

Grammar Girl Presents the Ultimate Writing Guide for Students (Quick & Dirty Tips)

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Named to the International Reading Association's 2012 Teachers' Choice book list

Grammar Girl Presents the Ultimate Writing Guide for Students is a complete and comprehensive guide to all things grammar from Grammar Girl, a.k.a. Mignon Fogarty, whose popular podcasts have been downloaded over twenty million times and whose first book, Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing, was a New York Times bestseller.

For beginners to more advanced students, this guide covers it all: the parts of speech, sentences, and punctuation are all explained clearly and concisely with the warmth, wit, and accessibility Grammar Girl is known for. Pop quizzes are scattered throughout to reinforce the explanations, as well as Grammar Girl's trademark Quick and Dirty Tips--easy and fun memory tricks to help with those challenging rules.

Complete with a writing style chapter and a guide to the different kinds of writing--everything from school papers to letter writing to e-mails--this guide is sure to become the one-stop, essential book on every student's desk.

Mignon Fogarty, the creator of Grammar Girl and the founder of the Quick and Dirty Tips Network, is also the author of the bestselling GRAMMAR GIRL'S QUICK AND DIRTY TIPS FOR BETTER WRITING and THE GRAMMAR DEVOTIONAL. She lives in Reno, Nevada.

Grammar Girl Presents the Ultimate Writing Guide for Students

Chapter One Parts of Speech

IN THESE NEXT few chapters, think of me as your grammar guide, intent on demystifying grammar. I'm a practical person--I've given people batteries and socks as birthday presents. That is what I want to give you, the things everyone will use--the batteries and socks of writing. In order to do that, we need a common language between the professionals and us. If I quickly spewed out terms like antecedents, future progressive tense, and subjunctive verbs, you'd probably run away screaming, but you do need to know some of these terms and what they mean. I promise to explain these words (and their usefulness) and, if I can, give you other words to use in their place.

To begin, you need to know the parts of speech, the function of different groups of words. In Chapter Two, you'll use this knowledge to put together sentences. After that, punctuation. Then the world is your oyster. Or your pizza. I prefer pizza.

1-1 NOUNS

A noun is a person, place, or thing. Things can be concrete, like rocks, or abstract ideas, like courage or purpose. Nouns are divided into two types: proper nouns and common nouns. Proper nouns name specific people, places, or things, such as Grammar Girl, Mississippi River, and Golden Gate Bridge. They are names. On the other hand, common nouns name general people, places, or things. The words girl, river, and bridge aren't capitalized because they are common nouns that don't name any one individual person, place, or thing. To learn how these general capitalization rules apply to specific words, such as nicknames, planets, seasons, directions, and dog breeds, see Appendix section A-1.1-2 PLURALS: NOUNS.

EVERYWHERE

You have one computer, but you'd love another one. Easy--at least on paper. Add an s. Ta-da! You have two computers (or more). Magic! It's fairly easy to make nouns plural. The last letter or letters of the word determine what you need to do. Usually, you just add s. When the word ends in ch, s, sh, x, or z, add es. When the word ends in y,

look at the letter before y. If it's a vowel, add s. If the letter before y is a consonant, change the y to i and then add es. Words that end in o don't follow specific rules; some words take an s to become plural and other words take an es to become plural. You have to memorize the spellings.

Making Abbreviations Plural

Add s to make abbreviations plural, but make sure it's a small s, not a capitalized one (and don't use an apostrophe). The rule is the same regardless of whether the abbreviation has periods. See section 3-34 for how to make single letters plural.

Tricky Nouns: Mouse? Mice? Meese?

With some nouns, you just have to know what the plural is, such as mice (for mouse), teeth (for tooth), deer (for deer), knives (for knife), children (for child), and oxen (for ox). Some of our words retain qualities of Latin or other languages they came from, so their plurals aren't formed in a standard way. Examples include appendices (plural of appendix), phenomena (plural of phenomenon), and bases (plural of basis). If you're not sure what the plural form of a word is, go to the dictionary. The dictionary is your friend--honest. It will give you the plural of the word if the plural isn't standard.

Check It Out

Rarely, language experts will say you can choose between two acceptable plural forms of a noun. For example, when you're talking about a computer mouse, the plural can be either mice or mouses, and although most people who work with plants prefer the plural cacti, most dictionaries say either cacti or cactuses is fine. Index becomes indices when you're writing about math or science, but in other cases it is usually made plural as indexes; and although buses is the preferred plural of bus, you can also go with busses. When in doubt, check a dictionary. The first plural form listed is the one that is most common.

1-3 VERBS: READY, CAMERA, ACTION

We have our people, places, and things--nouns--established, but they're not doing anything. We have to get those things, people, and ideas moving. Enter the verb! Verbs add movement to your writing. Like nouns, verbs come in different categories.

1-4 TRANSITIVE AND INTRANSITIVE VERB

The first way you can put verbs in groups is to separate them into transitive and intransitive piles. There's an easy way to remember those names, which I'll get to in a minute. Transitive verbs take their action on something--the object. If you remove the object from these sentences, they don't make sense: He will lay the book on the table. (Lay is the verb; the book is the necessary object.) She gave the pearl to the wizard. (Gave is the verb; the pearl is the necessary object.) Intransitive verbs don't need an object; they can take action all by themselves. No object is necessary in these sentences: He ran. She sits.

The Quick and Dirty Tip

to remember what these names mean is to think of a transitive verb as transferring its action to the object. Both transitive and transfer start with the prefix trans. Some verbs can be transitive or intransitive depending on how they are used. They cheered. (intransitive) They cheered the team. (transitive)

1-5 ACTION VERBS AND LINKING VERB

The next way you can put verbs into groups is to sort them into action verbs and linking verbs. Action verbs are exactly what they sound like: they describe actions. Verbs such as run, jump, and swim are action verbs. Linking verbs describe a state of being. The action isn't so rugged, but more thoughtful, connective, or complicated. Linking verbs aren't about actions as much as they are about connecting other words together. The verb to be is the basic linking verb. The word is is a form of the verb to be. If I say, "Squiggly is yellow," the main purpose of is is to link the word Squiggly with the word yellow. Other linking verbs include seem, appear, look, become, and verbs that describe senses, such as feel and smell. There are at least sixty linking verbs in the English language. Of course, it can't be as simple as action versus linking verbs. You wouldn't need me if it were. The complication is that some verbs--such as the sensing verbs--can be both linking verbs and

action verbs. A Quick and Dirty Tip to help you figure out whether you're dealing with a linking or an action verb is to see if you can replace the verb with a form of to be. If so, then it's probably a linking verb. He smells bad. (He has a bad odor.) He is bad. (He is ill-behaved.) In the above sentence, smells is a linking verb because if you replace smells with the word is, the sentence still makes sense. Bad describes the noun he, not the verb smells or is. Now see what happens when smells is an action verb. He smells badly. (His nose isn't working.) He is badly. (This doesn't make sense.) Replacing smells with is doesn't work, so you know you have an action verb. Badly describes the verb smells, not the noun he.

1-6 VERB TENSES: LIVE FOR TODAY People say, "Live for today, forget about yesterday, and ignore tomorrow." But if everyone did live in the now, I wouldn't get to invite you to explore the exciting world of verb tenses. Fortunately, people dwell on the past and plan for the future; history, for example, by definition, happened in the past. Verbs reflect time, which is why we need tenses. Verbs come in three varieties--present, past, and future. Today, yesterday, and tomorrow. Kilroy is here. Kilroy was here. Kilroy will be here. But that's not all. Each verb tense can then be spliced into more categories. Simple--the end of the action is unknown or unimportant. Things are simple when time isn't important. The captain swims. (simple present) Perfect--the action has ended or will end; it is complete or will be completed. It starts. It ends. It's known. It's completed. Things are perfect when you know everything about them. The captain has swum. (present perfect) Progressive--the action is ongoing, progressing, or will be ongoing; it is continuous. We have no idea when it will end; it's incomplete. The captain is swimming. (present progressive)

Other Books

Lelaki Tua dan Laut, Lelaki Tua dan Laut (The Old Man and the Sea) berkisah tentang perjuangan luar biasa seorang nelayan tua Kuba yang seorang diri berusaha menangkap ikan marlin raksasa jauh di laut lepas setelah sebelumnya gagal menangkap ikan selama 84 hari. Perjuangan pantang menyerah sang lelaki tua dalam mencapai tujuannya mengajarkan kepada kita betapa kesabaran, ketabahan, dan kegigihan dalam mengarungi cobaan hidup tak akan berakhir sia-sia. "Novel yang asyik dibaca ini ditulis Hemingway saat tinggal di Kuba dan berhasil menyabet Hadiah Pulitzer 1953 untuk kategori fiksi serta Award of Merit Medal for Novel dari American Academy of Letters, sekaligus mengantarkannya meraih Hadiah Nobel Sastra. Begitu populernya novel menyentuh ini sehingga berkali-kali difilmkan dan terus dibaca orang di berbagai penjuru dunia hingga saat ini. Diterbitkan oleh Penerbit Serambi Ilmu Semesta" (Serambi Group)

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