of a sentence instead of at the end. This structure will make it less confusing for your reader. Passive voice is when you have an object (a noun that receives the action) as the subject of a sentence. Typically, the purpose of the sentence appears at the end, following a verb. Passive writing isn't as precise as active writing. Think Yoda.

○   ○   ○   ○   example

active voice
Brody ate sixteen shrimp at dinner.

passive voice
At dinner, sixteen shrimp were eaten by Brody.
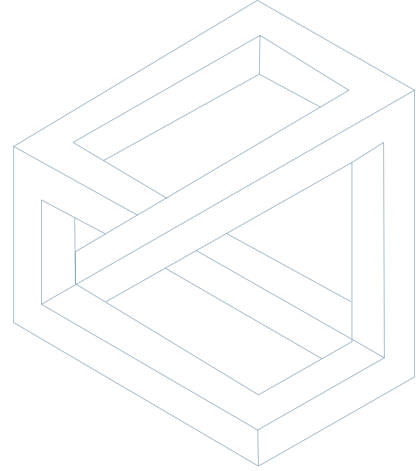
USE THE RIGHT WORD, PLEASE

This section could just be called homonyms. They are words that sound alike but have different meanings. Homophones are a type of homonym where words also sound alike and have different meanings, but have different spellings. Just call them "those frustrating words that can destroy your credibility in just one reading". Yeahhhhhh.

WHAT IS IN THIS SECTION, AND WHERE IT IS

USE THE RIGHT WORD, PLEASE

ITS OR IT'S

Homonyms are words that sound alike but have different meanings. Homophones are a type of homonym where words also sound alike and have different meanings, but have different spellings.

The difference between *its* and *it's* is difficult for some people. It is a common error when writing as it seems to conflict with proper grammar.

Its is the possessive form of *it*. Written without an apostrophe even through an apostrophe is usually required. This is similar to words like his and hers, neither of which needs an apostrophe.

It's is a contraction of *it is* or *it has*.

ITS
IT'S

○   ○   ○   ○ | example

owns it   contraction

Its coat was red but it's not the right colour of red to blend into the background.
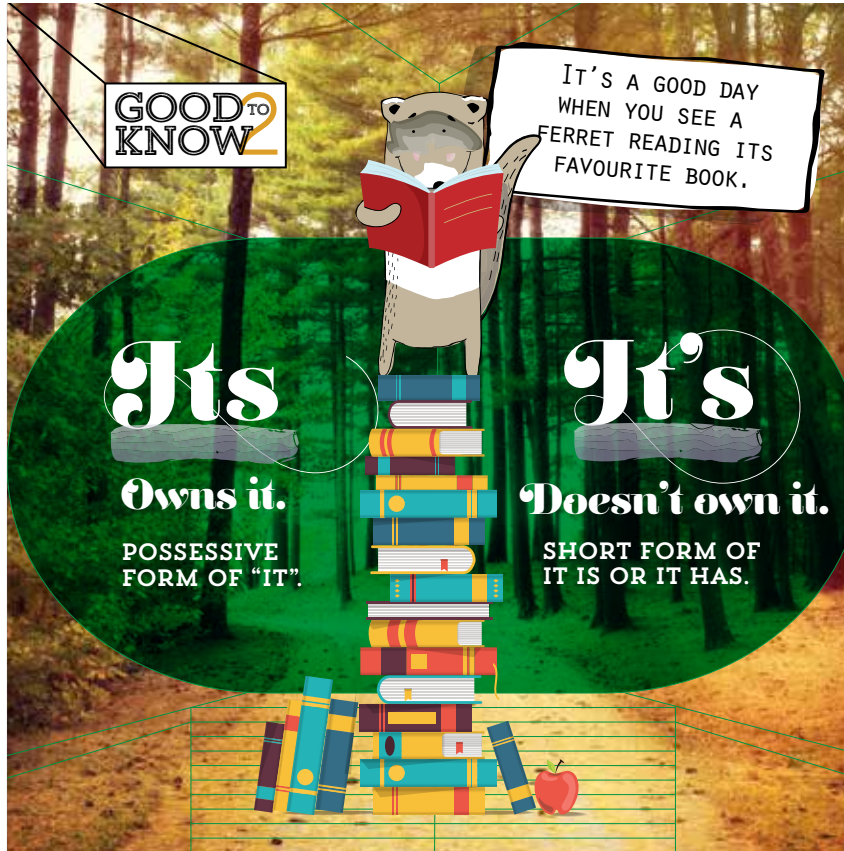
USE THE RIGHT WORD, PLEASE

YOUR OR YOU'RE

The same confusing rules for *its* and *it's* also applies for the words *your* and *you're*.

Your is the possessive form of you, meaning *it is yours*. *Your*, without an apostrophe, is a possessive form, where *an* apostrophe is usually required. It is similar to words like his and hers, neither of which needs an apostrophe but are still possessive.

You're is a contraction of *you are*.

YOUR
YOU'RE

○　○　○　○　example

contraction

Lori exclaimed, as she stomped away, "you're a jerk and

owns it

keep your opinions to yourself."

USE THE RIGHT WORD, PLEASE

THERE THEIR THEY'RE

THERE, THEIR OR THEY'RE

How many texts, blogs, and messages have you disregarded or even outright scorned for their usage of this same-sounding-yet-different-meaning trinity of misery?

- *there* is used as a direction or even, at times, a command.
- *their* is the possessive form of *they* or can be used as a high level of respect for station.
- *they're* is the contraction of *they are*.

If you find yourself coming up blank when trying to determine which one to use, take a hint from the spelling of each:

- *there* has the word *here* in it. *There* is your choice for talking about places, whether figurative or literal.
- *their* has the word *heir* in it, which can remind you that the term indicates possession.

They're has an apostrophe, which tells you that it's the product of two words: *they are*. If you can substitute *they are* into your sentence and retain the meaning, then *they're* is the correct homophone to use!

---

example

location
Hey **there**, can you tell me where to find the Jacksons?

owns it   contraction
Could they be in **their** restaurant? It is important **they're**

around for the proclamation.

USE THE RIGHT WORD, PLEASE

TO OR TOO

This is a short story of two, too, to and tutu (just kidding).

- *two* is a number,
- *too* means as well or in excess,
- *to* is an action or location, and
- *tutu* is a tulle skirt wore by ballerinas.

When trying to determine which to use think about how "too" has more letters, like there is an excess of "O"s. The other words "two and to" are pretty easy to figure out after that. A "W" for "what" number and two letters for the two definitions to has (locations or actions).

TO, TOO

○　○　○　○　example

It is **too** late **to** go **to** Fort Smith via the ice road as it has

in excess　*action*　*location*

melted and the mosquitoes are bad, **too**.

as well

USE THE RIGHT WORD, PLEASE

LITERALLY

"I literally feel the bugs crawling all over me." This sentence is cringe-worthy in many respects. First, ewww~, bugs. Second, *literally* means that the bugs are "in reality" crawling all over the person. I am hoping this is not true and the person speaking is just feeling like there are bugs all over them.

LITERALLY

○ ○ ○ ○ | example |

This morning [wrong] literally felt like forever.

This morning, Michaela was [correct] literally stuck in traffic,

so getting to work felt like forever.

USE THE RIGHT WORD, PLEASE

INTO OR IN TO

People tend to confuse *into*, spelled as one word, with the two words *in to*. To decide which is right for your sentence, remember that into is a preposition that shows what something is within or inside (a movement). As separate words, *in* and *to* tend to wind up next to each other, coincidentally.

So if you're trying to decide which to use, first figure out if the words "in" or "to" actually modify other words in the sentence. If they don't, ask yourself if it's indicating some sort of movement. If it does, you're good to use "into."

INTO
IN TO

○   ○   ○   ○   example

movement

Gunner must be put **into** her carrier so we can go to the vet.

modifier

Diane dropped **in to** talk about Maple.

USE THE RIGHT WORD, PLEASE

ME OR I

We can easily tell the difference between these two words, until it comes time to use one in a written sentence. You would say:

When you get done with that layout, can you send it to Eric and I?

But that's wrong.

Now try taking Eric out of that sentence; it sounds weird, right? You would not ask someone to send something to "I" when he or she is done. The reason it sounds weird is because "I" is the object of that sentence, and "I" should not be used as an object. In that situation, you'd use "me."

When you get done with that layout, can you send it to Eric and me?
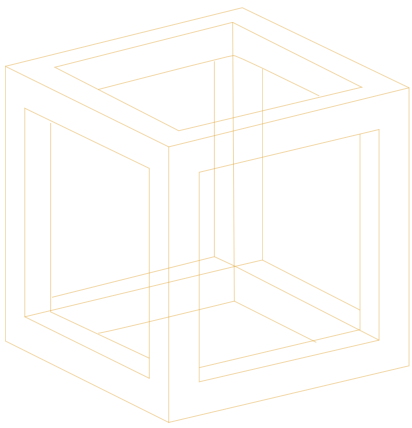
That sounds better.

ME

I

○ ○ ○ ○ example

subject of verb
Peter and I watched Breaking Bad.
object of verb
Amy took Allana and me to the classroom.

THE OFT-
CONFUSED

Like the previous section, the following are words that are annoying and tricky to get right. I hope this helps you choose wisely.

WHAT IS IN THIS SECTION, AND WHERE IT IS

THE OFT-CONFUSED

AFFECT VS. EFFECT

Affect and *effect* are homonyms, which means that they sound very similar but are not the same. This makes it annoyingly hard to remember when each should be used.

A good mnemonic device to remember the meaning of each is the word RAVEN: "Remember affect is a verb and effect is a noun." So *affect* is a verb which means it is an action word which is to be used when actively doing something. "The dangling leash affects Aaron—it makes him run around like a crazy dog." *Effect* is a noun that is the result of an action: "The dog leash smells like dog drool as an effect of Aaron biting it all the time."

AFFECT
EFFECT

○ ○ ○ ○ example

The crow knew the [noun] effect of watching the ravens. He also knew it was [verb] affecting the ravens.

GOOD TO KNOW 2

DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN
AFFECT AND
EFFECT

Reminder
Affect is a
Verb
Effect is a
Noun

THE OFT-CONFUSED

THEN VS. THAN

Choosing between then or than can be difficult since they are only a single letter apart and sound pretty close to each other. If you're not sure which word to use and when, don't worry—here is an easy way to remember it:

- *then* indicates **time** and both words have the letter *e* in them
- *than* makes **comparisons** and both words have an *a* in them.

THEN, THAN

○ ○ ○ ○ | example

Marc ate, **then** went to the movies; that is when he realized that fish sat better **than** the fried chicken.

THE OFT-CONFUSED

FEWER VS. LESS

The difference between fewer and less is traditionally all about counting. If what you are comparing can be counted with numbers then it is *fewer*, whereas *less* is reserved for when you are comparing a singular noun. This would mean that *fewer* is for when there are many and *less* is for the one. This is the counting rule.

Time, money, distance and weight are exceptions to this rule as they can be counted but are thought of as a singular amount. You would use *is* as the singular present verb when any of the four exceptions are used as a noun in a sentence. For example: "We think $1,000 *is* a lot of money." versus we would use "He *had* less than $1.00 on him." The reasoning behind this is the "singular or plural" rule which takes into consideration that certain nouns, even though they can be counted, are still viewed as singular concepts.

This counting rule, however, can get us in trouble. People can view phrases like "one less person" as incorrect. Even though it is a singular noun, it is still viewed as an object which can be counted. The best practice is to rewrite your sentence. For example, change "one less apple" to "take away one apple".

FEWER
LESS

○ ○ ○ ○ example

correct

There are fewer peanuts on my plate, so I guess it will take

correct

less time to shell them than all the peanuts on your plate.

THE OFT-CONFUSED

BETWEEN VS. AMONG

As prepositions, these two joining words can easily be mixed up. The traditional rule is that *between* is used when naming distinct, individual items (can be 2, 3, or more) and *among* is used when the items are part of a group, or are not specifically named. We can walk *between* the trees or *among* them. When *between* is used we are *between* two defined trees or on a path. When *among* is used we are surrounded by trees; and wandering through a group of them.

BETWEEN
AMONG

○   ○   ○   ○ | example |

correct
I had to choose between three shirts: the red, the white
correct
and the blue. Among them, I like the red one the best.

THE OFT-CONFUSED

ELUDE VS. ALLUDE

By Jove! Why does the English language love to taunt us with words that sound exactly... the... same! How are we to know when to use which?!

Elude is used when you are trying to stay away from something or someone. *(Tip: E̲lude = E̲scape)*

Allude is for all the writers out there who like to say things that sometimes mean something else. It means to refer to casually, or indirectly, or to contain a casual or indirect reference. *(Tip: A̲llude = a direct reference is A̲bsent)*

ELUDE
ALLUDE

○ ○ ○ ○ example

to escape

The real reason for Hanna's sadness has eluded her

to refer to

friends. She alluded to the cause by simply saying,

"We've all made sacrifices."

GOOD TO KNOW 2

Adrien has eluded the police for years, yet when he was finally apprehended, he alluded to previous crimes.

Elude
to escape from

Allude
to refer to

ACCURATE CREATIVE
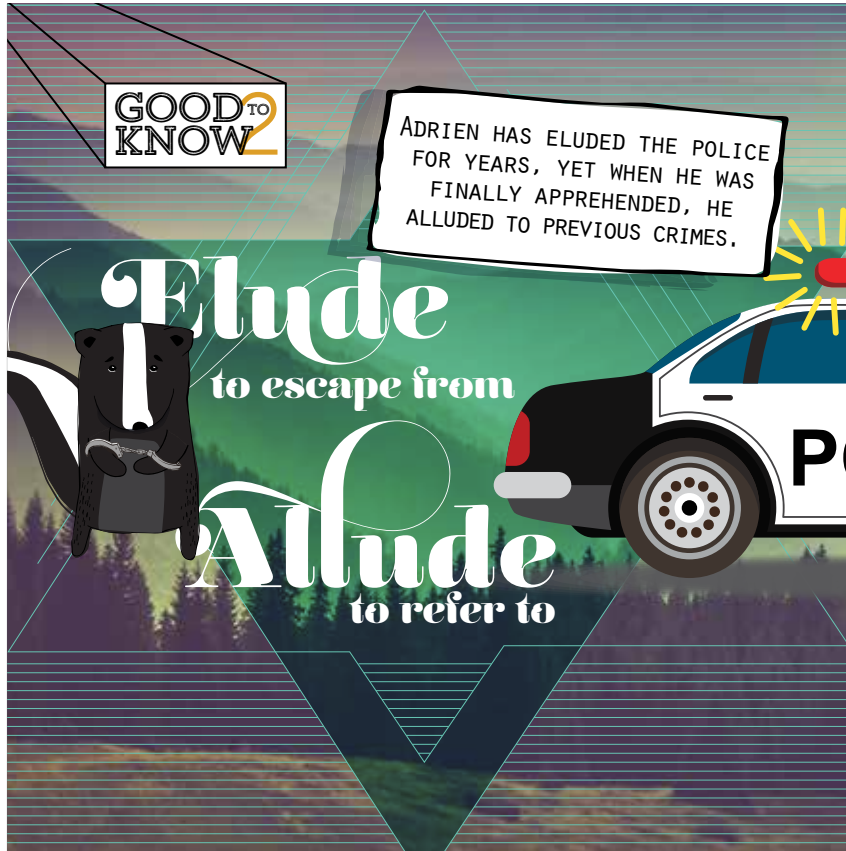
THE OFT-CONFUSED

ADVICE VS. ADVISE

Ok, someone who trusts you, and with whom you have shared long hours talking about hot chocolate and polar bears comes to you and poses a question. What do you do? Give advice or advise him to seek the answers himself. The choice is yours. All I ask is that you remember that advice is different than to advise.

A single letter difference and the word changes from a verb to a noun. It is either the act or the action. English language at its most infuriating.

An easy way to remember is advice is a noun, the act, and so is ice (tucked into word advice) a necessary element when discussing polar bears.

And advise is a verb, an action, and within the word advise is the word is, another verb. It is something you do.

Now advise your friend with good advice.

ADVICE
ADVISE

○　○　○　○　example

Skylar had a problem with snowballs until her brother **advised** [verb] her to packed them tighter. That was good **advice** [noun].
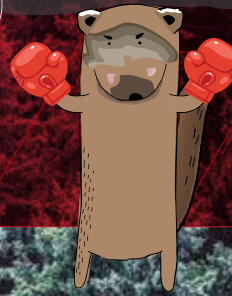
THE OFT-CONFUSED

WHO VS. WHOM VS. WHOSE VS. WHO'S

Who is used to identify a living pronoun. If you asked, "Who took my stuffed fox?" the answer could be a person, like Trevor ("Trev did"), or another living being ("the cat did").

Whom is usually used to describe someone who's receiving something, like a letter—"To whom will it be addressed?" But it can also be used to describe someone on the receiving end of an action, like in this sentence: *Whom did we feature in the latest podcast?*

Whose is used to assign ownership to someone. Like in this sentence: *Whose pen is this?*

Who's, on the other hand, is used to identify a living being. It's a contraction for "who is". Like: *Who's up to watch hockey?*

See the difference? "Whose" is used to figure out who something belongs to, whereas "who's" is used to identify someone who's doing something.

WHO
WHOM

○ ○ ○ ○ example

IDs   receiver

Who left this letter "to whom it may concern" on

            owner   contraction

my desk? Whose stapler is beside it and who's able

to take it back to the supply cabinet?

THE OFT-CONFUSED

PEEK VS. PEAK VS. PIQUE

These are other homophones that make your mountain adventure diary writing more ripe for spelling mistakes.

Peek is taking a quick look at something—like a sneak peek of a new movie.

Peak is a sharp point—like the peak of a mountain or a hat.
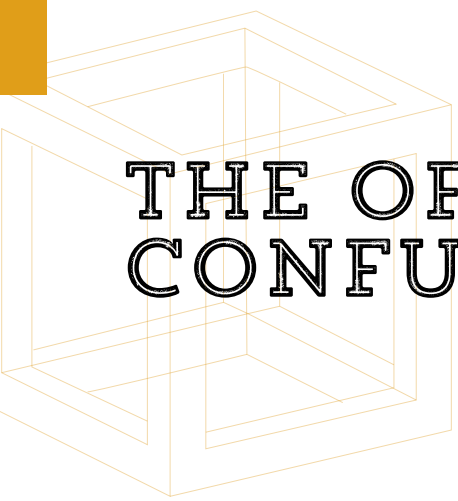
Pique means to provoke or instigate—you know, like your interest.

Now, how do you remember this? L<u>oo</u>k has two concurrent Os whereas p<u>ee</u>k has two concurrent Es. Peak has an A within, and an "A" is the top of the alphabet, cleverly, the "A" looks like a mountain as well. Pique has an "I" like the word interest.

PEEK
PEAK
PIQUE

○ ○ ○ ○ | example

Let's take a **peek** [look] at the **peak** [top] of Mount Olympus which **piqued** [provoke] Zeus' interest.

THE OFT-CONFUSED

LOSE VS. LOOSE

Lose is a verb that means: to be unable to find (something or someone), to fail to win (a game, contest, etc.), or to fail to keep or hold (something wanted or valued)." It's like losing your mind or losing a hockey game. Think lost.

Loose is an adjective that means: not tightly fastened, attached, or held, like loose clothing or a loose tooth.

LOSE
LOOSE

○ ○ ○ ○ example

verb   adjective
Did you lose your loose change, Gabriella?
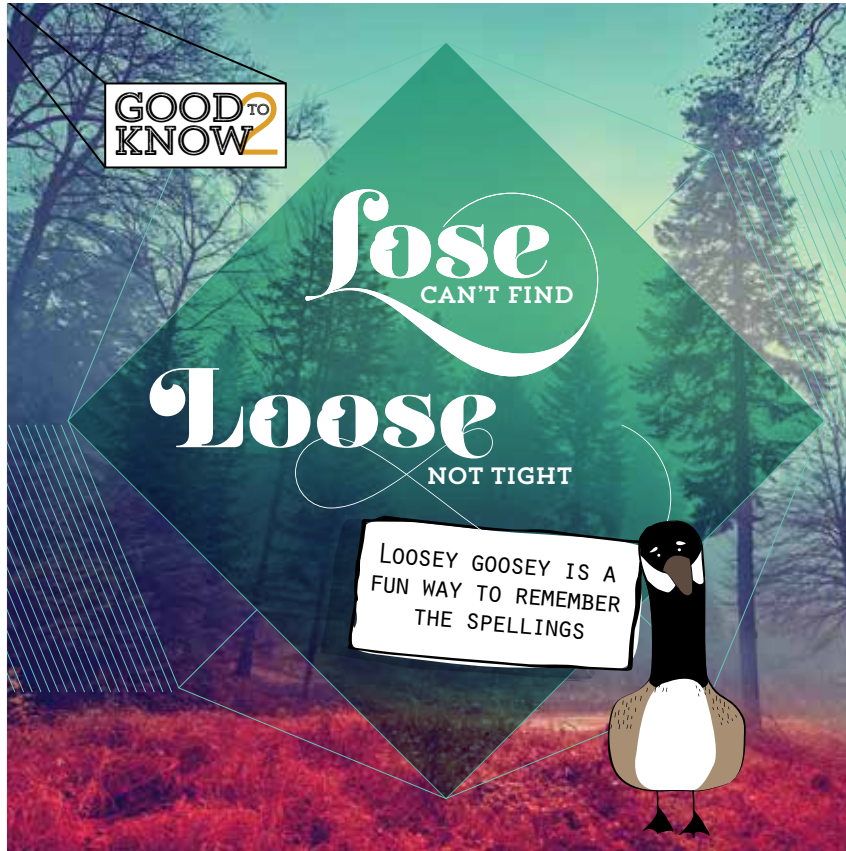
LATIN

Ever wondered why Latin is still around? I mean, isn't it one of those classical languages, out-dated and created thousands of years ago by a fallen civilization.

Technicaly yes but actually, no.

It is the mother of our language. To study it makes the experience of reading much deeper and more fulfilling. Latin has one of the most perfect and systematic grammar systems known to western civilizations, and when learned it will not only help you understand English better but will help you learn to be more logical in your thinking all around. Latin is not dead; it's eternal.

WHAT IS IN THIS SECTION, AND WHERE IT IS

LATIN

E.G. AND I.E.

These two abbreviations really help in the precision of your words. E.g. is short for *exampli gratis* or *for example*. I.e. is Latin for *id est* which means *in essence* or *in other words*. They are practical and let us make impressive use of a classical language. A good way to remember is to think *egg-sample* for e.g. as it is an example.

E.G.
I.E.

○   ○   ○   ○   example
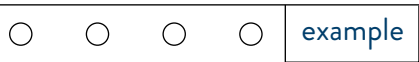
for example

Trevor liked all green foods (e.g. cucumber, broccoli, beer).

in essence

The standard tax applies (i.e. 7%).
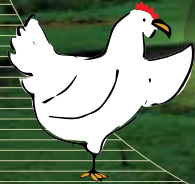
LATIN

AD HOC

This Latin phrase means *for this* or *for this situation*. Currently it is used to describe something that has been formed or used for a special and immediate purpose, without previous planning.

Ad hoc can be used as an adjective or an adverb.

- *ad hoc* used as an adjective:
  The mayor appointed an ad hoc committee to study the project.
  We had to make some ad hoc changes to the plans.
  We'll hire more staff on an ad hoc basis.

- *ad hoc* used as an adverb:
  The decisions were made ad hoc.

AD HOC

example

The business plan states that it deals with problems
on an **ad hoc** basis.
as it happens

LATIN

IBID

Have you ever had to make or read a bibliography? Well, alongside the riveting plot line, they tend to be full of abbreviations and unique codes. This list is to ensure you fully understand the gist of the document. And now you can feel slightly superior that you do understand more of these codes.

To help us, plebs here is one of those secret codes— decoded!! Ibid. means "in the same place (in a book)". It is an abbreviation for ibidem. I feel better now, don't you?

IBID

○   ○   ○   ○   example

1. Stark, Evyn. *Vanishing Wildlife of North America.* Ottawa, ON:

Terry Fox Elementary School, 2017.

in the
same place
2. Ibid.

LATIN
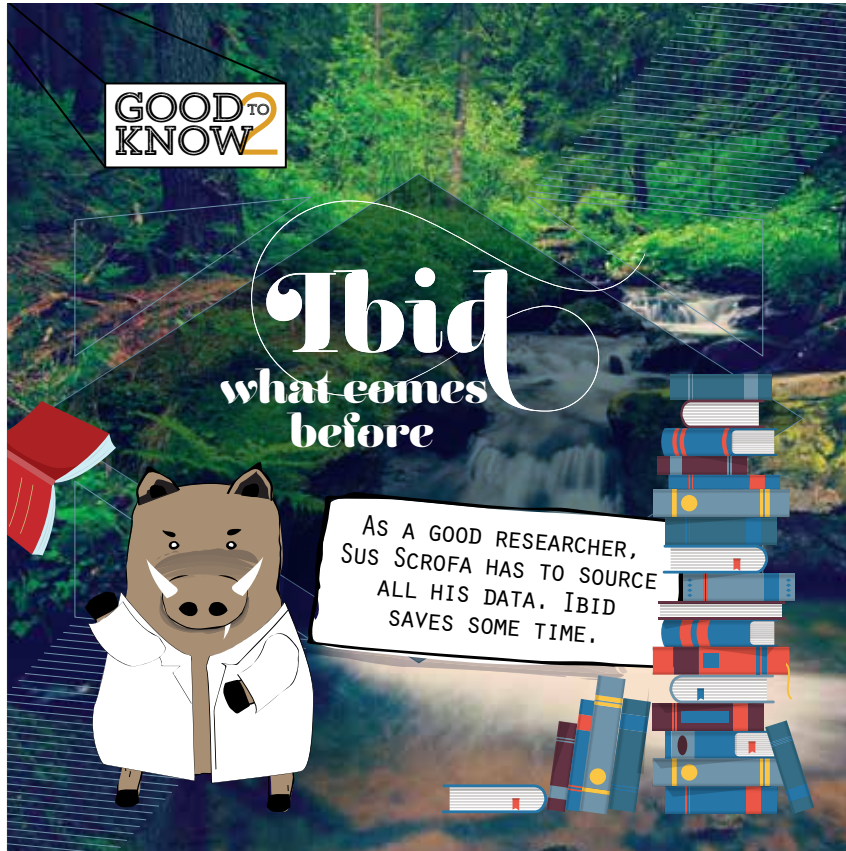
CIRCA

Circa is used mostly in historical writing when the dates of events are not accurately known. It should only be used for dates that have occurred in the past. If used in date ranges, then it must precede each approximate date.

When *circa* is not used in historical text, you can assume that the date is a certainty.

Another Latin term used in historical date stamping is *floruit* (fl. or occasionally, flor.), which means "he/she flourished". This would proceed the date or period during which a person was known to have been alive or active.

CIRCA

○   ○   ○   ○   example

Shane was not certain of the exact date, but he believed the artifact dates back to circa 100 BC.

around this time

LATIN

DE FACTO

This Latin word describes practices that exist but can not be verified by law. A fact that is not a legitimate fact and will not win any legal cases, but most people will smugly think it is true. Think fake news, urban myths, and fairy tales. Ok, not exactly, as there usually isn't any malfeasance, but always double check when someone uses this term.

In contrast, if you want lawyers to be happy and if you have all the facts, you will use de jure which means "of law."

DE FACTO

○　○　○　○　example

considered
a fact

The de facto king of the Northern woods would obviously be

the mighty Sasquatch.

LATIN

ERGO
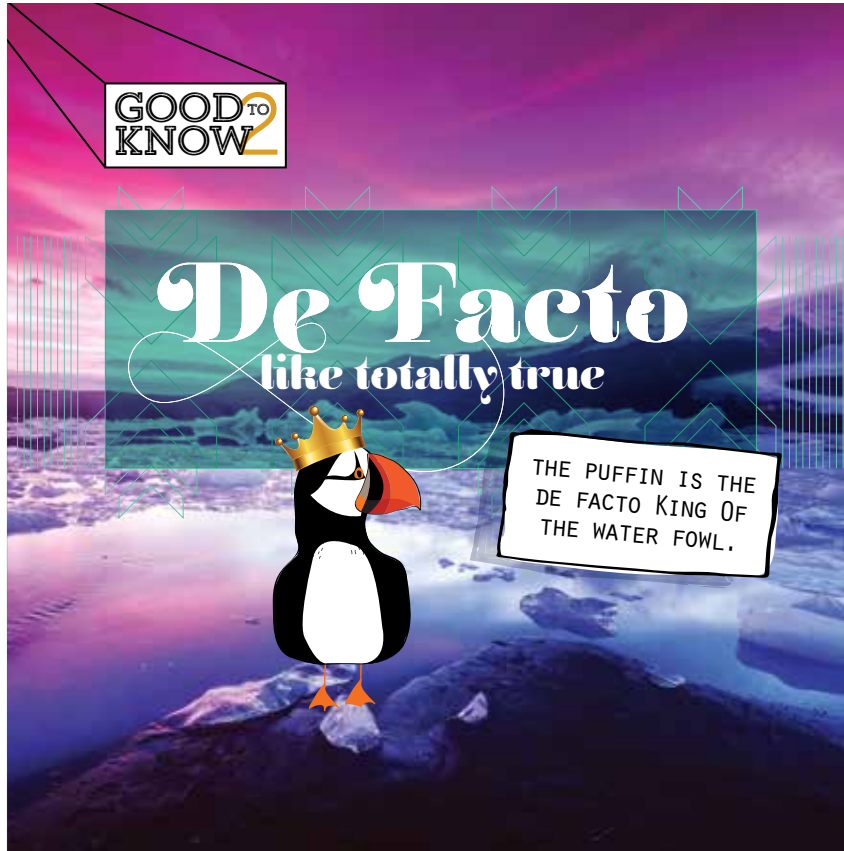
ET CETERA

Yada, yada, yada...

Et cetera (abbreviated to etc., etc, &c., or &c) is a Latin expression that is used in English to mean "and other similar things", or "and so forth". Et means 'and'; cētera means 'the rest'. In Latin, the expression means "and the rest (of such things)". So, as I said, yada, yada, yada. It indicates that there are other items in the list besides the ones you explicitly mention.

When "etc." is used in a sentence it must be followed by a comma. If it is at the end of sentence then the period serves as the final punctuation mark.

○   ○   ○   ○ | example |

The King of Siam in the movie *The King and I*, said "et cetera [and so forth], et cetera [and so forth], et cetera [and so forth]" to express his wide breadth of knowledge. This is similar to Elaine's use of "yadda, yadda, yadda" in the TV series Seinfeld.
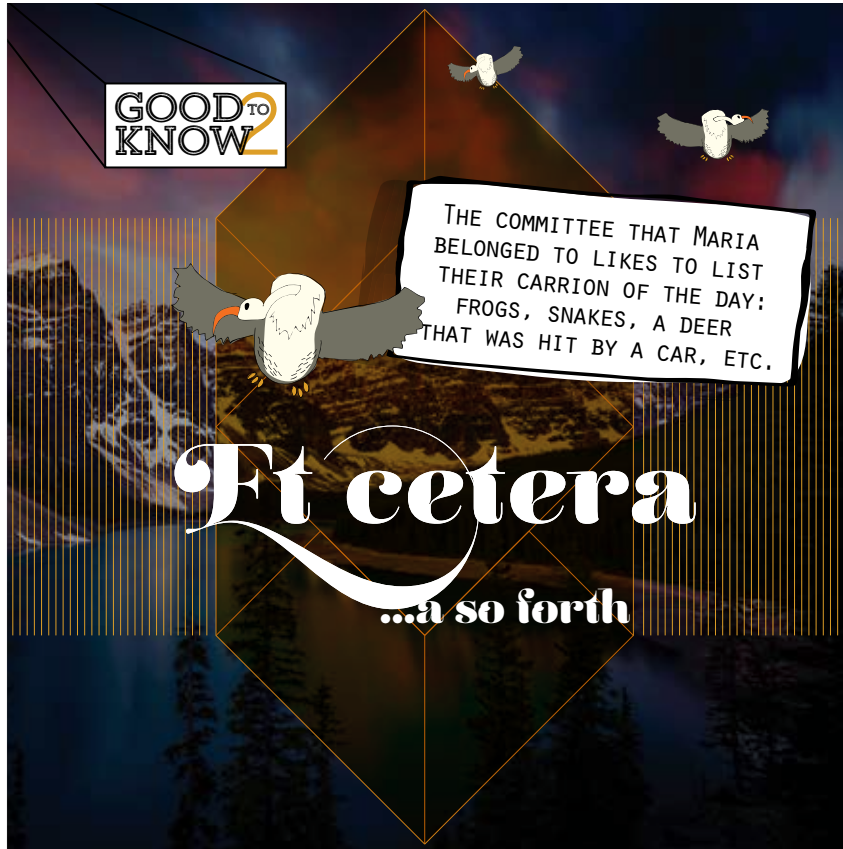
LATIN

ERGO

This Latin word is used in place of 'therefore' to introduce a group of words when describing the relationship between cause and an effect. The direct translation is "therefore, in consequence of," Possibly from *ex rogo meaning "from the direction," and from ex which means "out of" plus the root of regere or "to guide."

Usually, you will see "ergo" preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma. However, it can be used at the beginning of a sentence.

This term is generally thought to be archaic, but it is heard more and more often lately especially when the sentence demands a more tongue-in-cheek tone.

ERGO

○   ○   ○   ○   example

Stacey thought Latin words added credibility to her
<small>hence or therefore</small>
letters; ergo, she uses them whenever she can.
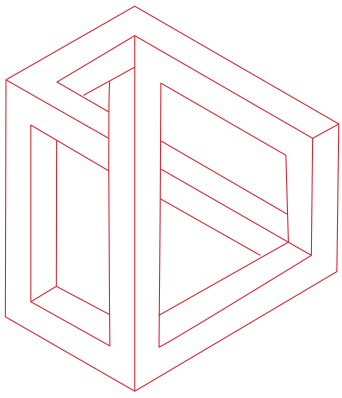
ABBREVIATIONS

The dawning of social media has created a whirlwind of words. Information is robust and accessible that it is becoming impossible to read and understand it all. This phenomenal also causes the plague of the computer age: carpal tunnel. So, to protect those sore wrists from typing too much, people have been reducing words and phrases into abbreviations. Fewer words, however, mean much more confusion. Here are some abbreviations that will help you navigate them and help make sense of this chaos.

BUSINESS

B2B: This "business to business" label refers to companies that are selling to other companies.

B2C: On the other hand, "business to consumer" designates a company that is selling to individuals.

CMGR: This is the abbreviation for "community manager."

CMS: A "content management system" is the tool you use for editing, scheduling and publishing any written material for the web.

CPC: The "cost per click" is the dollar amount an advertiser pays for every person who clicks on an ad.

CPM: "Cost per thousand" is the cost of 1,000 ad impressions per webpages.

CR: The "conversion rate" is a simple equation: the number of people who *take* an action divided by the number who *could have*.

CTA: A "call to action" is a statement that asks the reader to do something. This is usually a specific action related to building the company's social presence or to getting involved in a marketing push.

CTR: The "clickthrough rate" is a particular type of conversion rate where the action being measured in is clicking on a link.

KPI: A "key performance indicator" is a metric your team or business uses to measure success in achieving goals. For social media, this could be a measurement of engagement, conversions, shares or clicks, depending on your purpose being on those networks.

PPC: "Pay per click" is a metric for advertising costs. It is the same as CPC.

PV: This stands for "page views."

ROI: "Return on investment" measures the money you make in relation to the money you spent to make it. It's a way of assessing the success of certain promotional or advertising efforts.

UGC: The term "user generated content" encompasses any written or visual material that the individuals using a platform create, from comments or blog posts, to photos or video clips.

TECHNICAL TERMS

API: An "application programming interface" is a set of rules for how pieces of software interact. Your social media management tools use the APIs of Facebook, Twitter and other networks to post and schedule.

ESP: Your "email service provider" used for sending emails. This can be an outside service used for email blasts to your audience or for powering your internal team communications.

HTML: You see these letters all the time, and they stand for "hyper text markup language." It's the coding language used to build all web pages.

ISP: An "Internet service provider" is an organization that provides services accessing and using the Internet.

RSS: A "really simple syndication" is a feed of all posted content from a source, usually a blog.

SaaS: This is an abbreviation for "software as a service," which is a subset of companies that are in the business of providing software programs.

SEM: "Search engine marketing" is how businesses leverage search engines for marketing purposes.

SEO: "Search engine optimization" is a form of SEM. It refers to the choices you make in your written content that are designed to make sure that your creations appear high in the rankings of the correct search terms.

TOS: "Terms of service." Just about any online service, including social networks, has a Terms of Service that you must agree to in order to use it. Marketers will want to keep an eye out for any limitations on business activity and details about ownership, both of your content and your data.

UI: The "user interface" is the on-screen display that a person uses to control a computer page.

UX: The "user experience" is a person's response and reaction to taking actions within a tool.

SOCIALLY SPEAKING

These are the kinds of acronyms and abbreviations you probably see all the time in casual on-line interactions.

AMA: Most notably used on Reddit, "ask me anything," refers to crowdsourced Q&A sessions.

AWOL: Away While Online

BAE: A term of endearment for your loved one, "Before anyone else".

BD: Big Deal

BF: Boyfriend

BFF: Best Friend Forever

BFN: Bye For Now

BRB: Be Right Back

BTW: By The Way

CC: Carbon Copy

CU: See You

CYL: See You Later, Check You Later, or Catch You Later

CX: Correction

DM: A "Direct message" is a messaging function on Twitter that allows you to send a private message to another user.

ELI5: Popular on Reddit, meaning "Explain like I'm five"; this acronym is used when someone is asking for a simple explanation of a complex topic.

FB: Facebook

FOMO: The "Fear of missing out" is real, you know it.

FTW: Often used sarcastically this term means "For the win". It can be used to add excitement or emphasis at the end of a social post.

FTFY: Fixed This For You

FYA or **FYE:** "For Your Amusement" or "For Your Entertainment" to ensure you are always amused.

GF: Girlfriend

G2G: Got to Go

GTI: Going Through It

H2H: "Here to Help" or "Heart to Heart" either way you are there for the other person.

HBD: Happy Birthday

HT or **H/T:** "Hat Tip" meaning a way of crediting or attributing something you're posting to someone else)

ICYMI: To keep you in on it "In case you missed it"

ICYWW: In Case You Were Wondering

IG or Insta: Instagram

IMO/IMHO: "In my opinion" "or "In my humble opinion" to make it known or emphasize that something you say is an opinion, not fact.

IRL: To let people know you are talking about something "in real life" and not in the Internet world.

IKR: "I know, right?" Affirmation or agreement with someone's statement.

JIC: "Just in case" is used in the event that you might need something, e.g. "Bring your sunscreen JIC."

JK: Just Kidding

KK: Cool, Okay (Kewl Kewl)

LMK: "Let me know" is basically telling you to write back that you understand.

LOL: Laugh Out Loud, please just type this don't say it in polite company ;)

MYOB: Mind Your Own Business

MT: "Modified Tweet" If a manual Retweet is edited for length, use MT to signify that you've changed the original author's words.

NSFW: "Not safe for work" This means that your discussion or content isn't suitable for work.

NBD: No Big Deal

NCT: Nobody Cares Though

NTW: Not To Worry

NVM: Nevermind

Obv or **Obvi:** Obviously

OH: Overheard

OMG: Oh My God

OMW: On My Way

OTD: Of The Day

PDA: Public Display of Affection

Pls or **Plz:** Please

POIDH: "Pictures Or It Didn't Happen", a slightly passive aggressive way of saying I need photographic proof, please.

PRT: Partial Retweet

PSA: Public Service Announcement

Q or **QQ**: Question or Quick Question

RN: Right Now

RLY: Really

RT: Retweet

RT: A "Retweet" is a Tweet that is re-shared to the followers of another user's Twitter account.

SMH: "Shaking my head" If you find something really stupid and you don't have the words to respond.

SO or **S/O**: Shout Out

SRSLY: "Seriously" So glad someone took out those pesky vowels, eh?!

TBH: "To be honest"—when someone wants to emphasize that they are giving their honest opinion, often used for negative feedback, e.g. "TBH I don't like those sunglasses."

TMI: Too Much Information, not sure why my kids keep telling me this???

TY: Thank You

TYVM: Thank You Very Much

TL;DR: "Too long; didn't read" When someone hasn't read what you've written but wants to reply anyway. Also used to give a brief synopsis of a post or article.

TTYL: Talk To You Later

TYT: Take Your Time

YOLO: "You only live once" Often said before (or after) you take a risk in life. Also, if you did something stupid and jokingly want to justify it, e.g. "I shouldn't have eaten that poison ivy as a dare, but YOLO."

YSK: When "you should know" what someone is talking about.

YW: You're Welcome

ZOMG: Oh My God, but, like, more emphatic

OPINIONS AND REACTIONS

Since half of everyone's time online in spent reacting to things, and/or stating your opinion.

AFAIK: As Far As I Know

DGYF: "Dang Girl You Fine" I will have to say I have not used this much but there is still hope. ;)

FWIW: For What It's Worth

IDC: I Don't Care

IDK: I Don't Know

'CUS CUSSING CAN BE FUN

The fun of profanity without the full offence.

AYKMWTS: Are You Kidding Me With This Sh—?

BAMF: Bad Ass Mother F—er

FFS: For F—'s Sake

FML: F— My Life

HYFR: Hell Yeah F—ing Right

IDGAF: I Don't Give A F—

NFW: No F—ing Way

PITA: "Pain In The Ass" I will admit, I am worried that this could get confused with tasty, unleavened bread, IMO.

POS: Piece of Sh—

SOL: Sh— Outta Luck

STFU: Shut the F— Up

TF: The F—

WTF: What The F—