

What's New at Charlie Fern Ink

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- Charlie Fern Ink becomes federal government contractor, applies for DBE/WBE certification.
- Charlie Fern Ink introduces new Speech of the Month Club subscription.

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Charlie Fern Ink, LLC, Embraces Change as the Firm Continues to Grow

Charlie Fern Ink, LLC, is proud to announce its official status as a government contractor. With this transition, the firm has acquired several new clients.

“This year we have focused on broadening our capabilities and building our client list, and our hard work has paid off. We established new relationships with nationally known figures and worked with federal agencies, including the White House and the State Department,” Ms. Fern said.

A new staff member, Ally Hugg, will help with the firm’s growing needs. Ally came on board in June and currently serves as the Office Manager and Executive Assistant to Charlie Fern, principal and owner.

“These welcome changes and additions will make a big difference not only for our business, but also for our clients,” said Ms. Fern.

“We look forward to further growth and development this year.”

The firm is finishing another important process – its certification as a DBE/WBE business

(Disadvantaged and Woman-Owned Business).

Please note our new contact information, the new office address is 12400 State Highway 71 West, Suite 395, Austin, TX 78738, and the new toll-free phone number, is 800-349-9048.



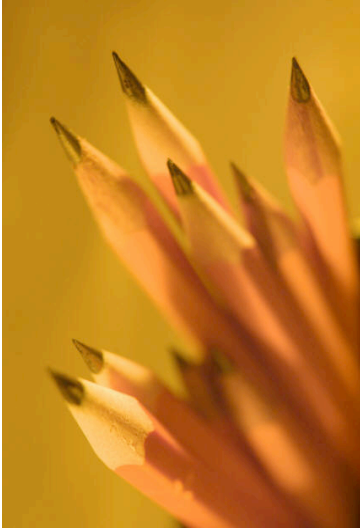
Speech of the Month Club

Subscribe to our Speech of the Month Club and receive ready-made speech templates, including:

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- * Event keynotes
- * Graduations
- * Weddings
- * Funerals
- * Emcees

...and many more! See our website for details: www.charliefernink.com.

The Dirty Dozen of Common Grammatical Errors



*“English
is the language that
lurks in dark alleys,
beats up passing
languages, and steals
the vocabulary it finds
in their pockets.”
--Unknown*

Writing is an art form that one may practice for a lifetime and never fully master. Even the pros get caught stumbling over common mistakes in spelling and grammar sometimes.

Who hasn't occasionally wondered, “For who, or *whom*, did the bell toll?”

1. Active vs. passive voice.

Know the difference between the two, and use active voice when possible. It's the quality of a verb that tells whether a subject acts or is acted upon. A sentence is in active voice when its subject does the acting, and in the passive when its subject is acted upon.

Active voice examples:

Bob hit the ball.
Kathy fed the kittens.
James captured the frog.

Passive voice examples:

The ball was hit by Bob.
The kittens were fed by Kathy.
The frog was captured by James.

2. It's, its.

Mind your apostrophes!

Its is a possessive pronoun.

It's is a contraction for the words *it is* or *it has*.

Example:

Regensburg is known for its beauty.

It's in the heart of Bavaria.

It's been a landmark in my family's history.

3. Their, they're, there.

Their is the possessive form for they (belonging to them).

They're is a contraction of the words *they are*.

There is used as an adverb or exclamation.

Example:

Their home is beautiful.

They're the proud new owners of a 2-story colonial house.

The party is over there. There! I'm done.

4. Improper use of commas.

In the world of amateur writing, the comma is the hands-down favorite among people who punctuate. In fact, commas are everywhere they don't belong, meddling in phrases that don't need their help; facilitating those nasty run-on sentences, giving weary readers unnecessary pause, muddling up lines, and encouraging long lists.

Let's restore the good name (and good use) of the comma. Resist the urge to use a comma to indicate a pause in speaking. And give your comma's neighbor, the period, a chance.

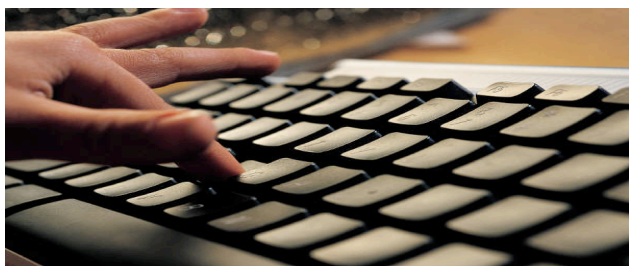
Don't drop a comma in between two independent clauses without using a conjunction (and, but, since, etc.), or you'll end up with a run-on sentence. (An independent clause is a phrase that has a subject and a verb and can stand alone as a sentence).

Examples:

Incorrect: He went to the store in the storm, I thought that was silly.

Correct: He went to the store in the storm, and I thought that was silly.

Correct: He went to the store in the storm. I thought that was silly.



5. Fragments as sentences.

According to one expert, "The term fragment refers to a group of words beginning with a capital letter and ending with a period.

Although written as if it were a sentence, a fragment is only a part of a sentence."

Fragments are phrases, or subordinate (dependent) clauses that are usually missing something important, like a verb, or a subject. Advice: Make sure your phrases have both a subject and a verb. Eliminate fragments, and terminate the offense.

Example:

Incorrect: Around the corner.

a) Make it into a sentence:

Correct: Little Lucy skipped around the corner.

b) Connect it to an existing sentence:

Correct: Little Lucy was waiting around the corner.

6. Improper use of quotation marks.

Quotes come in a close second to the comma for popularity and misuse. People tend to put quotes around a word they really, really, "really" want to emphasize. Teachers and readers put this error high on the list of pet peeves.

Don't depend on visual cues to point out your emphatic point of view. Use words, not quotes, when you need to stress a point. Find an interesting and creative way to state the same emphatic word or idea. Use better, stronger and more descriptive words.

Example:

Incorrect -- *I am "so" mad.*

Correct -- I'm so mad that if I were a cartoon character, I'd have steam shooting out of my ears.

Correct -- I have surpassed the point of irritation. I am ready to throw a glass vase across the room.

Incorrect -- *I am "really" disappointed.*

Correct -- I am bitterly disappointed.

Last resort -- use *italics*, or underline the word.

7. Avoid unnecessary capitals.

Use standard conventions to determine whether or not to capitalize a word.

Proper Names

- Names/nicknames of people or things, or trademarks:
T. S. Elliot, Buffalo Bill, Liberty Bell, Noah's Ark, Academy Award, Echo Lane, Honda Accord
- Geographic names:
America, Middle East, Texas, Ellis Island, Garden State, Estes Park, Okalahoma City
- Peoples and their languages:
American, Asian, Hispanic, German, Italian, English, Spanish
- Organizations, government agencies, institutions:
Red Cross, Associated Press, Air Force, National Guard, Congress, St. Edward's University, Republican Party, Dallas Cowboys, Federal Express
- Days of the week, months, holidays:
Thursday, Friday, May, Thanksgiving, Labor Day
Note: seasons are not capitalized: summer, fall, etc.
- Historical documents, periods, events:
The Fifth Amendment, the Bill of Rights, Stone Age, Civil War, Romantic Movement
- Religions and their adherents, holy books, holy days and words denoting a supreme being:
Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Catholic, Protestant, Bible, Book of Mormon, Koran, Easter, God, Messiah, Yahweh, Buddha, Flying Spaghetti Monster

Derivatives

- Words derived from proper names:
Americanize, Israelite, Christmas, Stalinism, Germanic, Orwellian

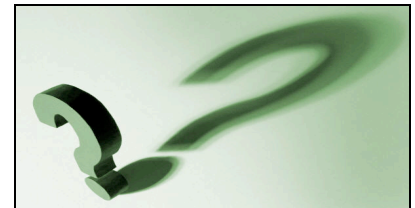
Abbreviations and

Acronyms

- Shortened forms of capitalized words:
DVM, IRS, CBS, D.C., ABC, AT&T, OPEC, NATO

Exceptions:

A.M. or a.m.; P.M. or p.m



Questions? Consult a dictionary.

8. Trouble with possession.

This common trouble spot gives writers grief. Here are a few tips to help:

- Singular nouns: Take an apostrophe-s ('s).
Example: Rachael's cat was named Tigger. Bob's car is in the shop.
- Plural nouns: Add an apostrophe after nouns ending with an s or z, and for words that don't end with an s or z, add an 's.
Example: My four cats' litter box is always filling up. The people's opinions do not count.
- Compound nouns: The last word of the compound word takes the apostrophe.
Example: My mother-in-law's kitchen is perfect for cooking large family dinners.
- Indefinite pronouns: use an apostrophe.
Example: I have somebody else's cell phone.
- Possessive pronouns: do not have apostrophes.

And don't forget this important plural rule: Attorney general becomes attorneys general.

9. i.e. vs. e.g., for example.

We use them, but we don't know what they mean.

To clarify:

i.e. means "that is"

e.g. means "for example"

And both should always be followed by a comma.

**10. Effect vs. affect.**

This pardonable offense is committed by most well-meaning people every now and then. Use this key of synonyms to help you decide what to use:

Effect
result
consequence
outcome
upshot
end
product
achieve

Affect
have an effect on
influence
involve
shape
concern
change
impinge on

11. Whom or who?

I use this method to decide which word to use:

Take the *who* or *whom* out of the sentence and substitute it with either *he* or *she*, or with the words *him* or *her*. If the words *he* or *she* properly complete the sentence, then the correct choice would be the word *who*. If the words *him* or *her* fits the bill, then use *whom*. (I also use this as a key: the words *him* and *whom* both end in an m, and they are the correctly paired words).

He -- who

Him -- whom

Her -- whom

She -- who

12. Capitol or capital?

A capitol is a building. (Cue: Capitol with an "o" is an Office building).
Capital refers to money, or letters, or ideas.

Examples:

I went to the State Capitol offices to ask a question.

That's a capital idea!

The firm needs to raise capital for its new product line.

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.charliefernink.com

Next Month: Public Speaking Tips and Tricks

Be sure to check out next month's issue! Charlie offers advice about powerful presentations and public speaking.

About Charlie Fern Ink, LLC

When your job puts you in the spotlight, it pays to have us working behind the scenes. Why? Because people in leadership positions don't spend afternoons indoors writing pretty sentences. They're out in the fray, generating interest and headlines.

Many of the most confident leaders you know have us behind the scenes, building clear, concise, and memorable messages. And our words don't just inspire audiences; they inspire movements.

At Charlie Fern Ink, we believe that developing revolutionary ideas is only half the job. Convincing people to join the revolution is the other half.

Are you a subscriber?

Sign up for our quarterly newsletter and Speech of the Month Club! Visit our website for details.

Referrals

We offer financial incentives and rewards for referral business. Tell people you know about Charlie Fern Ink, and ask them to mention you by name!

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