Grammar & ESL

Wordsmith Workshop #2
THINGS WE SAY TODAY, WHICH WE OWE TO SHAKESPEARE:

“Knock, knock! Who’s there?”
“In a pickle” “set your teeth on edge” “heart of gold”
“Faint hearted” “so-so” “good riddance”
“Lie” “fight fire low” “baited breath” “come what may”
“Wear your heart on your sleeve” “the game is up”
“Not slept one wink” “full circle” “out of the jaws of death”
“What’s done is done” “naked truth” “break the ice”
“Laughing stock” “breathed his last” “wild goose chase”
“Heart of hearts” “vanish into thin air” “makes your hair stand on end”
“Dead as a doornail” “for goodness’ sake” “love is blind”
“Green eyed monster” “fair / foul play / play” “off with his head”
“The world is my oyster” “brave new world” “be all / end all” “a sorry sight”
Effective Legal Writing

“Writing is the great invention of the world.”

~ Abraham Lincoln
Legal Language

- Legal language functions to:
  - Establish rights and obligations
  - Direct audience to authority
  - Distribute information
  - Convince or persuade
  - Dissuade, control damage, mediate
  - Enable communication within the legal profession
Legal Language

- Universal Features:
  - Extreme precision
  - Obscurity and ambiguity
  - Archaism (structures and vocabulary)
  - Formalism, ritualism, and ceremonialism
  - Wordiness and redundancy
  - Lengthy and complex sentences
  - Impersonal constructions
  - Terms of art and technical terminology
Characteristics of Good Legal Writing

- Conciseness
- Completeness
- Courtesy
- Clarity
- Correctness
- Accurate + Analytical
- Relevant + Organized
- Thorough + Specific and Concrete
- Logical + Correct
- Persuasive + Clear
Seven Suggestions for Effective Legal Writing

1. Credibility
2. Clarity
3. Brevity
4. Know Your Audience
5. Using Your Facts to Tell Your Story
6. Organizing Legal Arguments
7. Avoid Visual Fatigue
Dictionary & Thesaurus

- Take the time to find the definition (Black’s Law Dictionary).
- Learn how it is used by the courts (Words & phrases).
- Understand the context.

- Example: “Stipulate”
Grammar – Connectors

- The use of connectors makes your writing easier to understand.

- Connectors are used for transitions, i.e. moving from one idea to another. Connectors link sentences and paragraphs.

- Transitional expressions include phrases for (a) amplification or addition; (b) cause and effect; (c) comparison or analogy; (d) contrast or alternative; (e) conclusion; (f) emphasis; (g) illustration or example; and (h) relationship in time.
Commas

- English does not use commas in the following situations:
  - Before the word *that*
    - I trust that you will return the money I lent you.
  - Before the word *because*
    - I trust him because he has always paid me in the past.
  - After the word *please*
    - Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions.

With the Oxford Comma:
We invited the rhinoceri, Washington, and Lincoln.

Without the Oxford Comma:
We invited the rhinoceri, Washington and Lincoln.
Active vs. Passive

- **Active voice** → the subject of a clause or sentence expresses the agent of the main verb, i.e. the subject commits the action the verb designates.

- **Passive voice** → the subject of a clause or sentence is the patient or theme indicated by the main verb, i.e. the person or thing undergoes the action or has its state changed.

- **Example:**
  - Active: Joe pulled down the tree.
  - Passive: The tree was pulled down by Joe.
PETE THE PENCIL PRESENTS:

Examples of the Three Voices in Writing

1. Active Voice
   “You ate six donuts.”

2. Passive Voice
   “Six donuts were eaten by you.”

3. Passive-Aggressive Voice
   “You ate six donuts and I didn’t get any. Don’t worry, it’s cool. I can see donuts are very important to you.”

WRITE ON, EVERYBODY!

metzgercartoons.com
Double Negatives

- A double negative happens when two forms of negation are used in the same sentence.
  - Example: You cannot not use the book. (two negatives)
    - Interpretation: You can use the book.

- Multiple negation happens when there are three or more forms of negation used in the same sentence.
  - Example: You cannot not use none of the books.
    - Interpretation: You cannot use the books.
Subject-Verb Agreement

- The verb should agree with the subject of a sentence.
  - In person: In English this only occurs in the third person singular, present tense form of verbs → add “-s” or “-es”.
  - In number: In English, the verb should agree with the number of the subject, i.e. if the subject is singular, the verb should be singular. If the subject is plural, the verb should be plural.
- Example: The dogs eat food. The dog eats food.
Commonly Misspelled or Misused Words

Effect Affect

Most of the time effect is a noun and affect is a verb.

If you’re unsure, try substituting a different verb and see if it works. As a child, he was affected by his parents.

A verb works here so you should use “affected.”

C’MERE, RANDALL
I want to ingest you, just like I did your obnoxious parakeet.

You ate him?!! But he sang only of love and beauty! You’re a monster, Dad!
Their

Their is possessive, meaning it owns something.

I hate our new neighbors. Their cow keeps eating the leftover casserole.

In this case, their is referring to the neighbors who own a cow.

They’re

They’re is a contraction for “they are.”

They’re gonna get a shovel to the face unless they get that cow under control. No one eats my casserole.

In this case, they’re means “they are.”

There

There refers to a place or idea.

Look over there! An alien just burst out of that cow’s chest!

In this case, there is referring to a location.

It can also refer to something more abstract:

There are many reasons to discipline a cow. For starters, a cow who eats rancid casserole will later become a host for alien parasites.
Lose
Opposite of win

Pretend the extra O is a hemorrhoid on the word. Hemorrhoids are never tight.

Loose
Not tight

Weather
Snow, rain, sunshine, typhoons. All that crap.

I'm the sun, I make super happy sunshine!
Also, one day I'll explode and burn you all alive like the miserable little sausages that you are!

Whether
Whether is used in this way:
Your correct usage of this word will determine whether or not I kick you in the hemorrhoids.

Nothing gets a point across like a solid kick to the hemmies.
It's

This is a contraction for *it is* or *it has*.
If you can replace *it's* with *it is* or *it has*,
then use *it's* in your sentence.

For example:

*It's* not fair that Randy gets to ride a Wolverine
to school, but I have to ride this stupid Manatee!

Its

This is indicating possession.
Use this when one thing owns another.

For example:

The Wolverine knows only death, pain, and slaughter.
Also, *It's* thick, black fur is good for
exfoliating the thighs during a long ride.

Confused by apostrophes?
Click here to learn
how to use them.

Using "it's" in this case would result in:
"Also, it is thick black fur is good for..."
which is wrong and anyone that does this
deserves to be mauled by a wolverine.
Your  You’re

These both use the same rules as “their” and “they’re.”

Your is possessive. In other words, you own something.

Your new baby alien loves to cuddle, but he keeps crapping in your refrigerator at night.

This is referring to your alien and your refrigerator.

You’re is a contraction of “you are.”

You’re definitely cleaning out the fridge tomorrow morning, assuming that little beast can’t keep his bowels in check.

This translates to “you are definitely cleaning...”
Definitely
There is no A in “definitely.”
To help you remember, use this:

If you put an A in “definitely,” then you’re definitely an A-hole.

A lot
Always leave a space here.
Remember, there’s a lot of space in outer space.

Alot is not a word.
You don’t write alittle, abunch, acantaloupe, aporkchop
So don’t write alot.

Then
is used for time.
First I stole a panda bear, then we drank malt liquor together.

That is comparing a panda’s drinking ability with your own, so you should use “than.”
"Punctuation and Grammar"
http://www.cali.org/lesson/585

"Punctuation and Grammar: Advanced"
http://www.cali.org/lesson/108
Diagramming Sentences

“A diagram arranges the parts of a sentence like a picture in order to show the relationship of words and groups of words within the sentence.”

Sentence Diagramming

www.English-Grammar-Revolution.com
Synonyms & Antonyms

- Using synonyms and antonyms in your writing can help break up the monotony of what you’re trying to express.

- Example:
  - Without synonyms: The specific doctor must look at the specific patient in a specific manner on a specific day.
  - With synonyms: The specific doctor must look at the single patient in a particular manner on a distinct day.
**Adjective**

Is a word which describes or gives more information about a noun or pronoun.

**EXAMPLES:**
- beautiful flower
- Big house

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**Adverbs**

- He sang **loudly**. (Tells how he sang.)
- I play sport **outside**. (Tells where I play sport.)
- She **always** skips to the park. (Tells when she skips to the park.)
- **Yesterday**, we went to the movies. (Tells when we went to the movies.)
- We heard her **softly**-spoken words. (Tells how the words were spoken.)
Contractions

- "Contractions are a combination of two words. Often they are a pronoun and a verb. . . . Use only these verbs: have, has, is, are, am, would, and will.

1. isn’t = is not
2. aren’t = are not
3. can’t = can not
4. don’t = do not
5. it’s = it is
6. what’s = what is
7. that’s = that is
8. here’s = here is
9. I’ll = I will
10. he’ll = he will
11. she’ll = she will
12. you’ll = you will
13. we’ll = we will
14. they’ll = they will
15. it’ll = it will
Use the pronouns “it” and “that” to refer to a company, not “they” and “who.”

“Bemused” has nothing to do with amusement. It means “confused, bewildered, or baffled.”

http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/
Plurals

- “Most English plurals are formed quite simply. Just add –s to the end of a noun:
  - Dog → dogs
  - Building → buildings

- However, if the noun ends in –s, -ss, -z, -x, -ch, or -sh, add –es to form the plural:
  - Boss → bosses
  - Box → boxes
  - Witch → witches
  - Dish → dishes

- If the noun ends in a consonant plus –y, change the –y to –l, then add –es:
  - Lady → ladies
  - Penny → pennies
Possession

- “Nouns form the possessive in two ways: (1) they become the object of the preposition of, or (2) they add the ending –’s (apostrophe plus –s).”

- Examples:
  - The roar of a lion. A lion’s roar
  - The color of the book the book’s color
  - The children of Mrs. Diaz Mrs. Diaz’s children
  - The prey of the wolves the wolves’ prey
Useful Grammar Websites

- Grammar Girl
- Law Prose
- Wordrake
- The New Legal Writer
"Thank-you" with a hyphen can be a noun and an adjective. When it's a noun, you make it plural by adding an "s" to the end: "thank-yous."

#GGSays
#grammar
Useful ESL Websites

- English Grammar
- Conversation Questions
- ESL Video
- Using English
- Busy Teacher
ANY questions?