Business Writing: "Word Crimes" and Digital Blunders

Presented by:

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Polish Writing & Editing
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Polished Writing in the Workplace Is **More Important** Than Ever Before.
Why?

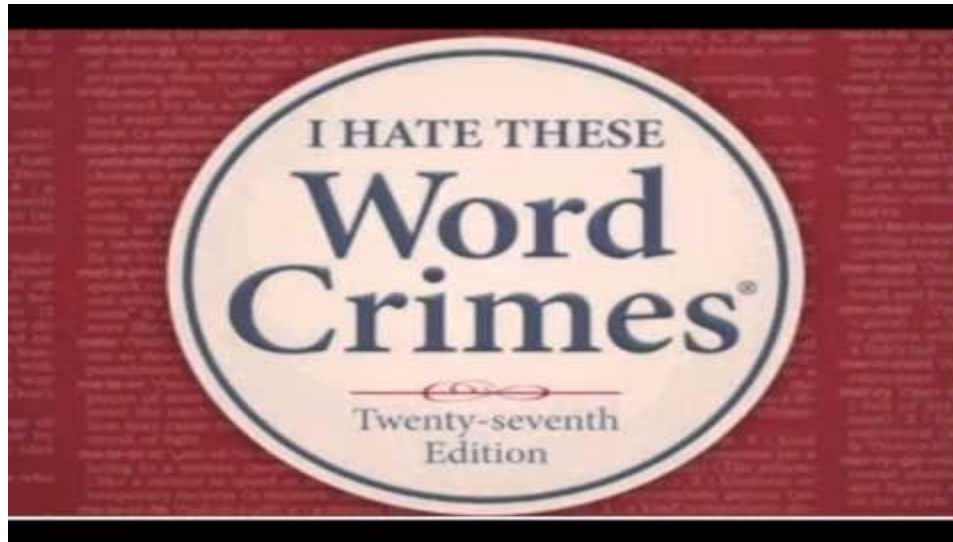# What Does Your Written Communication Say About You?

- Attentive to detail or careless?

- Rational or emotional?

- Organized or scattered?

- Confident or timid?

- Courteous or pushy?

Why does this matter?

Written Communication Should Be

- Easy to Understand.
- Hard(er!) to Ignore.

Grammar Matters!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Gv0H-vPoDc

Poor grammar can make you appear careless or unintelligent and can make your writing hard to understand.

Apostrophes

"I can't believe I went out with an apostrophe. He was so possessive."

Apostrophes

- Create Contractions
  - *don't, won't, can't, I'll, I'd*

- Show Ownership / Possession (of objects)
  - *The employee's report is impressive.* – singular subject
  - *Our employees' reports are impressive.* – plural subject
  - *John and Sara's report was impressive.* – two noun subjects sharing possession of the report
  - *John's and Sara's reports were impressive.* – two noun subjects possessing his or her own report
  - *John's and my report is impressive.* – noun and pronoun subjects sharing possession of the report (both subjects possessive)
  - *John's and my reports are impressive.* – noun and pronoun subjects possessing separate reports (both subjects possessive)

Apostrophes

- Show Ownership / Possession (of time and money)

  - *One year's time*

  - *Ten years' experience*

  - *Two weeks' notice*

  - *Five dollars' worth*

Apostrophes DO NOT Make Words Plural

Watch Last Names!

Wescotts not Wescott's
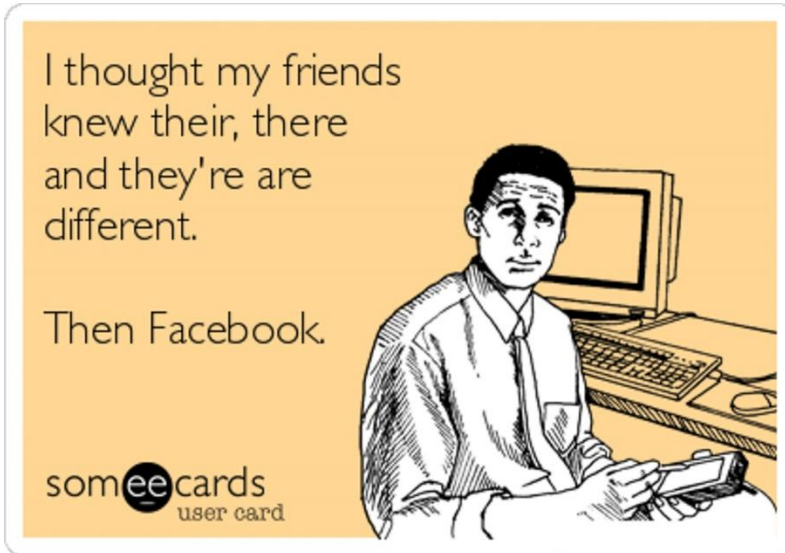
Foxes not Fox's

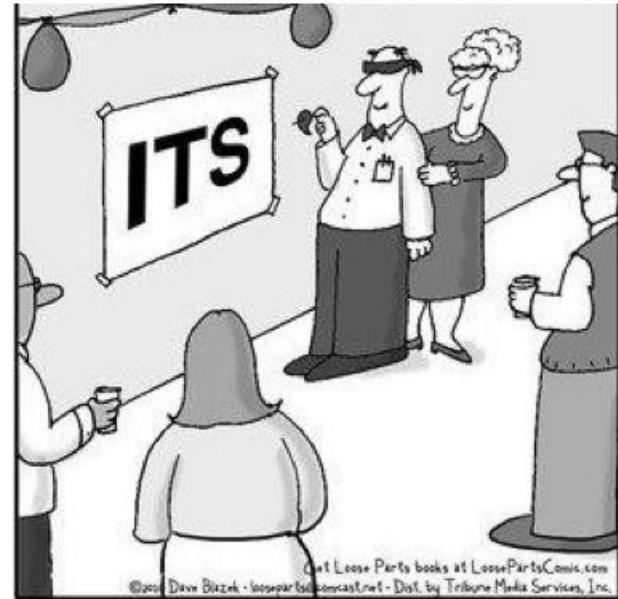Joneses no Jones's

Your OR You're?

There OR Their OR They're?

I thought my friends knew their, there and they're are different.

Then Facebook.

someecards
user card

ASK US
Fort Collins

For the record, it's not just at English teachers' parties that things get this out of hand.

ITS

The games get pretty crazy

It's OR Its

Commas

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"I have trouble with punctuation. I just don't have any comma sense."
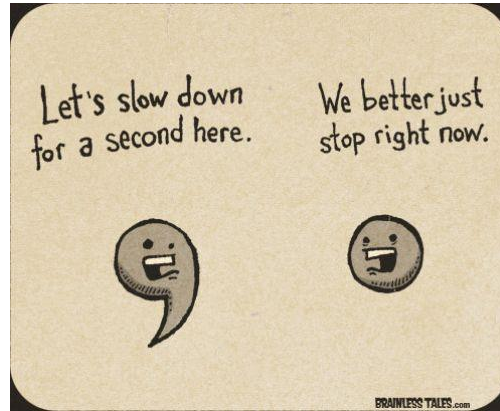
Incorrect:

- *I'm so glad it's Friday, I am going to enjoy the weekend.*

Correct:

- *I'm so glad it's Friday. I am going to enjoy the weekend.*

- *I'm so glad it's Friday; I am going to enjoy the weekend.*

- *I'm so glad it's Friday, and I am going to enjoy the weekend.*

KEEP CALM AND Avoid Comma Splices

Commas After Introductory Clauses / Phrases

After we finish discussing grammar we will better recognize "word crimes."

OR

After we finish discussing grammar, we will better recognize "word crimes."

Commas in a Series
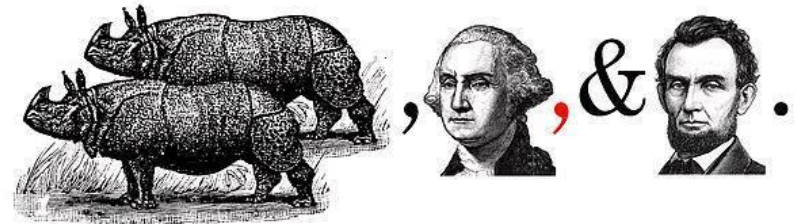
Use a Comma
Before the Name of Someone You Are Addressing

Let's eat Grandpa.
Let's eat, Grandpa.
Correct punctuation can save a person's life.

Thank you, Amy.
Hi, Amy.
Dear Amy

Confusing Words

- Compliment or Complement?
- Insure or Ensure or Assure?
- Affect or Effect?
- Farther or Further?
- Everyday or Every day?

- Lay or Lie?
- Principle or Principal?
- Good or Well?
- Number or Amount?
- Fewer or Less?

Interested in More Grammar Help?

- Grammar Girl
  - http://quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl

- Grammarly
  - https://www.facebook.com/grammarly

Email and Text Practices Matter

Do You Have a "Love-Hate" Relationship
with Email and Texting?

Want Help With the "Hate"?

Learn to Write E-mail and Texts That Are

Easy to Understand

and

Hard(er!) to Ignore

Smart Email and Texting Practices: First Things First

- Do not send anything via email or text that you wouldn't want published.

- Only send copies of an email or text to those who really need to see it.

Smart Email and Texting Practices: Writing Your Message

- Streamline your message to cover one main topic.

- Write a descriptive subject line.

- Open directly with a clear statement of your request or your response.

Smart Email and Texting Practices: Writing Your Message

- Look for ways to put content in lists (bullet points, numbered lists) instead of in paragraph form. For example:
  - Series of questions
  - List of topics to address
  - Instructions
  - What else?

Smart Email and Texting Practices: Writing Your Message

- When applicable, give a deadline for response AND a reason for that deadline.
  - *Please respond with answers to these questions by March 1 so I can complete the employee handbook prior to the summer hiring season.*

- Re-read your email or text before hitting send.
  - Spelling / Grammar Errors
  - Attachments Included

Smart Email and Texting Practices: Responding to Messages

- Set aside blocks of time each day to respond to your messages.

- Acknowledge receipt of all emails and texts, even if you can't yet respond in full.

- Respond immediately to email and texts that can be answered in two minutes or less.

Smart Email and Texting Practices: Responding to Messages

- Avoid replying to all unless it is necessary.

- Revise the subject line (of email) if the topic changes.

- Beware of adding someone late to a group email or text. Make sure that all previous correspondence is appropriate for the new receiver.

Questions

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417-527-0501

Reference

- Guffey, Mary Ellen and Dana Loewy. *Business Communication: Process & Product, 7th ed*. Mason: South-Western Cengage Learning, 2011.

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