

# Notes on Editing

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# Chapter One

## An Introduction

The act of communicating in print involves gathering, sorting and distributing information. Printed information must be assumed to be correct. Mistakes of any kind cause the information to become suspect.

The writer of the material to be printed should be able to present the information in such a way that concerns over its form and accuracy do not arise. If this happens, the material won't need much attention and will float through the copy-to-print process. This is possible in part because of the training and knowledge of the writer. Among other considerations, the writer will be sufficiently grounded in the basics of the language to present his or her thoughts clearly and accurately. Of course, the subject matter must also be accurate and clear.

Editors are inserted in the process to provide critical judgment. Editors who have a grasp of the intricacies of language may be able to catch errors or mistakes. If no errors are found, the editor can provide a stamp of approval on what the writer has done.

Editors can improve copy only to the extent to which they are qualified. Changing copy for the sake of change is not good editing. Editors must have a reason for making changes. Changes should improve the copy. One way to say this is: "Editing is the art of improving copy without messing it up."

Writing and editing are closely related. Writers and editors have the same goal: that of communicating. Both writing and editing involve making constant decisions about language. A justification must be found for every word, for every way of handling information.

The better grounded writers are in the basics of the language, the better able they are to present clear, accurate copy. The same applies to editors. Qualified editors can help writers achieve the goal of effective communication.

How are these qualities acquired? Editors may be taught, they may learn through observation or reading, or they may pick up ideas so naturally that they don't remember the origin of those ideas.

In the beginning, would-be editors can develop bad habits as easily as they develop good habits. Having their work challenged by teachers or trained editors is helpful in teaching young editors how to edit well.

Good editors must have self-confidence. They build self-confidence by having their work critiqued by people who are better at editing than they are. In this way, they learn about standards of excellence. They learn what actions need to be made and how to justify those actions. Justification involves editing for a reason, not as a result of whim. Good editors deal in knowledge and logic.

## **The Editing Process**

Raw copy can seem forbidding. Editors must have a system for reading the copy. Such a system allows editors to break the editing process down into smaller, manageable areas. When editors look at a mark of punctuation, a word or a construction they can check what the copy says against what the editors know to be the acceptable way of handling that particular information.

This process requires mental discipline. For as long as necessary, the editor must concentrate on the material at hand. Every editor develops his or her best approach to this process. Here's a suggested way of going about it:

1. As you read each sentence, pay attention to areas that you know should be checked. Ask yourself as you go, is this comma in the right place, is that the correct way to spell that word, does this sentence conform to acceptable patterns of structure? If changes need to be made, make them at that point. Don't tarry. If you need to check something further, make some kind of small mark to help you remember that additional checking is necessary.
2. Go back to the places you have marked and do whatever you have to do to straighten them out. If you need to look up the word in a dictionary, do that now. If you need to check something in the stylebook, do that now. If you weren't sure about a fact, check it now if possible. Remove your marks as you go.
3. Read over the copy again. This second reading should be more thorough. Look at it with a sense of detachment. When you have finished reading and when all the areas you needed to check have been checked, go on to something else. You can proceed to other tasks with assurance that what you have edited so far has been edited to the best of your ability.

You are probably editing on a video display terminal. But in the event you are editing on the copy itself, a suggestion: Make your improvements as clearly and neatly as possible. The purpose of editing is to prepare the copy for the typesetter. The editor is the last stop. When the copy leaves the editor, all questions should have been answered.

Implicit in this approach is the understanding that you won't change anything unless you have a reason to make that change. You will need to have a mental checklist of areas with which you should be concerned. You are constantly comparing what you read to that mental check list.

Here are some of the specific items you will want to have in your catalog of areas to evaluate: style, spelling, vocabulary, word usage, grammar and structure, punctuation, facts. Your catalog won't have a set number of areas of concern. With experience you won't even be conscious of working from such a list. You will begin to notice that when you have seen this particular situation before it has sometimes been incorrect.

Work on speeding up the editing process. Push yourself. Don't go too slowly. Slowness works against concentration.

When in doubt, consult a supervisor. Depending on the circumstances, you may need to talk with the writer. This would be appropriate when fact situations are in doubt.

## **Editing With Good Sense**

Anyone who is going to be an editor can prepare for the inevitable: whoever handles copy makes mistakes. In learning to edit, students should train themselves to make as few mistakes as possible. One way of doing this is to learn to scrutinize every mark of punctuation, every word, every aspect of the composition. Finding mistakes and correcting them is what is expected of the editor.

Editors need not brag about their success in editing. Neither do they need to berate the people who make the mistakes as in: "Hey, stupid, you goofed." If editors need to say anything, they might make a gentle statement that a proper name is spelled incorrectly, or a word isn't used the way it should be or that our style is to use a comma there.

Careless or capricious editing can be as bad as no editing at all. Bad editors will overlook areas that need work while playing with areas that either had nothing wrong with them or were a matter of preference. In matters of preference, the writers' preferences must prevail.

To repeat: the editor should not impose her or his preferences on the writer. Otherwise the relationship between writer and editor erodes. Erosion begins when editors are unable to justify the changes.

Caution and restraint are the best approaches to editing. This applies especially when writers have a pronounced style. A change can often affect the cadence of a sentence. Editors must maintain the style in which the writing was written. They look for the tone of the material and edit with such sensitivity that a writer's individual approach isn't lost.

Editors can affect copy in one of four ways: They can make it better, make it worse, make changes that don't make the copy better or worse, or make no changes at all. The goal should be to maintain the quality that is in the writing and

to fix only what needs to be fixed. Good editors make copy better, and they make changes with that in mind.

Editing involves the repetitious application of critical judgment on all matters, large and small. Good editors pit their knowledge and ability against the copy. The better prepared the editors are, the less likely they are to fail. Succeeding gives editors satisfaction. The only reward for good editing comes when editors know they have done a good job.

Writing is a creative process, editing a critical one. Good editors understand that acceptable writing may occur in any one of several ways. Young editors must overcome the temptation to edit the way they would have written. While the editors' prerogative may be to change, that prerogative does not extend to re-creation. Editors must have a reason for their every action.

By establishing a checklist, editors will look for specifics. If a change is made, the reason for that change will have been determined in advance. In this way editors are able to separate what ought to be changed from those areas that editors shouldn't worry about. When editors have more experience, the obvious mistakes will jump out. The more subtle mistakes may still slip through. The nature of subtle mistakes is such that they slip by everyone, including experienced editors. That danger is always present.

Editors should have a standard from which they work and they should be clear as to how they created that standard. This standard should include the basics, such as style, spelling, etc. Editors should be cautious when dealing with colloquialisms or regionalisms. Language shouldn't be forced into a straitjacket.

Editors can and should be pedantic about appositives, about the apostrophe (its/it's), about hyphens in modification. But editors shouldn't be dogmatic about the way writers write that is different from the way they, the editors, would write.

Editors-in-training must have the right attitude toward learning to be good editors. What seems trivial to one person may be important to another. No one can persuade another to adopt such an attitude. Editing is essentially a discipline. Extreme concentration is required.

Professionalism is  
more than education,  
more than experience,  
more than training.

Professionalism is  
a state of mind.

--- Lilla Ross, *Florida Times-Union*

## A Broader Scope

Working as an editor may involve more than editing copy. Here we're discussing all kinds of editing. Editors oversee the process of getting material from copy to print. This could include taking care of typesetting and choosing a printer. Photographs and illustrations have to be assembled. Layouts must be devised. Headlines have to be written. The project has to be supervised along the way.

In theory, whatever is to be printed must be edited: advertisements, company publications, brochures, news releases, wire service copy, magazines, books, newsletters, newspapers, annual reports. Even radio and television news copy must be edited. Opportunities in editing range so broadly that any list would be limiting. Editing is as necessary in advertising and public relations as it is in news/editorial work.

No typical organizational chart exists. In many situations, one or two people may write, edit, write headlines, take care of design, oversee typesetting and printing, handle distribution. The exception, though, is the rule. In many situations, the copy process is a group effort. The pattern is that every organization that handles copy does it the way it thinks best.

Editors work for other people we will call supervisors. These supervisors have a great deal of experience or limited experience. The supervisors may handle people well or ineffectively. Sometimes they are great teachers. Sometimes they think they know more than they do. If they haven't had the benefit of good teaching or haven't worked for good editors, they may not have high standards. Or their standards may simply be different. Sometimes good young editors can find the situation awkward when they have to work for someone who isn't as prepared as they are.

People with talent must hope that they will be recognized by people who have talent themselves. When this match occurs, working can be fun and rewarding. Young people have to prepare themselves for such opportunities. Young editors who are ill-prepared will have a difficult time working with supervisors who have a good grasp of the editing process.

Changes in typesetting and printing have not affected the basics of editing. Whatever the impact of technology, the importance of editing has not lessened. Training and skill are still involved. This skill may be performed at a word-processing terminal or on paper. Copy still must be processed, and the person responsible for processing is an editor. Technology has not eliminated the need for editing. Because of technology, the future may hold expanded opportunities for editors in the processing of information.

## Proofreading

Proofreading changes should be limited to glaring errors. The time to make structural changes in the copy is before the copy is set in type. Making changes in the type can be time-consuming, costly and may result in additional mistakes.

Proofreading is an entirely different and separate process from editing. Corrections are made in the body of the copy during editing. Proofreading corrections are made in the margins. Some of the editing and proofreading symbols are similar, but many are different.

Among the mistakes that must be caught during proofreading are misspelled words, wrong division of words, transposed letters/words/lines, faulty alignment, typographical errors in punctuation, wrong fonts, uneven spacing between words and lines, and missing or incorrect slugs or guidelines. Obviously, incorrect information must be caught at any time, even in proofreading.

Some definitions related to proofreading: Proving type – and that is a wonderful term that has unfortunately fallen out of use – in its original form involves working with a galley proof. If the page of type has been put together, that's called a page proof.

## Chapter Two

### Style

Style evolved as a natural consequence of typesetting and printing. The art of printing dictates neatness, orderliness and consistency. This must begin with the words on the page: how they are spelled, punctuated, abbreviated, hyphenated, etc.

Because of the nature of the printing industry in early America, however, consistency usually extended only to an individual shop or printer. Of course, certain printers did such good work that they were imitated. And because printing was a trade, apprentices picked up approaches they were to use and pass on to people who eventually served as apprentices with them.

The accepted version of the English language in America has always been in a state of flux. Style changes, too. Style often changes in keeping with the language itself. They aren't necessarily together, though. Some areas of style remain in dispute.

The best example is the question of whether to put a comma before the word and in a series. English teachers use a style that requires the comma, journalists generally do not. An even greater area is capitalization. Journalists favor a down style. But in business, titles standing alone are often capitalized. Many people believe that capitalizing a word makes it more important. In our approach to style,

that isn't a consideration.

Another difference is spelling. A word may have more than one spelling, and authorities may not agree on which spelling is preferred.

Nevertheless, the tendency toward standardization is strong among people who commit words to print. That concept helps explain the need for style. Verily, the demand for it!

## **The Development of Style**

Something of a universal style exists in the United States today. It's what may be called the journalistic style. The basis of that style is the wire service stylebooks. The way they came to be tells us much about the development of language, typesetting and human nature.

With the coming of the Teletype to newsrooms in the 1920s and 1930s, local newspapers began to feel the influence of the wire services. The copy was in all caps and could be edited to conform to local style. Nonetheless, the impact was great, and rules about abbreviation and punctuation tended to become like those of the wire service style.

Eventually, the Teletypesetter came along. It wasn't a new invention, but by the time it made its way into the newsrooms in the early 1950s, the impact was revolutionary. To accommodate the Teletypesetter, wire services sent copy to newspaper subscribers that was justified and edited. Perforated tape accompanied the story. The tape could be fed into the Linotype or Intertype machines. The attachment on the machines was the Teletypesetter. Wire services usually sent the type on regional and state wires that became known as TTS wires, after the Teletypesetter.

Smaller and medium-sized newspapers had little choice than to go along with the style dictated by the wire services. Actually, they were to take part in formulating that style. But the process was by majority vote.

In the beginning, each wire service had its own style. The Associated Press was and is a member-owned agency. United Press was owned by Scripps-Howard at the time. International News Service was owned by the Hearst newspapers. Papers that took more than one wire service had a problem: which style to follow? This problem set in motion the need for agreement among the services.

United Press and International News Service merged into United Press International in 1958. In 1960, AP and UPI published the first joint stylebook and the style became uniform.

In arriving at this new, unified style, the wire services solicited the opinions of many people. The stylebooks, therefore, came to represent a consensus, or at least a majority. Sometimes style doesn't seem logical even today. Mostly it is, with

exceptions. The exceptions occur as a result of either tradition or because the wire services are hesitant to change some of their approaches.

Since then individual newspapers have developed detail stylebooks. And the Associated Press Stylebook has been expanded and rearranged. Unfortunately, UPI is not a major player any longer.

When revisions were made in the AP Stylebook, attempts were made to resolve disagreements over certain aspects of style. But the committees in charge couldn't get editors to go along with some changes. An example was state abbreviations. Editors across the country voted on whether to stick with old wire service abbreviations or to switch to the newer United States Postal Service abbreviations. The editors liked the abbreviations they had been using and were adamant against a change.

Other stylebooks have been available from other sources, most notably the one published by *The New York Times*. The stylebooks of *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *Los Angeles Times* can be bought on the open market, also. But no other stylebook has had the effect on style as the Associated Press Stylebook.

One of the reasons for the pervasiveness of the wire service style has been the use of the stylebooks as a teaching tool in college journalism and communications classes since the first wire service stylebook was published by The Associated Press in 1953. Students learned this style and took it off to various career endeavors with them. Other people came out of newspaper work into public relations, business communications, magazines and book publishing and brought the AP style with them. They developed a local style to fit the particular needs of the situation in which they worked. But the basis of that style always was AP.

Then students who studied the style became teachers, and they taught the style. Eventually this combined style was to become dominant in the United States.

Now, when students graduate in North Dakota or Delaware or Arizona and go to work, the style they are expected to know is the AP style. If the supervisor changes certain aspects of the style, the new staff member will be told that in this office the AP style is used with these exceptions. Learning the exceptions is much easier, of course, than having to learn entirely new style. This is why learning the style now, in college, is so important.

Style has to be learned only once. When you have it, you have it for a long, long time. At least until it changes.

### **Specific Style**

Editors must learn to isolate what they are looking for. This is part of the process of breaking editing down into a series of smaller concerns. Style has to be the

first step. Eventually style becomes the most natural part of the process. That comes after the style is mastered.

When editors look at a sentence, they must ask a series of questions related to style. And for that reason, a list of the concerns related to style must be in the forefront of the editor's thinking. Broken down, the concerns might be approached like this:

1. Capitalization
2. Abbreviation
3. Numbers
4. Time
5. Punctuation

One way to learn style is to study these various categories in the original -- the stylebook. As would-be editors delve into style, they will tend to add subdivisions under these main headings and will learn to be especially watchful of specifics in each subdivision.

Much of style is based on logic or common sense. Exceptions abound. But once the basic logic of style is grasped, the exceptions can be accommodated. Also, problems recur. Some problems come up only once in a blue moon, but others are forever with us.

Here are simple statements regarding the style in each of the areas, with major exceptions:

Capitalization: Formal or official titles, as opposed to occupational titles, are capitalized before names but not when standing alone or when used after names.

Abbreviation: The wire service style makes the greatest departure from logic in dealing with abbreviations. Abbreviation of addresses, dates and states varies under certain conditions. This approach will be to go along with the wire service style in only one area: state abbreviations. When towns and cities are used with state names, we abbreviate: Opelousas, La. But, we abbreviate only the longer states. We don't abbreviate states with five letters or fewer. Those are Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah. Add to that Alaska and Hawaii, which we also do not abbreviate for other reasons. That gives us eight states we don't abbreviate and 42 we do.

Numbers: One through nine are spelled and 10 and up are figures. Except, ages are always figures. We try to avoid using a number above nine at the start of the sentence. But, don't modify the number at the start of the sentence carelessly.

Avoid such words as some, many and most to modify the number. Use about. But be sure the number is a round number: about 20, not about 22.

Time: Keep time in its simplest form when referring to scheduled events: at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday. Don't arbitrarily put casual time into the same form. Let people write this way: He doesn't like 8 o'clock classes.

Punctuation: The biggest problems in style come with punctuation. Of those problems, the really big ones are with the comma, the apostrophe and the hyphen. They have to be learned. Punctuation is of vital importance because it provides the signposts for reading. The ability to handle punctuation well is one mark of a good editor.

## **Troublesome Areas in Style**

### 1. Titles

Opening remarks will be made by Ambassador Jeremy Kaye.  
Opening remarks will be made by the ambassador, Jeremy Kaye.  
Opening remarks will be made by Jeremy Kaye, the ambassador.

### 2. Commas around dates and states

The rule that we do not use a comma before the word and in a series is superseded by the rule that commas are used around years in dates and states with towns and cities.

He was born on December 5, 1967, in Cleveland, Ohio.  
He was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on December 5, 1967.  
The cities are Amherst, Mass., Berkeley, Calif., and Oxford, Miss.  
The dates in question are May 30, 1979, August 10, 1983, and March 7, 1995.

### 3. Punctuation with attribution:

With direct quotations:

Franklin said, "A penny saved is a penny earned."  
"A penny saved is a penny earned," Franklin said.  
"A penny saved," Franklin said, "is a penny earned."

With paraphrased quotations:

Franklin said that a good way to earn a penny is to save one.  
Or, Franklin said a good way to earn a penny is to save one.  
Saving a penny, Franklin said, is the same as earning one.  
A good way to earn a penny is to save one, Franklin said.

### 4. When to use a comma and when to use a semicolon

Members of the committee were Mary Jane Stevens from Des Moines, Iowa, Zack Belcher from Red Lodge, Mont., and George Jones from New Orleans.

Members of the committee were Mary Jane Stevens, a senior from Des Moines, Iowa; Zack Belcher, a sophomore from Red Lodge, Mont.; and George Jones, a graduate student from New Orleans.

Members of the committee were Debbie Price from Baltimore, Tom Belden from Philadelphia and Cheryl Bradshaw from Charlotte, N.C.

Members of the committee were Debbie Price, a freshman from Baltimore; Tom Belden, a junior from Philadelphia; and Cheryl Bradshaw, a freshman from Charlotte, N.C.

Members of the committee were Martha Hughes from Woodstock, N.Y., and John M. Kennedy from Springfield, Mass.

Members of the committee were Martha Hughes, a sophomore from Woodstock, N.Y., and John M. Kennedy, a senior from Springfield, Mass.

#### 5. The hyphen in modification

Direct modification:

five-year plan, 100-yard dash, a 23-year-old student,  
labor-saving devices, part-time job, well-dressed man

The suspensive hyphen:

five- and 10-year plans, 50- and 100-yard dashes,  
20- and 21-year-old students, time- and labor-saving devices,  
full- and part-time jobs.

All time, part time and full time in modification:

She has a full-time job and goes to school part time.

He is the Ole Miss all-time scoring leader.  
He's the leading scorer of all time at Ole Miss.

#### 6. Numbers, figures, ages, dates

It's 21 years old, but a 21-year-old. Also: 21-year-olds.  
It's third grade, but third-grade teacher and third-grader.

It's 20s, 30s, 90s in reference to ages and temperatures.  
It's '50s, '60s, '90s in reference to decades. 1950s, etc. is preferred.

## Additional Concepts in Editing

Here are some additional matters to work on in editing:

1. Watch for words that may be confused. These include such words as a lot (not alot), it's (meaning it is), who's or whose. Words ending in ly are not hyphenated. Irregardless isn't a word. It's supersede and sacrilegious. Disinterest does not mean not interested.
2. Notice the difference in contractions and possession. Contractions: who's, all's, it's, can't, you've. Possession: John's, Henry's, the Smiths' cat, the Jones' dog. Note the difference in plurals that require no apostrophe: The Smiths are going to Jackson Hole, Wyo., on their vacation.
3. Be careful with Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola, Dr Pepper, 7-Eleven, Rolls Royce, Neiman-Marcus, NorthPark, Snider Plaza and any other words that may have unusually spelling or punctuation. Of course, these words vary with location. You should make a list of the words that are difficult to spell where you are.
4. It's bachelor's degree and master's degree.
5. Don't use the hyphen in such constructions as August 11-18. Use to or through instead: August 11 through 18. Make it May 3 and 4 or May 3, 4 and 5, not May 3-4 or May 3-5.

## Chapter Three

### Spelling

Among the basics that trouble everybody, spelling ranks at the top. Supervisors complain that young people coming out of school don't know how to spell. They are right. This can be unfortunate for beginners. They may have a great many good traits. Problems with the basics can get in the way of the talent. So important are the basics of language that many professionals put them before anything else.

Therefore, young craftspeople must pay attention to style, spelling, punctuation, grammar, word usage, etc. Not to do so will create unnecessary problems. In the beginning, avoiding problems can be of utmost importance. Poor spelling can be a major problem in a field where the language is the basic tool.

Poor spelling cannot be justified or explained away. What is there to say? We could say that a great many people have trouble with spelling. The language seems to have been developed to play tricks on spellers. The Americanization of

the English language is most consistent in its inconsistency. All this is true, but none of it is an excuse for misspelling words when you are charged with the responsibility of spelling them right.

The goal is to avoid misspellings. You don't have to be a spelling champion. But you do have to avoid mistakes. To do that, you have to work on spelling. Learning to spell requires a systematic approach. The same approach won't necessarily work for everyone. One person may have trouble hearing another word, another may have trouble remembering word order. Each person needs to work out the kind of system that enables her or him to identify problem areas.

A beginning step is to determine why you are having problems with spelling and in what areas. Faulty discrimination, either visual or auditory, is common. That is, grasping the word is difficult. Incorrect pronunciation also accounts for errors. Sometimes a word is misspelled because its meaning is unknown or hazy or because it is confused with other words that are similar in appearance or sound. Some words are just troublemakers.

To improve, you must be honest about your problems. You can't fake it forever. Eventually you'll make the mistake that will unmask you.

The system we are going to use involves separating words into the kinds of problems many beginning spellers have. What follows is a discussion of those problem areas.

### **Difficult-to-Spell Words**

Many commonly used words are difficult to spell and are often misspelled in print. They include, among others: sophomore, dormitory, commitment, consensus, relevant/irrelevant, separate, judgment, supersede, nickel, pastime, memento, hindrance, maintenance, remuneration, supplement, offered/offering, recommend, marshal, buses, quandary, acknowledgment, cemetery, harass, embarrass, accommodate, occurred/occurrence, recurred/recurrence, conducive, concerted, gray, occasion, benefit/benefited/benefiting.

Of course this category can be easily extended since so many words are difficult to spell: skiing, zeros, genie, innocuous, inoculate, guerrilla, paralleled, protester, livable, likable, abutment, expatriate, raconteur, ricochet. You can add your own words to this list.

Also: diesel, weird, seize, siege, sacrilege, sacrilegious, privilege.

And: conscious (adj), conscience (n), conscientious (adj), reminisce (v), reminiscent (adj), reminiscence (n).

Many words are misused. Leading this group would be lie and lay, sit and set. The principal parts are

lie, lay, lain, lying;  
lay, laid, laid, laying;  
sit, sat, sat, sitting;  
set, set, set, setting.

Also in this category are affect/effect, compliment/complement, stationery/stationary, principal/principle, capitol/capital, advice/advise, martial/marshal, ordinance/ordnance. These words can be handled correctly only after their separate identities are learned.

Also, oral/verbal, anxious/eager, uninterested/disinterested, rebut/refute, proved/proven, lectern/podium, sewer/sewage/sewerage.

A note about verbal: words are verbal. The statement “verbal agreement” is nonsense. Perhaps the agreement wasn’t written down. In that case, it would be an oral agreement. But, perhaps you would be better off saying they agreed. You might even explain that the agreement wasn’t yet in writing. The point in this is to watch especially for stupidity that becomes a cliché.

### **Additional Observations on Spelling**

Somewhat surprising are those words whose spelling changes when adding the -ed, -ing, -able suffix. Among them are quizzes, winnable, programmed, monogrammed, politicking, picnicker, trafficking, mimicker, regrettable, sicked (verb).

Faulty discrimination results in mistaking words such as a lot, it's/its, who's/whose, a vengeance, hey, heyday, awkward, queue, playwright, harebrained, chuckhole, genre, trusty, mourning dove, milieu, milquetoast, chipmunk, short shrift, racquetball, bellwether, just deserts, raconteur, rescind, strategic, auxiliary, sherbet. Use till or until, not 'til.

Also: stifle, hassle, passel, duffel, shaky, smoky, tacky, hooky, furry.

Faulty pronunciation may be a problem in words such as sophomore, dormitory, mathematics, arctic, bachelor, February, height, laboratory, liaison, library, miniature, privilege, temperature, tentative.

### **Style**

Some words are spelled a particular way in keeping with style. Whether a given word is spelled one way or another may be of extreme importance in maintaining consistency. Arguments over such words are common, and often meaningless.

Words spelled according to style can also be grouped.

A basic list would include a lot, all right, under way, percent, employee, weekend,

lifestyle, theater, canceled, traveled, nonprofit, collectible, dietitian, pompon, cooperate, cigarette, kidnapped/kidnapping, valor, glamour, ax.

Also: cupfuls, daytime, right of way, at large, byline, round trip, schoolhouse, courthouse, stylebook, driveway, under way.

The words with -wide, -long and -fold are one words: nationwide, worldwide, etc., daylong, weeklong, etc., twofold, threefold, etc.

Adviser is sometimes spelled advisor. Whiskey is domestic, whisky is imported. It's Scotch whisky.

### **The Hyphen and the Apostrophe**

Some style questions related to the apostrophe: athlete's foot, collectors' item, citizens band, hors d'oeuvre, maitre d', rock 'n' roll, wash 'n' wear, country 'n' western, bull's-eye.

Some style questions related to the hyphen: driveway, drive-in, teen-age, teenager, daylight-saving time, re-elect, head-on, best-seller, T-shirt, T-shaped, A-frame, X-ray, X-rated, A- and H-bomb, no-man's land, first-rate, honky-tonk.

Other uses of the hyphen:

- a. Noun and participle or adjective and participle: fire-fighting, bad-looking, blue-eyed.
- b. Noun and adjective or adjective and noun: lily-white, never-ending.
- c. Compound numbers when written out: twenty-one.
- d. Short adverbs and participles: best-known, ill-gotten.
- e. Adjectives of nationality: Anglo-Norman, Franco-Prussian,
- f. Two nouns forming an adjective: father-son banquet.
- g. Verbs combined to form an adjective: would-be, hit-and-run.
- h. The in-law series: brother-in-law.

### **Shifty Words**

A surprising number of words shift according to usage. These include part time, full time and all time as adverbs and part-time, full-time and all-time as adjectives. Blond is spelled without the e as an adjective and when referring to a male but with an e when referring to a female: blonde.

Box office is not hyphenated as a noun, but is as an adjective: box-office. Babysit and baby-sitting are hyphenated; baby sitter should be two words.

It's shot put/shot-putter/shot-putting.

Also: dead end (n) and dead-end (adj), write in (v) and write-in (adj), cover up (v) and cover-up (n, adj), call up (v) and call-up (n, adj) cave in (v) and cave-in (n, adj), would be (v) and would-be (adj).

Still other words are spelled differently according to use even though no hyphen is involved: back yard (n) and backyard (adj), hold up (v) and holdup (n, adj), set up (v) and setup (n adj).

Many other groups of words don't follow such an exact pattern. It's driveway, drive-in, drive shaft. It's half-moon, half-truth, halfway and half nelson. crossroad, crosstie, crosswind should be one word. Hyphenate cross-town and cross-reference. Two words: cross section. It's crossword puzzle. Inner city, inner man, inner tube and inner space should be two words. Innersole and innermost are one. Inner-directed is hyphenated.

The -up, off-/off and out-/out are all erratic. It's slip-up, sit-in, sit-up or situp, setup, lineup, holdup, getup, backup, roundup, checkup and pickup truck. It's off-color, off-white, send-off, but cutoff, offstage, playoff, takeoff and runoff. But it's off-Broadway. It's handout, outdated, outpatient, cop-out and fallout. It's hide-out and walkout as nouns and hide out and walk out as verbs. Takeout is one word.

### **Mispronunciations**

Some words are misspelled because of the tendency to add vowels: athletics, disastrous, entrance, explanation, grievous, hindrance, laundry, maintenance, mischievous, umbrella.

Or, to drop vowels: accidentally, auxiliary, bachelor, beneficial, boundary, brilliant, criticism, caramel, convenient, deficient, delivery, familiar, frivolous, grammatically, laboratory, literature, miniature, original, Parliament, populous, proficient, temperament, temperature.

The tendency to drop consonants: acquaintance, arctic, awkward, candidate, environment, lucrative, library, kindergarten, lightning, rescind, quantity, surprise, rheumatism, acquire, column, rhythm, similar, tentative.

### **Other Ways to Group Words**

Words you'd use around the house: chaise longue, trundle bed, Queen Anne chair, fluorescent lamp, Klieg light, lectern

Words you'd use in the kitchen or restaurant: blue cheese, cordon bleu, hors d'oeuvres, victuals, jalapeno, smorgasbord, dessert, cereal, mayonnaise,

margarine, mousse, gazpacho, kolache, chitlins/chitterlings, etouffee, cantaloupe, sherbet, croissant, spaghetti, chow mein, canape

Flowers: chrysanthemum, poinsettia

### **Words That Are A Lot Alike**

Often misuse occurs because another word is similar. This mistake can be humorous, libelous or both. Some examples: advice/advise, bridal/bridle, Calvary/cavalry, catechism/cataclysm, cereal/serial, cite/site/sight, elicit/illicit, fiscal/physical, martial/marshal, ordinance/ordnance, pair/pear/pare, pen/pin, pour/pore, premier/premiere, sclerosis/cirrhosis, statue/statute/stature, tract/track, to/too.

This list can be greatly expanded:

alternate/alternative, anecdote/antidote, bar/barre, baloney/bologna, bite/byte, bizarre/bazaar, blanch/bleach, bloc/block, burgeon/bludgeon, bus/buss, buses/busses, busing/bussing, canape/canopy, canvas/canvass, careen/carom, caribou/carabao, caster/castor, censor/censor/censure and sensor, cirrhosis/sclerosis, coarse/course, coliseum/Colosseum, complete/compleat,

disburse/disperse, desert/dessert, dying/dyeing, demur/demure, eminent/imminent/eminent domain, fair/fare, faint/feint/feign, faze/phase, flair/flare, flaunt/flout, gage/gauge, gibe/jibe, hanger/hangar, horde/hoard, ingenious/ingenuous, liable/libel, lineage/linage, mantel/mantle, maze/maize, morning/mourning, pedal/peddle, plane/plain, pier/peer, pray/prey, precede/proceed,

reel/real, reign/rein/rain, riff/rift, soar/sore, steak/stake, straight/strait, team/teem, tenet/tenant, troupe/troop, trustee/trusty, veil/vale, vice/vise

Some words may not make that much difference: founder/flounder, insure/ensure. Still, founder is best used when the idea of flopping around is not involved. Ensure is best used when the idea of insurance is not involved.

### **Especially Troublesome Areas**

More problems occur in these areas than in almost all other areas of spelling combined: ei/ie, able/ible, ant,ance/ent,ence.

No rule correctly explains the ei/ie situation. The rule i before e except after c... is not a good guide. The only part of the rule that holds up is the "when sounded as a in neighbor or weigh."

ei

receive, seize, seizure, caffeine, leisure, sheik, weird, codeine, protein, weight, weigh, perceive, reign, deity, neighbor, feign, freight, sleigh, reindeer, skein, rein, vein, veil, heinous, inveigh, chow mein, seine, fahrenheit, height, seismic, stein, forfeit, surfeit, counterfeit, foreign, sovereign, heifer, nonpareil, apartheid, surveillance, conceive, gesundheit, feist

ie

siege, wield, shield, retrieve, sufficient, wiener, conscience, grieve, grievous, deficient, convenient, proficient, efficient, omniscient, mischievous, ancient, conscientious, inalienable, alien, hieroglyphics, reverie, fiery, fiend, yield

Also: glacier, fancier, financier, species

Similarly, no set rule applies to the able/ible endings. Usually a noun ending in ion will be spelled with an ible adjective form. When the adjective has an s preceding the ending, the ending is most often ible. Words with ss before the ending are about equally split.

A most important category to learn is the eable endings:

changeable, chargeable, knowledgeable, manageable, serviceable, traceable, noticeable, replaceable, enforceable, shakeable, malleable, peaceable, salvageable, mileage, lineage

able

acceptable, passable, impassable, kissable, likable, actionable, laughable, comfortable, dependable, equitable, impeccable, indispensable, irritable, inimitable, salable, excusable, perishable, profitable, conceivable, preferable, sizable, movable, negotiable, inevitable, inalienable, predictable, adjustable, desirable, quotable, practicable, regrettable, commendable, unforgivable, advisable, explainable, palatable, unforgettable, livable, untenable, reconcilable, impressionable, debatable, irreparable, usable, delectable.

It's movable type and advertising lineage. Tracing your ancestors is lineage.

ible

admissible, permissible, convertible, fallible, deductible, irresistible, indefensible, compatible, collapsible, collectible, plausible, contemptible, responsible, incredible, accessible, audible, invincible, indelible, sensible, reversible, edible, incontrovertible, flexible, susceptible, feasible, forcible, comprehensible, irrepressible

ant/ance

Two troublesome words end in *ant*: resistant and defendant. These end in *ance*: resistance, preponderance and perseverance. Pay particular attention to relevant and relevance.

ent/ence

occurred/occurrence, recurrent/recurrence, deterrent/deterrence, insistent/insistence, persistent/persistence, dependent/dependence, turbulent/turbulence, referred/reference/referring, preferred/preference/preferring. Pay particular attention to reverent and reverence. Two especially difficult words are reminisce and reminiscence.

A superintendent lives in an apartment and collects the *rent*.

### **A Rule Worth Its Weight in Gold**

The best rule in spelling comes in three parts.

Part I: Double the consonant when the final syllable is accented before a suffix beginning with a vowel, as in occur/occurred/occurring/ occurrence, recur/recurred/recurring/recurrent/recurrence, deter/deterred/detering/deterrence, regret/regretted/regretting/regrettable, forget/forgot/forgotten/forgetting/forgettable, patrol/patrolling.

Part II: Do not double the consonant when the accent falls on an earlier syllable. Best examples: offer/offered/offering, budget/budgeted/budgeting/budgeter/budgetary and benefit/benefited/benefiting.

In some words, the accent may shift according to the suffix: refer/referred/referring/reference, prefer/preferred/ preferring/preference, transferred/transferring/transference.

Other words have accepted single- or double-letter spelling. Our style will be to use the shorter spelling: equaled/equaling, total/totaling, leveled/leveling, canceled/canceling, traveled/traveling/traveler. Note that canceled becomes cancelable and cancellation. Exceptions: enrolling/enrolled/enrollment, kidnapping.

Referable, transferable and transferal are examples of words that could be spelled with one r or two, depending on the placement of the accent. Our style is to prefer the shorter spelling. Also, a most unusual situation in the language: referable has the accepted alternative spelling of referrible.

Part III: The consonant is doubled before a suffix beginning with a vowel, but not before a suffix beginning with a consonant: commit/committed/committing, committal/commitment.

### **Additional Rules in Spelling**

*Notes on Editing*

1. Words ending in a silent e usually drop the e before a suffix beginning with a vowel, but not usually before a suffix beginning with a consonant: move/moving/movable/movement, state/stating/statement, love/loving/lovable, pursue/pursuing, ensue/ensuing, unmistakable, careless, lonely, pureness. In spelling, exceptions abound. One approach is to learn the rule, then the exceptions. Exceptions: judgment, acknowledgment and eable words. Also: singeing and swingeing.

2. Words ending in ede and eed also present problems. Generally the words proceed, exceed and succeed are spelled eed and all others ede: accede, antecede, concede, intercede, precede, recede, secede. Supersede is from a different root.

3. A natural and common ending in English is ify. The main variations are liquefy, rarefy, stupefy and putrefy. The noun forms of these words are liquefaction, rarefaction, stupefaction and putrefaction. And: benefaction.

4. Adjectives ending in ic add ally to form the adverb: artistically, lyrically, scholastically, academically, specifically. Other words that take ally are incidentally and accidentally. One lly ending often is misspelled: coolly. Also woolly, totally.

5. When a word ends in c, add a k before appending an e, i or s, as in colicky, frolicker, picnicker, trafficking, mimicking, panicked, panicky, staticky, politicking, politicks (verb), sicked (verb).

6. Only two nontechnical words end in yze: analyze and paralyze.

7. The spelling of compound nouns can present difficulties.

a. With the in-law series, add the s to the main noun: mothers-in-law.

b. Words of measurement go according to meaning: spoonfuls, cupfuls, bowlfuls, handfuls indicate one spoon, cup, bowl, hand, as in three spoonfuls. If the number of spoons, cups, bowls, hands increases, the logical form might be spoonsful, as in three spoonsful. That isn't likely to happen, of course.

c. Multi-word nouns are a matter of style: attorneys general/attorney generals, poets laureate/poet laureates.

d. An illogical plural form occurs when the plural is put on the wrong word. An example is more than one deputy sheriff. The form could be deputies sheriff, sheriff's deputies, but not deputy sheriffs. The deputies are plural in this instance, not the sheriff.

## **Prefixes**

Prefixes, for the most part, run into the main word without a hyphen. Therefore, it's nonfiction, nonprofit, cosponsor, semicolon, semiannual, prehistoric, bylaw, byline, extracurricular, halftime, intramural, multicolored, outpatient, transplant, trilateral, trimester, unseasonable, bisexual, transvestite, antebellum, antediluvian.

Hyphens are used in these instances:

1. a. When the prefix is followed by a capitalized word: trans-Texas.
- b. When the prefix ends in the same letter as the main word: re-elect.
- c. When double prefixes are formed: sub-subparagraph.

These rules apply in ante-, bi-, dis-, extra-, in-, infra, inter-, intra-, multi-, non-, pre-, re-, semi-, super-, trans-, tri-, ultra- and others.

2. When the prefix creates the meaning of against, former or before. Examples: anti- in anti-bias, anti-war, anti-intellectual; ex- in ex-convict; and pre- in pre-dawn.

Other prefixes:

anti-: The hyphen is used in such words as anti-aircraft, anti-bias and anti-inflation. Words such as antibiotic, antifreeze and antipathy are not hyphenated because they are considered to have meanings of their own.

ex-: Often former is better, as in former student. But ex- may be appropriate in ex-president, ex-student, ex-patient and ex-convict.

pre-: The only hyphenated usages are in pre-convention and pre-dawn.

Another prefix to watch is re-. When the sense of the word dictates, a hyphen may be used with re-. In recover, no hyphen is necessary. But re-cover, meaning to cover again, would require a hyphen.

Almost all words with self are hyphenated: self-serving, self-conscious, self-control.

But half, semi and counter don't, for the most part, require hyphens. Exceptions: half-mast (for ships and at naval and Marine stations) and half-staff (for flag poles).

## **In Conclusion**

The importance of spelling will not diminish. And, spelling problems will not be eliminated without work. Spelling notebooks can be helpful. Words in a spelling notebook can be reviewed, added to, arranged, rearranged. Persistence will pay off. You must learn to recognize misspelled words and to look up words that you don't know. The recognition of incorrect spelling is of vital importance.

Don't avoid words because they are unusual. Look them up. Write them down. Make a list. Here's a list you can add to:

gobbledygook, gesundheit, highfalutin, kilter, shtick, deja vu, hunky-dory, okey-dokey, traipse, mishmash, shoo-in, gumption, persnickety, schmear or schmeer (as in "the whole schmear"), namby pamby, jumpin' jehosophat, brouhaha, nincompoop, rigmarole, finagle, kamikaze, ruckus, lean-to, klutz, doodads, willy-nilly, galoot, flabbergast, bon vivant, kaput, fussbudget, copacetic, scintilla, bric-a-brac, kerplunk, femme fatale, pizzazz or pizzazz, razzmatazz, paparazzi.

### **A Spelling List of Difficult Words**

abutment, appendicitis, avocado, aficionado, all right, aggravate, accommodate, apropos, asphyxiation, accouterment, anathema  
bourgeois, bourgeoisie, bylaws, bureaucracy, benefit, benefiting

connoisseur, coliseum, collapsible, corsage, coalesce, cantaloupe, camouflage, commitment, consensus, census, cemetery, chrysanthemum, conscience, conscientious, consciousness

discotheque, dirigible, despair, daiquiri, dissension, dispel, dissipate, desiccate, disseminate, delectable, dinosaur

evidently, embarrass, equivalent, entice, equipped, entomb, ecstasy, exceed, employee

fluoride, filibuster, flugelhorn, frivolous, fluorescent

guerrilla, gesundheit, giraffe, graffiti, gauge, gnash, garage, groundswell, gourmet

homicide, hemorrhage, hors d'oeuvres, hindrance, hassle, hepatitis, height

infectious, innocuous, inoculate, intact, iridescent, immersion, inclement, irreverent, irrelevant, incidentally, intravenous, inamorata, immaculate

judgment

kidnapping

lightning, laissez-faire, lascivious, liaison, liquefy, lifestyle

marshal, martial, memento, millwright, mayonnaise, maneuvers, marshmallow, mourning dove

nickel, nonprofit

occur, occurred, occurrence, outpatient

pentathlon, percent, perceive, perform, performance, precede, preference, prerogative, proceed, protestant, programming, plaque, privilege, poky/pokey (different words), paralleling, publicly, playwright, parimutuel, plagiarism

quandary, quadriplegic

receive, rescind, recommend, repetition, relevant, ricochet, rapport, rotisserie, remuneration, recurrence, restaurateur, ridiculous, reminisce, reminiscence,

sizable, satellite, sacrilegious, surveillance, shepherd, spaghetti, sherbet, scrimping, sheriff, skiing, salable, separate, secede, supersede, seize, siege, succeed, superintendent, supplement, stifle, shaky, spelunker

till, temperament, temperature, tendinitis, trafficking, trampoline

ukulele, umbrella, under way

veterinarian, verbatim, volume

willful, weird, wiener, winnable

yacht

## Chapter Four

### Proper Nouns

People and places have names that tend to be more unusual than usual. Because America has assimilated people and cultures the way it has, all kinds of names have been given to people, places and things. The spellings of names are either right or wrong. Getting a name wrong is a mistake of consequence. Getting the name right is no easy accomplishment. Correctness of proper nouns requires sensitivity, alertness, carefulness and care. The ability of writers or editors to deal with names tells a great deal about their professional standards, or lack of them.

The basic approach must be: When in doubt, look it up. Source materials can be invaluable. Almanacs, encyclopedias, postal guides, dictionaries, telephone books, city directories, street guides, atlases and Congressional directories are necessary reference materials. Special dictionaries may be necessary in subject areas. Collecting names is important.

One of the reasons for the difficulty with proper nouns is provincialism. People who live in one part of the country or who have definite ethnic backgrounds may find other areas and other ethnic groups unusual. Because Americans are so mobile, they often leave places with familiar names for places with unfamiliar names. But every person's name is important to her or him. And the names with which people are familiar are important to them. Because of this, exactness and correctness can be the only standard.

Even when alternative spellings are possible, one person, place or thing has only one name. Examples: Johnson, Johnston, Jonson, Jonssen, J. Eric Jonsson; Catherine, Katherine, Kathryn, Cathryn, Katharine Hepburn, Katharine Ross, Katherine Anne Porter; Barbara, Barbra Streisand; Dorothy, Dorthy; Phillip, Prince Philip; Ann, Anne, Ann-Margaret; Glen Campbell, but Glenn Miller/Ford/Davis; Lewis, Louis Armstrong; Brown, Jackson Browne; Charlie, Charley, Charly; Alan, Allan, Allen; Wilson, Willson, Elliott Gould, T.S. Eliot, Eliot Richardson; Laurence, Lawrence; Patterson, Paterson, N.J.; Myer, Meyers, Ron Meyer, Gerald Meyers.

The pattern is no pattern.

Soldier Field is in Chicago, and Soldier's Field is at Harvard. Also at Harvard is the Nieman program, which is different from Neiman-Marcus. LeRoy Neiman is an artist. Columbia is a university, city and the gem of the ocean. Colombia is the country. In Pennsylvania the place is Pittsburgh. In Texas, Kansas and California it's Pittsburg. DePaul is in Chicago and DePauw is in Greencastle, Ind. Monterrey is in Mexico, Monterey in California. The city in Australia is Sydney. Herbert Spencer and Edmund Spenser didn't have all that much in common.

Eugene O'Neill wrote "Mourning Becomes Electra." Cale Yarborough and Lee Roy Yarborough drove stock cars. Glenn Yarborough was a singer. Ralph Yarborough was a United States senator. Hugh O'Brian and Edmund O'Brien are actors. Julius Caesar lent his name to the Caesarean section. Cesar Chavez gave his to the farm labor movement. Allen Ginsberg and Ralph Ginzburg both lived in New York City. Henry Kissinger was secretary of state. Don Kessinger played baseball. Neil Armstrong landed on the moon. Neill Armstrong is a football coach. McMurry College is in Abilene, Texas. MacMurray College is in Jacksonville, Ill. Gale Storm starred in "My Little Margie," a favorite television program of the 1950s. Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel sang together. Dionne Warwick changed her name to Warwicke and then back to Warwick. Michael Murphey is a singer, Michael Murphy an actor. It's Martha Raye, Danny Kaye and Sammy Kay. Hillsborough is in Florida and Hillsboro in Texas. e.e. cummings. Bob Uecker played baseball, Peter Ueberroth was commissioner. Jack Ramsay was a basketball coach and commentator.

The names of places are a source of wonderment: Apalachicola, Lackawanna, Alamogordo, Lake Pontchartrain, Okefenokee, Cincinnati, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pascagoula, Plaquemines, Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Thibodaux, Fort Huachuca, Parris Island, Machu Picchu.

The same for people: Antony (his first name was Marc) and Cleopatra, Captain Queeg, Ronald Colman, Vikki Carr, Nastassja Kinski, Cyndi Lauper, Cybil Shepherd, Gene Autry, Eric Sevareid, Muhammad Ali, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Akeem Olajuwon, Detlef Schrempf, Kris Kristofferson, David Janssen, Stokely Carmichael, Joe DiMaggio, Gloria Steinem, Eugene O'Neill, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, Walter Lippmann, Orson Welles, Liza Minnelli, Georgia O'Keeffe, Phyllis Schafly, Marabel Morgan, Ayatollah Khomeini. Woodall Rodgers is a cross-town freeway in Dallas. Richard Rogers wrote music. Lorenz Hart and Oscar Hammerstein II wrote the lyrics.

Song titles, publications, brand names, organizations and institutions multiply the problem of getting proper names right.

Some random samples: American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, USAir, Smithsonian Institution, Freedoms Foundation, Book-of-the-Month Club, *New York and International Herald Tribune*, Seventh-day Adventists, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Duncan Phyfe, The Citadel, Van de Graaff, Dr Pepper, Harper's, Johns Hopkins, Levi's, Coca-Cola, *The Star-Spangled Banner*. It was Gulf + Western.

So many incidentals: The nickname of the Montreal hockey team is the Canadiens. Scholz's is a beer garden in Austin. Guillain-Barre syndrome attacks the nervous system and can leave a person paralyzed. Alzheimer's disease is a deterioration of the mind. The life-saving procedure is known as Heimlich maneuver. The Appaloosa was developed as a war horse by the Nez Perce Indians.

Watch especially the distinction between generic drugs and brand-name drugs. Some brand names: Lomotil, Valium, Librium, Quaalude.

Some combinations of words require partial capitalizations, as Scotch tape, Lalique crystal, Ferris wheel, Irish coffee, Guinness stout, Labrador retriever.

The apostrophe and the hyphen cause problems. They don't always appear in a consistent pattern, for various reasons. A hyphen won't be somewhere when logic might dictate it ought to be there: Sanger Harris, Houghton Mifflin, Times Mirror Co. Many businesses simply pay no attention to it. Law firms have a tendency to name themselves Jones Smith Moore and Hagegeorge. It was Merrill Lynch Pierce, Fenner & Smith.

## Chapter Five

### Vocabulary

The very idea of words is startling, almost beyond comprehension, difficult to grasp, imaginative, wonderful, thought-provoking, exact, open-ended, confined, out of context, limitless, direct, subtle, inviting.

Alone, they can cause arguments and debate. One word. Check out viable, parameter, exotic, moot and mundane. You may know what you think viable means. But look it up. Hurry, before the definition changes to fit the way everyone is using it. Compare cavil and quibble. Be prepared for a surprise.

We pick up words because we hear them or see them. The process is so random that we add words without discrimination. Rarely do we stop to examine those words. We give words meaning in the context in which we use them. Use itself makes the words familiar to us. Almost no one challenges us. You can use anxious or podium from now on and no one is going to tell you that you are using the words incorrectly.

Finding the right word, the word that is the best to use under the circumstance, can be difficult. Some words sound alike. Some words look alike. Examples: bizarre and bazaar, Calvary and cavalry, sclerosis and cirrhosis, liable and libel. Sometimes the differences are not significant: frantic and frenetic, founder and flounder. But that condition is the exception rather than the rule. Almost always the distinction between words is important, even if the words seem so much alike: continual and continuous, insure and ensure, immigrate and emigrate.

A good example of the difference in words that appear to be similar are the words irrefragable and irrefragible. On first glance, the variation in spelling would seem to be a matter of style. Not so. They are two different words. The one with the a means irrefutable or indisputable. The one with the i means something that cannot be broken or violated. Another example is carat (the weight of precious

stones), karat (one 24th part of pure gold) and caret (a mark used in editing and proofreading).

Sometimes we assume words mean something that they may or may not. Quibble and cavil are excellent examples. Verbal is a word that is widely misused. Disinterest is another. Irregardless is an interesting nonword.

Words are symbols and should be viewed that way. They carry emotions, grievances, hidden meaning. They imply, suggest. They have different connotations according to who hears them and according to the time and place they are used. Words tell a great deal about the person using them. Words perform their tasks so exactly that a group of words might get across roughly the same idea. And yet, each will be different. People go to court over words. People fight over words. And some die over them.

Words are tools. They are the basic tools of communication. They should be used carefully, knowingly, with sensitivity. Knowing words and using them correctly is important for several reasons. Among them:

1. Communication involves finding the right way to talk about an event, an emotion, an observation, a thought or an idea. Words do that.
2. In its purest form, the purpose of communication is to capture accurately the meaning or substance of an event, emotion, situation, etc. Words do that.
3. We have enough problems as it is with the language gap. That is, what is said, what is heard, what is written, the way it is interpreted. At each step, misunderstanding is possible. And that's within the same language. The ideal is to have words mesh as they pass along the communications trail.

Finding the right word or words isn't easy for most people. The process is worthy of our greatest concern and study and requires our continuing attention. The process never ends. The more we know about words, the more we want to know.

Jacques Barzun, a history teacher at Columbia University and a writer, said, "Simple English is no one's mother tongue. It has to be worked for." Mark Twain said, "The difference in the almost right word and the right word is the difference in lightning and the lightning bug."

Learning vocabulary requires an understanding of the importance of words and a commitment to personal excellence that makes improving vocabulary and word usage part of one's attitude about being an educated person.

## **Noah Webster**

No language ever grew so fast as the American version of the English language. We started with 16th- and 17th-century English and embellished it. This created a long period of linguistic adolescence that cried out for standardization. As often

happens with such situations in history, a man appeared who was able to work on solving the problem.

He was Noah Webster, a graduate of Yale who was briefly a lawyer before becoming a schoolteacher in the 1780s. He wasn't satisfied with the books available in the schools and decided to produce better ones. He was to compile a spelling book, a reader and a dictionary. He, more than any other person, was responsible for the standardization of spelling in America. He not so coincidentally Americanized the English language.

His speller, known as the blue-backed speller, was finished in 1783 and was still in print in the early 1900s. It was one of the largest-selling books in American history. By 1806 Webster had a dictionary -- called *The Dictionary* -- which was revised in 1828 and became *An American Dictionary of the English Language*. It was in two volumes. A second edition that came out in 1840, three years before Webster's death, became a definitive American dictionary.

Webster had competition. In 1830 Joseph Emerson Worcester brought out *A Dictionary of the English Language*. Both these were good dictionaries, but the Webster version was to win in the long run. The G. & C. Merriam Company of Springfield, Mass., acquired the rights to Webster's dictionary after his death and promoted it. Many states adopted a dictionary by legislative act, and eventually Worcester's faded and Webster's remained the leading dictionary.

But the Merriam Company was unable to maintain the rights to the name Webster, so that in these last 150 years many dictionaries have included the word Webster in their names. One sure mark of someone who has a less than adequate background in the language is a reference to a dictionary or dictionaries as a Webster's.

## **Dictionaries**

So many dictionaries are on the market today that listing all of them in hard and soft cover would be difficult. From the first, dictionaries have caused arguments and controversy. Most people don't know anything about their dictionaries. Neither do they know how to use them.

The three kinds of dictionaries are the unabridged, the abridged or desk dictionary and the paperback.

The unabridged was considered the beginning point of dictionary research. Of the several that have been available in the United States, the G. and C. Merriam Company's *New International Dictionary* has been the leader. The third edition is the one in use.

Companies with unabridged dictionaries base their desk dictionaries on them, and they base their paper dictionaries and spelling books on the desk dictionaries. Some companies don't have unabridged dictionaries. They start with the desk

dictionaries. Some companies that have sold paperback dictionaries through the years don't have desk dictionaries.

People who argue about words and their definitions often pull out a dictionary indiscriminately to try to prove their point. Knowing something about the dictionary, its history and its reputation can be important in deciding whether to trust one dictionary over another. Often the best approach is to check the word in more than one dictionary and then try to logically determine which is the best definition.

The main consideration beyond the dictionary itself is knowing the order of senses. Desk dictionaries usually give the order of senses in the front of the dictionary. To take three examples for comparison:  
Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, Merriam-Webster:

The order of senses is historical; the sense known to have been used in English is entered first. This is not to be taken to mean, however, that each sense of a multisense word developed from the immediately preceding sense. It is altogether possible that sense 1 of a word has given rise to sense 2 and sense 2 to sense 3, but frequently sense 2 and sense 3 may have arisen independently of one another from sense 1.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language:

When an entry has multiple numbered definitions, these are ordered by a method of synchronic (at a given time without reference to historical antecedents) semantic analysis intended to serve the convenience of the general user of the Dictionary. The numerical order does not indicate the historical sequence in which the senses developed. The first definition, then, is not necessarily the earliest sense of the word, though it may be. Rather, the first definition is the central meaning about which the other senses can most logically be organized. The organization seeks to clarify the fact that, despite its various meanings, the entry is in a single "word" and not a number of separate words that happen to be spelled the same way.

Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition:

The senses of an entry have, wherever possible, been arranged in semantic order from the etymology to the most recent sense so that there is a logical, progressive flow showing the development of the word and the relationship of its senses to one another (see, for example, the entries *stock* and *common*). In longer entries, where the treatment would not greatly disturb the semantic flow, technical senses have been entered, with special field labels in alphabetical order, usually following the general senses to facilitate their being found quickly.

## **Working With Words**

Words are different and can be identified as different. Deciding on that difference may be the key to working with words. Avoid using synonyms to define words. Try to determine why a particular word came into existence and what about the word has managed to keep it alive.

Often a word may be used for several purposes. See receiver, plug, spoil, console, to name only examples. Sometimes the distinction may be difficult to see. Some dictionaries tell you related words and the meanings.

Building a vocabulary that can make distinctions among words requires more work than that, however. Here are suggestions on working with words:

1. When you run across words you don't know, look them up and write down the definition or definitions. You might even have a small notebook for this purpose. Don't expect to remember words you look up. You need a system for keeping them.
2. Make a note of the part or parts of speech. If the word is a verb, note whether it is a transitive or intransitive verb. If the word is both a noun and a verb, or if the noun or verb is in a different form, pay particular attention to the differences.
3. As time goes by, organize the words in some fashion. In this way you will discover surprising relationships among words. This is where the notebook becomes important.
4. Build your self-confidence on the words by using them. Don't worry about making mistakes. In a society that misuses language so commonly, how could you possibly embarrass yourself?

Through association we learn the general meanings of words, if not the specific meaning. That may or may not be sufficient, depending on the intended purpose. You need to work beyond that and be able to know the specific meaning of the word. Here are words you may know in general. Test yourself to see. Then see if you know the specific meanings for some of the words.

The words:

simpatico, congenial, sardonic, melancholy, contrite, humble, perplexed, haughty, paranoid, obnoxious, morose, lethargic, veracious, bumptious, wiry, concerted.  
An interesting word: palpable.

Other words can be more easily defined because they sound or look like what they mean: nervous, hyper, frustrated, upset, itchy, giddy, flighty, spacey, spaced out, bubbly, down, laid-back, mellow, intense, sharp, dull, bright, uptight, bummed out, peeved, jumpy, jittery, empty, frightened, fuzzy, rough, scrappy, numb.

All these words fit in a general category of words we use to express the mood, emotion, state of being or general feeling about ourselves or others. This category

is one of the largest in the language and has many old and new words with shades of meaning.

The words we are going to study in depth deal with communication. This, too, is a large group. But they are words we need to know. Because communication is such a varied exercise, words trying to describe the process are plentiful and varied. With some of the words the definitions are surprisingly close together.

To use words effectively, you must be able to explain what a word means and how it differs from other words. Don't use synonyms or short-cut answers. You should be able to explain the use of the word.

A batch of words you ought to know:

oral, verbal,

reticent, taciturn, laconic, inarticulate,

voluble, verbose, verbiage, fluent, glib, loquacious, garrulous, logorrhea,

chatter, prate, prattle, babble, gibber, gibberish,

vociferous,

palaver, wheedle,

succinct, concise, cogent,

banal, bromide, cliché,

reluctant,

connotative, denotative,

colloquial, colloquialism,

euphemism, circumlocution,

rhetoric, rhetorical, rhetorical question,

soliloquy,

dialect, patois, vernacular, parlance,

slang, jargon, lingo, argot, jive, cant,

idiom,

saying, saw, maxim, axiom, adage, proverb, motto, precept, aphorism, apothegm, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, analogy,

epigram, epithet, epigraph, epitaph, slogan, cachet, colophon, witticism, quip,

moot,

orthography, lexicography, etymology, linguistics, philology, semantics, syntax, solecism,

non sequitur, anacoluthon, malaprop/malapropism,

acronym, anagram, palindrome, acrostic,

empirical,

forensic,

pedant, pedagogy, didactic,

polemic,

colloquy,

edict, ukase, canon, dictum,

quibble, cavil,

bicker, querulous, bellicose, badger,

pejorative, pejoration,

tirade, harangue, diatribe, scurrilous, vilify,

acerbic, acerb, acerbate, acerbity,

connive, impugn,

lucid, obfuscate,

homily, treatise, paean,

tome,

quidnunc,

doggerel,

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neologism,

norm, average, mean, median, mode.

### **Some Definitions**

The definitions given are an attempt to explain the meaning of the word and may not parrot dictionary definitions:

A reticent person is habitually restrained, quiet, reserved. The makeup of taciturn people is such that they are almost always silent and do not want to communicate. A person who is laconic talks, but not much. The word inarticulate carries the meaning of someone who is unable to speak clearly or coherently.

Voluble implies a great flow of words. Verbose is an adjective applied to a person who uses more words than necessary. Verbiage is a noun. You would characterize something as having verbiage, an excess of words. Fluent is being able to speak or write easily and expressively. A glib person can talk a great deal about any given subject, but at a point isn't convincing. Loquacious is very talkative. A garrulous person talks a great deal, especially about unimportant things. Logorrhea is excessive talkativeness, especially when incoherent and out of control.

A person chatters away with fast, non-stop, foolish talk. To prate involves lots of foolish talk. To prattle has a child-like connotation of talking too much. The noun babble involves foolish or meaningless talk. To gibber is to speak rapidly and incoherently. Gibberish is the talk produced by one who gibbers: rapid and incoherent talk.

Vociferous implies loud and unrestrained shouting or crying out. Note related words to vociferous in Webster's New World Dictionary.

Palaver as a verb means to talk flatteringly. To wheedle is to attempt to persuade and to get something from someone by coaxing.

Succinct is clear and brief. Concise is brief and to the point. Cogent is convincingly to the point.

Banal is worn out through overuse. A bromide is a trite saying. A cliché is an expression or idea that has become trite.

Note the distinction between reticent and reluctant.

### **Words of Talk**

These meanings are designed to show the difference in these words:

Dialect is the way a language is spoken in a particular region or among a particular group. Patois is a provincial dialect spoken in a subarea of the region.

In the vernacular means in ordinary, everyday language. Parlance is a form of talk that uses idioms, as in the military.

Slang is that constant infusion of new words into the language. Jargon is specialized vocabulary of a profession. Lingo is what is not understood by a person not privy to the meaning of the jargon. Argot is the way people talk in jail or prison. Jive is the way musicians talk. Cant is using what turns out to be meaningless talk out of habit.

An idiom is a turn of phrase, such as: get a second wind, the patience of Job, get lost, a bull in a china closet, the sixty-four thousand dollar question, to wheel and deal, say cheese, to lead a busy life, just for kicks, dirty dog, etc.

## **Sayings**

Saying is the simple, direct term for any pithy expression of wisdom or truth.

A saw is an old, homely saying that is well-worn by repetition. The term old saw is redundant.

“A stitch in time saves nine.”  
“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.”

A maxim is a general principle drawn from practical experience and serving as a rule of conduct.

“Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.”  
“Keep thy shop and thy shop will keep thee.”

An axiom is a statement universally accepted as true or an established principle or law of science, art, etc.

“Those who live by the sword will die by the sword.”

An adage is a saying that has been popularly accepted over a long period of time.

“Where there's smoke, there's fire.”

A proverb is a piece of practical wisdom expressed in homely, concrete terms.

“A penny saved is a penny earned.”  
“Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.”

A motto is a maxim accepted as a guiding principle or as an ideal of behavior.

“Honesty is the best policy.”

A precept is a commandment or rule of action or conduct.

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

An aphorism is a terse saying embodying a general, more or less profound truth or principle.

“He is a fool that cannot conceal his wisdom.”

An apothegm is a short, pithy saying.

“Brevity is the soul of wit.”

### **More Sayings**

metaphor: a figure of speech containing an implied comparison in which a word or phrase ordinarily and primarily used of one thing is applied to another.

“All the world's a stage.”

“The ship plows the sea.”

mixed metaphors: to use two or more inconsistent metaphors in a single expression.

“The storm of protest was nipped in the bud.”

simile: a figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another, dissimilar thing by the use of like or as.

“a heart big as a whale”

“Her tears flowed like wine.”

“cheeks like roses”

hyperbole: exaggeration for effect, not meant to be taken literally.

“He's as strong as an ox.”

“This cat weighs a ton.”

analogy: making a point by taking the point under discussion and comparing it with another point.

### **Words on Words**

An epigram is a terse, witty, pointed statement that gains its effect by ingenious antithesis.

“The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it.”

An epithet is a word or phrase used to characterize a person or thing, usually disparaging: egghead. Also, a description or title: Richard the Lionhearted.

An epigraph is an inscription on a building, monument or other public place; also, a motto or quotation at the beginning of a book, chapter or other piece of writing.

An epitaph is an inscription on a tomb or gravestone or a short composition written in tribute to a dead person.

A slogan is a catchword or rallying motto or a catch phrase designed to be used for promotional or advertising purposes.

A cachet is, among other definitions, a commemorative design or slogan put on envelopes, often as part of the cancellation.

A colophon is a publisher's emblem, or notes about the typesetting and production of a book or other printed piece.

## **Made Up Words**

Acronyms:

radar: radio detecting and ranging

scuba: self-containing underwater breathing apparatus

snafu: situation normal, all fouled up

laser: light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation

Flak is an acronym for fliegerabwehrkanone, which is German for anti-aircraft gun.

Snob is sin noblesse.

Jeep is a phonetic acronym developed when the Jeep was introduced during World War II. Jeep is a way to spell g.p. or gee pee, from general purpose (vehicle).

Anagram: a word or phrase made from another by rearranging letters, as won/now, ram/arm.

Palindrome: a word, verse or sentence that reads the same backward or forward:

wow

Able was I ere I saw Elba.

Name no one man.

Acrostic: a poem in which letters of successive lines form a word or pattern; if the pattern is alphabetical, the acrostic is an abecedarius, which is from abecedarian:

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## **Norm, Average, Mean, Median and Mode**

Norm connotes the usual and the expected. In psychology and sociology norm is a technical term referring to a state of being in accordance with accepted or established practice. In that sense, acceptable synonyms might be regular, natural or typical. The norm refers to the rule and not the exception.

Norm also refers to an established model or pattern. In this sense, par in golf is an example. Few players match par, but it is the universally recognized goal for golfers.

In non-technical usage, average refers to the ordinary, the mediocre and the pedestrian. Thus, an average golfer is not shooting par.

Several averages are used in mathematics.

One of them is mean. If you add up a series of numbers and divide them by the number of items in the series, you get the mean. The definition of mean is: the sum divided by the number of its parts.

Two other statistical averages are the median and the mode. The median is the number exactly in the middle of a sequence. The mode is the most common number.

Here's an example to demonstrate mean, median and mode:

$$1 \text{ plus } 1 \text{ plus } 2 \text{ plus } 5 \text{ plus } 6 = 15$$

In this example, the mean is 3, the median is 2 and the mode is 1.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Structure**

#### **Part I: In The Beginning**

The inexperienced editor attacks copy as she or he would cut weeds along a roadway. As time goes by, the editor-to-be begins to sort out what to look for and to catalog these areas. Then the editor finds errors in style and spelling. Vocabulary and word usage may be added, or at least introduced. Now the editor is not as quick to change the word order or to substitute her or his phrasing for the writer's. Pruning seems more appropriate than clear-cutting. And so the question becomes, what to change in the editing process?

To answer that, let's look at the sentence as a whole. A sentence doesn't have to

have a particular order. Still, some approaches are better than others. Each sentence should be natural. Each sentence should be different from other sentences, not as a result of being forced but because the natural order for this particular set of words has been discovered. Recognizing the good and bad approaches is a matter of judgment or evaluation. The editor has to concentrate on a larger area. The words, the length, the content are appropriate for the information carried in the sentence.

The most natural beginning for a sentence is with a subject stressed immediately or almost immediately. That subject can be modified, with an adjective. If other material comes in front of the subject, watch out. The beginning of the sentence is a place where mistakes crop up. If anything precedes the subject, the reason for having it there should be evident.

### **It and There**

Do not start the sentence with the indefinite it or with there. Those are the weakest ways to write. And starting either of those ways is a terrible habit that leads only to worse writing. Such a beginning usually leaves the sentence without a clear subject. As an editor, you need to change every sentence you see that begins with the indefinite it or there.

Almost without exception, you must have a subject that is responsible for the action in a sentence. The “it” and “there” constructions are part of sentences that don't have subjects.

Edit sentences like these to eliminate the it and there constructions:

It is expected that many of the world's most famous writers will come to New York for the International Congress next January 12 through 18.

When all is said and done, it is hard not to be informed in America now.

There were three reasons given for the postponement.

Don't confuse the indefinite it with an it that has a clear antecedent. For example, the it in the next sentence under dangling participles has a clear antecedent.

### **Dangling Participles**

When a participle is used at the beginning of the sentence, it must have a noun to modify. When that doesn't happen the result is a dangling participle. Every time you see a participle at the beginning of the sentence, go down to the comma and check the next word. If the participle doesn't modify that word, something's wrong.

Get in the habit of looking for participles that have gone wrong. They often do. Here are some examples of dangling participles to get you used to the concept:

Sailing smoothly over the high jump, the dirt scattered about the legs of the runner.

Looking out the window, the sky receded rapidly from view.

Facing the consequences, the door opened slowly as Harold walked in to meet his punishment.

Expecting to hear just another rock 'n' roll band from the United Kingdom, the record was hesitantly placed on the turntable revealing a truly refreshing sound.

Having kept an eye on the two staff members mentioned, it appears they know more about student government than some of the government leaders.

Believing that food eaten plays a major part in shaping the destiny of individuals, families and the world, animal studies are used as laboratory activity to supplement textbook material.

The participle can dangle at the other end, too. That's difficult to do, but here's how (you can see that this is an example that is bad):

Wing Alain (Bam Bam) Belanger had to go to Quebec upon the death of his father, hoping to return to the team Friday.

### **Other Dangling Constructions**

Sentences introduced by prepositions can dangle, too. Here are examples of incorrect usage:

On entering the room the typewriter can be heard.

After listening to Ashberry read his poetry, it is easy to understand why he has received such national recognition.

In talking to many of the women in the store, most of them seemed familiar with what Loehmann's is all about and had shopped one or more of the other 38 locations throughout the country.

Sentences can dangle in still other ways besides the participle and prepositional introductions. Here are examples:

Every morning before going to class, our assignments are reviewed.

Still in the formative stages, Phillips said the new system is

intended to reduce the time involved in signing up for courses.

The dangling problem often occurs because the writer has not put someone or something in the sentence in such a way that that person or thing takes charge of the sentence and acts as its subject. Some inexperienced writers mistakenly believe that the idea of the subject can be somehow understood. Good sentence structure doesn't work that way.

### **Non Seq.**

A non sequitur can occur within a sentence, and often introductory material is used to create what English teachers call non seq. The non sequitur may be technically acceptable, but the relationship of the information is tenuous. Examples of such sentences:

The son of a postal worker, Mongillo was living in Florida when he had his brush with death.

Listed in the South and Southwest Edition of Who's Who, Levitt has an outstanding record with individual sales exceeding 10 million in the Metroplex.

Being one of the most persuasive publicists for the feminist movement, Steinem leads a busy life.

Any introductory material must modify the first noun in the main part of the sentence. An example of how this can go wrong:

Born in Leavenworth, Kan., Nycum's family moved to Victoria in 1976.

While looking for dangling elements, include situations like these in which the material is out of sync.

### **Dangling Adverbs**

Almost everybody does it. They use words like currently, presently, thankfully, actually, etc. at the beginning of the sentence. Whether or not this is technically correct is a matter of opinion. Perhaps the rules of grammar are such that an adverb may sit alone at the beginning of the sentence. But opinion differs on that.

One of the basics of the language is that we have parts of speech and these parts of speech do what they are supposed to do. Adverbs modify adjectives, verbs and other adverbs. Words such as significantly or more importantly at the start of the sentence may or may not modify the verb -- depending on how you look at the construction.

A related point about good grammar is that the adverb used to modify the verb

should be somewhere near the verb. Authorities differ over whether it can split the verb. But that's a separate issue.

Keep in mind that a word ending in *ly* must act as an adverb with few exceptions. *Holy* is an exception.

The word in this category that has a great many purists upset is *hopefully*. *Hopefully* has the greatest opposition of any word in the language, curse words aside. Many of the opponents of *hopefully* are our best authorities on the language.

*Hopefully* is used as an easy way to start the sentence. Using *hopefully* can be unbelievably habitual. Notice how common *hopefully* is in the vocabulary of those around you. Much of the opposition stems from this overuse. Even if you accept the argument that an *ly* word can be used at the beginning of the sentence (*thankfully*, *frankly*, *generally*, *accordingly*), be cautious with *hopefully*.

The opposition isn't as keen against *thankfully*, *interestingly* and some other words, although many authorities have criticized the use of *currently* and *presently* for a long time. They are two words you would have a difficult time justifying, should you choose to use them in print.

As an editor, you should edit out the dangling adverb. The word is not usually necessary. If *hopefully* is the offending word, reword the sentence so that the hoping takes place in the verb. For instance, take a sentence like this, *Hopefully, we'll be home by midnight*, and make it read, *We hope we will be home by midnight*.

## **Participial Tenses**

When participles are used correctly, the participle must be in the correct tense. The participial form may either be in the present or present perfect tense. What determines which it should be is the verb in the main part of the sentence and the logic implied.

Here are examples of the correct use of participial tenses:

Running daily, he has strengthened his body.

Having run three miles, he showered.

Having studied all night, he expected to do well on the test.

## **Part II: The Verb**

### **Sequence of Tense**

One of the most serious problems that can occur with the verb is a violation of sequence of tense. Tenses must be orderly and consistent from sentence to sentence and within the same sentence. Once the tense is established in a piece of writing, other tenses must relate to that tense.

This can be a particular problem when a sentence has two parts and one is dependent upon the other. Orderly sequence must prevail in compound sentences. But the sentences we are talking about here are complex. They have an independent clause and a dependent clause. The two verbs could deal with events that occur at different times. If that happens, the same tense will not be appropriate in both parts of the sentence. The tenses must show that one action occurred before the other.

Usually the first verb, which is the main verb, deals with the most recent action. The second verb describes an action that is previous in time. If the first verb is in the past tense, the second verb must be in the past perfect tense. The rule is: The tense of the verb in a dependent clause is determined by the tense of the verb in the main, or independent, clause.

The possibility of verbs gone wrong will often occur in a sentence that begins with attribution, such as he said, they said or the equivalent. Here are examples of incorrect use of sequence of tense:

They said they paid their bill.

The woman testified she locked the door.

In each of these sentences, the word had must be used in the second half of the sentence to demonstrate that that action occurred before the action in the main, or independent, part of the sentence. Here's the way the sentences should read:

They said they had paid their bill.

The woman testified she had locked the door.

You can get around this problem by placing the attribution at the end of the sentence:

They paid their bill, they said.

She locked the door, the woman testified.

The application of this rule is necessary because in the absence of a clear statement of time, the verbs must indicate by their tenses the relative time. The rule changes when a clear statement of time is included in the sentence. Therefore, these sentences are correct:

They said they paid the bill last month.

The woman testified she locked the door when she went to bed.

Don't be misled by a construction in which established facts are being presented.  
Examples:

He said the world is round.

He said the distance between Dallas and Waco is about 100 miles.

On the other hand, say: He said he was healthy. This is not because he may not be healthy now, but to indicate that he was healthy at the time he made the statement. That's all we know. We don't know whether he has continued to be healthy after he said he was. We have no need to add evaluative remarks, subtle as that may be in this instance.

### **The Conditional**

The conditional is necessary when attribution is used in writing about future events: He said he would go. Or, the sentence can be turned around: He will go, he said.

Common sense requires events to be presented in proper order and time. That is an obligation of the editor.

### **Future Tense**

Pay particular attention to the need to put future events in the future tense. Avoid the is to be construction, as in: The meeting is to be Monday. Use will be.

### **Passive Voice**

Don't use the passive voice unnecessarily, and do not shift unnecessarily from the active to the passive voice, as in:

She went to American University and was employed at a department store in Washington for almost two years.

## **Part III: Showing Relationships Within the Sentence**

### **Time**

When writing about scheduled events, put time before place as in: The game will be at 3 p.m. Sunday in Texas Stadium. When place is unusual, or needs to be stressed, put that first.

Do not place too much emphasis on the day of the week so that it takes on an aspect greater or more important than what will happen on that day. An example of

misplaced emphasis: Friday is the last day to register for the trip. Turn that kind of sentence around and say: The last day to register for the trip to is (or will be) Friday.

Avoid the use of next and last in writing about time. Don't say next Monday, or last Monday.

Don't use words like set, slated, scheduled, due to, upcoming in writing about events.

### **Showing Possession**

Reserve possession for situations in which a person or animal can actually possess: John's car, Spido's bone. Avoid having inanimate objects possess, as in mountain's peak, house's color, car's motor, etc. Turn those into prepositional constructions, as: peak of the mountain, etc. That way the emphasis and the relationship are in better order.

### **Parallel Constructions**

Three problems are common in the effort to keep structure and ideas parallel. Here are the problems with examples of how not to handle comparisons:

1. An illogical comparison, as:

The ideas of the students are not always the same as their parents.

2. A change in thought, as:

During his five years in the Army he advanced from private to being in charge of men.

3. A change in construction. Here are examples:

To me, orientation seems both a necessity and worthwhile.

Jack has received offers from Hollywood not only for his fishing experiences but also because he resembles the late Will Rogers.

The union delivered demands for an increase of 10 percent in wages and to cut the work week to 30 hours.

Jim Caswell, assistant to the vice president for student affairs and dean of students, Bobby Leach, said they do not know what type of person Zumberge is looking for to fill the position.

Suggestions on how to avoid or to edit improper parallelisms:

1. When two or more elements are together, they must be in the same form.
2. Pair participles with participles, infinitives with infinitives, etc.

Be careful with the not only/but also construction. Not only requires a but also. Everything on both sides of the comparison needs to be in the same form. When possible, edit away not only/but also and replace it with a simpler construction.

## **That and Which**

One of the niceties of the language is a rule of thumb involving that and which. Because writing has so much to do with relationships, understanding the difference in that and which and learning how to use them in this certain way can be helpful.

The rule is this: Use that in restrictive or essential constructions, which in nonrestrictive or nonessential constructions. These sentences demonstrate the difference:

The river that flows through Dallas is the Trinity.

The Trinity River, which flows through Dallas, is muddy.

A preliminary question is: Is the word that bad? It can be overused. It can be used unnecessarily. Some writers need to use that. To them, the sentence reads better with a that. Some readers find a well-placed that comforting.

What's important is not to impose one's subjective view on another. Such imposition in editing is bad, anyway. However, the editor needs to be aware of possible overuse. A rule of thumb would be to avoid that whenever possible. Notice, though, that some sentences can be misleading if the that is omitted:

The police disclosed a girl was missing.

A better question is: Is which bad? The answer is yes, except after a preposition (of which) or in a nonrestrictive phrase. Why? Which is a harsh word. It creates a much rougher relationship in the sentence than other words would.

As to the question of whether the words that and which are interchangeable, the answer is absolutely not. They should serve two entirely different purposes in the sentence.

That should be used to show a direct, integral relationship. Which should be used to show a relationship that is not vital to the meaning of the sentence. Don't use which to tie two parts of a sentence together that are necessary (see that which would have been the wrong word in this sentence) to each other.

A good example of when that should be used instead of which:

This is the day that the Lord has made.

Do not use which as a substitute for that in such constructions as: ... the car which, ... the building which, ...the class which, etc.

Use who, not that or which, when referring to people.

Here are sentences in which that would have been better than which:

The newspaper which is free of grammatical errors will delight readers who respect correct usage.

Brigham Young, ranked No. 13 and 7-1, has another sensational quarterback and an offense which has scored 364 points in eight game.

Which is often indicative of yet another problem in relationships within a sentence. Which may be used to add something in the sentence that is not related to the part of the sentence it has been added to. This creates a run-on effect with the which introducing information that has no antecedent or a fuzzy one at best.

... made the score 42-24, which was the beginning of the end.

... told Smith he should get the promotion next month, which is what he wanted to hear.

A basic rule of structure is that elements placed adjacent to each other in a sentence must meet the test of logical relationship.

Here is an example of the sentence in which the which construction has been used to put together information that isn't related:

Not much of a crowd was attracted for the tournament last winter, which was held at Burns Park.

Especially don't let a which construction modify a noun followed by a preposition on the assumption that somehow or other that can work. To emphasize the rule again: Which must be with the word it modifies. You can't say that, well, everybody knows what was meant and everybody got the idea. That's not the point. The point is that tightness of structure demands logical and technical cohesiveness.

Here are sentences in which the which construction tries to modify the noun, but in each a prepositional phrase gets in the way:

The motto of *The New York Times*, which the newspaper proudly displays every day on its front page, is, "All The News That's Fit to Print."

This was in spite of the ethics code of the Newspaper Food Editors and Writers, which suggests that such offers can compromise the journalist's credibility.

He read a handwritten letter from Mrs. Robert Prentice asking for help in reopening investigation into the recent murder of her husband, which Scotland Yard has failed to solve.

That can create relationships that don't exist, too, as in this sentence: Writing coach Paula LaRocque gets pleasure from an oil painting by an Arlington artist that hangs in her office.

### **Other Faulty Relationships**

Bad relationships develop in other ways. Here are examples:

Reports break students down by sex.

The money was found by a boy in a box.

Last year, snow accumulations in Rochester reached 73 inches during the winter season.

The Rotary Club will hold their regular noon luncheon meeting Thursday at the YMCA, beginning at 12 noon.

Like Texas, he starts two freshmen, two sophomores and a junior.

A picnic was held in his honor at the Pyote Park in Monahans when he was presented with a gift from fellow employees.

Greene answered questions in Clements Hall about writing in Texas from reporting students.

The boycotters urged supporters not to buy sugar in full-page ads in morning papers.

On the planet Mars the best available information indicates life is possible.

Yesterday the farmer said the mule was perfectly happy behind the plow.

He was slouched in his seat, motionless, with his chin propped on his elbow.

I am indebted to *Winners & Sinners* of *The New York Times* for many of these examples. *Winners & Sinners* was a critique of the writing and editing in *The Times*.

It was edited for many years by Theodore M. Bernstein. Among the best books written on editing are those by Bernstein.

## Chapter Seven

### Attribution and Variation

#### **Attribution**

Said serves the purpose of attribution, and synonyms for said aren't necessarily good. Don't use according to, cited, commented, stated, added, feels, thinks and believes. Attribution serves a definite purpose: to indicate who said what. Synonyms for said should not be used because the writer or editor thinks that said can be repetitious.

Repetition is not bad in writing. When done right, repetition can be good. Writers should vary the placement of said so that all sentences with quotes or paraphrases don't look alike. This should be a natural variation, though. Such variation enables the writer to de-emphasize the word said. In that way the reader gets used to seeing the attribution but isn't distracted by it.

Readers who are good with the language can be distracted by a poorly chosen word of attribution. Writers need to concentrate on the placement of attribution, not on varying the words used in attribution. Editors should check to be sure the writer has the right word of attribution in the right place.

Notice the bad effect of varying the attribution in this example:

"I had good velocity, maybe my best of the season," Ryan admitted after hurling his first complete game and hiking his career strikeout total to 3,148, third best in the history of the game.

Was Nolan Ryan under interrogation? What was there about this situation that required him to admit to anything?

Some writers use attribution to guide the reader through written material. They use continued, added, also said, concluded, etc. Don't let the writer do that in copy you edit.

Using attribution correctly is one of the tests of good writing.

#### **Tense**

The past tense -- said -- is better. Set up the writing in such a way that the reader knows why this particular piece is being written, what's going on, where it is taking place and who is involved. That means that by the time the story gets to the reader everything has already happened. The use of the past tense -- said -- sets

the story in time.

The present tense -- says -- could be appropriate under certain circumstances. But if the writer and editor don't have a compelling reason to use some other tense, use the past tense.

### **Feels, Thinks and Believes**

The words feel, think and believe should not be used as words of attribution. Said should be used. When feel, think and believe are used, they should be used after the attribution has already been set: He said he ...

Be extremely careful with feel. Use it only when well-being is described: He said he wasn't feeling so well today. That is the only legitimate use of feel.

Use believe in dealing with principles that a person has or in describing a person's religious beliefs: He said he believes in the priesthood of believers. (We are assuming the belief continues, and therefore the present tense believes would be appropriate.)

Use think after the verb of attribution when ideas are involved: He said he thought he had a chance of winning. Notice that felt or believed would be inappropriate in that sentence.

To take an example of a very bad sentence:

He felt the team had a chance to beat Oklahoma.

Changing felt to thought or believed would not provide the word of attribution, which is needed. But felt is not appropriate in this context. Thought is preferred. Therefore, the sentence should be edited to read:

He said he thought the team had a chance to beat Texas.

Or, better still:

He said the team had a chance to beat Texas.

### **According To**

Use according to when citing a source of unquestionable authenticity, such as census statistics, or when the source of the information is apocryphal: According to legend ... Avoid according to in other situations.

### **Quotes and Paraphrases**

Direct quotations, with quotation marks around them, are used to capture the exact words of a person and to give the flavor of the way that person talks. Direct quotes help to authenticate the writing.

Paraphrases give the literal sense of what was said. They don't have to be exact. The writer has freedom in choosing the way to present the information. Synonyms can be used. Long statements can be condensed. A paraphrase can clarify and simplify.

Direct quotes and paraphrases serve different purposes. Direct quotes can give verbatim accounts of what people say and how they say it. Paraphrases provide additional information and put together pieces of information that might not stand alone.

Editors should never, never, never arbitrarily place quotation marks around material being edited. But editors can change quotes to paraphrases when circumstances demand.

Some statements aren't going to be appropriate in direct quotation: "I don't want to go to Waxahachie," she said. That has minimal value as a quotation and would be better in a paraphrase: She said she didn't want to go to Waxahachie.

Edit out the "When asked ..." construction. This unnecessarily involves the writer and is an extremely poor way of writing. Let the quotes stand out and make clear that they were said in an interview.

### **Partial Quotes**

Try your best to avoid partial quotes. Writers usually use them in an attempt to capture the exact language. But, a paraphrase could serve that purpose. Examples: She said that was the "best book" she had read in years. She said she would "do her best" to meet the deadline. In both of these the ideas of "best book" and "do her best" could be gotten across without the use of the quotation marks.

Here are examples in which partial quotes weren't necessary:

Jere Cox, the spokesman, said his company notified airport officials of its decision to "defer" its bond request in a letter dated March 21.

Mrs. Adams said she and her boyfriend, Bernard Deters, 39, were two of witnesses "invited" to testify before the grand jury.

Former Foreign Minister Sean MacBride of Ireland said today the United States and "the Iranians" have agreed to a plan to release the U.S. hostages "before or concurrently with" the opening of a U.N.-sponsored inquiry into the shah's regime.

The United States and its Western allies have established an international "sting" operation to foil attempts to sell embargoed grain to the Soviet Union, Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland said Thursday.

Save the partial quotes for the rare occasion in which you need to emphasize the exact wording of a controversial statement. The rest of the time the writer and editor should try to get across the idea without having to use partial quotes.

Partial quotes would be acceptable in a situation in which the quotes give the word an ironic or opposite meaning the word would have without the quotes.  
Example:

Nanos spent two weeks with the decoy squad last summer and was mugged every night, an unprecedented “success” rate.

### **Combining Identification and Background with Attribution**

Related to attribution is the problem of identification. Attribution should be as simple as possible and not get in the way of what is being said. Identification should also be simple, but it should be presented separately from attribution. Avoid synonyms for identification. Examples of how not to do it:

...said the 38-year-old father of two.  
...said the blue-eyed girl.  
...said the native of Ireland.

In situations such as these, use the person's name or the pronoun she or he.

All those other words are used to tell something about the person that, in the context of the writing, may be incidental. This is the salt-and-pepper approach to writing: drop in a fact here and there. Stay away from that approach.

Details, facts, background information and description should be presented in a context set apart from attribution. The writer should be able to keep the elements together that belong together and should separate elements that don't belong together. If for some reason the writer doesn't do that, the editor has an obligation to straighten out the structure.

Approaches to avoid:

...said the granddaughter of Henry Morgenthau Sr. and the daughter of Maurice Wertheim, an international banker, publisher, philanthropist and sportsman.

“I've changed a lot from my early days,” said Muckler, who admits to being an average minor league defenseman during an eight-year career.

“I think women should register for the draft,” says 21-year-old Melanie Tyler.

The kitchen off the breakfast room is small and compact, “just the way I wanted it,” the charming young married revealed.

“I never thought it would happen like this,” said the son of a Phoenix Motorola engineer who grew up in Arlington Hts., Ill., but moved to Phoenix for his high school days.

“They've got a real good pass rush,” said Zorn, picked up as a rookie free agent quarterback by the Cowboys. “You get behind and there's not much else they have to do. Just tee off on you.”

“I've entered these Publisher's Clearing House Giveaways since I was 19,” says the 28-year-old Ms. Walter, who lives in Norfolk, Va.

“Well to tell you the truth, the most nervous I've ever been was riding in the Water Melon Derby out in Colorado,” said Kaenel, who earned a spot on Aloma's Ruler with his victory in the Wood Memorial last week.

“There was a lot of pressure on me there because the horse I was on had won something like six races in a row.”

### **Inexact Introduction: Combining Observation with Attribution**

Inexact introduction occurs when what is said at the beginning of the sentence doesn't lead into what is said after the comma. The introductory material must relate to the main part of the sentence directly. The connection must be both grammatically and logically correct. When the logic is missing, a non sequitur is created.

In journalistic writing this problem develops most commonly when a statement made by the writer (in an attempt at clarification or amplification) and then attribution is used to introduce a thought that isn't directly related to the observation.

Examples of constructions that must be changed:

1. Characterizing his life, Moore said...
2. With both Dallas and Fort Worth nearby, she said that she has not been limited.
3. Aside from the lack of reading and writing, Smith said....
4. In notetaking, he said that.....
5. When attributing material, he said to use the.....
6. In addition to reading, he told the class...

7. Looking back, he said, "Success had more of an effect on me than I realized."
8. In an interview with her on Tuesday, she said she had experienced working both in front and behind the camera.
9. Even though the various departments did not make the requested cuts, Brown said that no tax rate increase would be needed next year under the present level of services being considered by the commissioners.
10. If it is nonfiction, he said that a publisher will be.....
11. Using the fundamental approach to investing, Cadell said lately he's been advising his clients to broaden their investments and to stay in cash buying or treasury bills because they yield more.

When the attribution comes in the middle of two paraphrases, it should be set off by commas and both sides of the sentence should be paraphrases. Otherwise, the first part of the paraphrase looks like a condition of the second part. Here's how not to do it:

When she was in the seventh grade, she said she finally got on a summer team that was organized for girls.

Setting the attribution off with commas can clarify the time:

When she was in the seventh grade, she said, she finally got on a summer team that was organized for girls.

Still, the sentence would read better as:

She said she finally got on a summer team that was organized for girls when she was in the seventh grade.

Occasionally, even that technique won't work. An example:

During a routine check of the club, police said they found Crosby free-basing cocaine.

What needs to be done to edit that sentence successfully?

The best writing is simple, clear and straightforward. Writers get into trouble when they fool around with sentence structure. The basic information is best presented separately. Keep background together. Don't mix attribution and background. Don't mix attribution and observation. If the intent is to say that someone said such and such, say that. Don't introduce the paraphrase or quote with an observation.

Attribution can be moved around in both quotes and paraphrases. But it must be moved carefully and with consideration of the effects the placement of the attribution has on the information being presented.

The writer doesn't want to present every sentence with the same pattern of attribution. Some thought and logical sentence structure can open up many possibilities for variation other than what is being presented here.

Story organization can be improved by grouping paraphrases within a paragraph and setting full quotes aside in separate paragraphs.

### **Elegant Variation**

Don't substitute words of identification, description or background as synonyms for a person's name or the pronoun representing that name.

Examples of what not to do:

The autistic patient's death ...

The one-time varsity tennis player's heart ...

Walton's foot specialist, Dr. Thomas Daly, examined the big redhead in Los Angeles Wednesday.

"I was pretty consistent," the Mission Viejo, Calif., diver said, "and I'm glad of that."

As she fought death, the paralyzed cheerleader's friends and loved ones fought alongside her.

The new \$25 million Reunion Arena's ice surface can be prepared for ice hockey or ice shows in 12 hours.

"The action is the same in Atlantic City, and it's a lot closer to home," the machinist said.

Rep. Leland's office said the congressman was attending a meeting and had planned to vote.

The 56-year-old newspaperman's responses were peppered with ...

The Oklahoma native studied at ...

The commercial artist describes his work as ...

The native of Los Angeles learned the hard way that ...

# Chapter Eight

## Grammar

### Agreement

More errors occur in agreement than in any other area of grammar.

The most common problem in agreement is the failure to recognize a collective noun and, as a result, using a plural pronoun or verb with it. Collective nouns are considered singular in the United States. Collective nouns are words like class, team, group, committee, club, fraternity, company, etc.

Here are examples of incorrect usage:

1. Meanwhile, SMU gave their new coach, Ron Meyer, a victory.
2. The tennis team will play their next matches on Saturday afternoon.
3. The Rotary Club will hold their luncheon Thursday at the YMCA.
4. He said the company is doing better than they have in the past.
5. A headline: Texas receiver corps rank among Big 12's best

Sometimes a prepositional phrase comes after a singular noun and incorrectly influences agreement. A prepositional construction does not -- except in a rare instance -- affect the agreement.

Here are examples of that problem:

1. The Badlands Hotel is a row of buildings that include a saloon, which offers nightly entertainment.
2. At the beginners' craps table, a cluster of young men and women stand as self-consciously as amateur actors at a rehearsal of *Guys and Dolls*.

Watch especially sentences in which the word group or a similar word that may not be necessary is the subject. In such instances, eliminate the word group or whatever and make the sentence plural. This won't always work, but it will work surprisingly often.

Sentences that could be improved by editing out the group idea:

1. A group of 100 people were on hand to meet him.

2. A team of debaters are competing for the national title.
3. A committee of four sophomores, three juniors and five seniors were elected.
4. A fleet of boats provide trips during the day to nearby islands.
5. The group of agents looking into the killings are being directed by Edward Sharp, the head of the organized crime section of the FBI.

Occasionally the group is indeed an entity and should be kept in the sentence. In such instances, be sure of the agreement.

In this example group is appropriate, but agreement is incorrect:

A group of Dallas businessmen, spearheaded by magazine publisher Wick Allison and real estate developer Dave Fox, are promoting a back to basics movement in local education.

Remember this rule:

A prepositional construction after a collective noun does not affect agreement. You should get in the habit of reading the sentence with the prepositional phrase set aside in some way so that you can identify the correct relationships between nouns, verbs and pronouns.

Sometimes the sentence has other problems in addition to agreement. Even though you may immediately spot an agreement problem, look to see what else might be wrong with the sentence.

Here is such a sentence:

The game, which kept the standing room only crowd of 6,777 on the edge of their seats at Will Rogers Coliseum, was as thrilling as any playoff game in league history.

Remember that many writers use group, team, committee or some other collective noun without thinking about the structure they are getting into. Your job as an editor is to straighten out that lack of thinking. Sports announcers by and large ignore the rule and refer to the singular team with a plural verb or pronoun over and over. Perhaps that influences others to do the same.

Sometimes disagreement results with unnecessary shifts from plural to singular in the sentence:

Examples of incorrect shifts:

1. The artists displayed their work at the fair.
2. The students were lined up to pay their bill.
3. The rookies watched the last Cowboys-Packers game in the comfort of their living room.
4. The students said their lifestyle is better than that their parents enjoyed at the same age.

## Number

Each and any word signifying each is singular: one, no one, someone, everyone, anyone.

Examples of incorrect use of each:

1. Each of us have our own transportation.
2. Each of us are going to the meeting in separate cars.
3. Each senator has their own personal mailbox.

Neither by itself is singular. In either/or and neither/nor constructions, the verb should agree with the closest subject.

Correct these sentences:

1. Neither of us are interested in going.
2. Neither CBS nor ABC have indicated any willingness to settle.
3. Neither his wife nor his parents was aware of the difficulty.
4. Either the officers or the fraternity have to take the blame.

The word number depends on whether “a” or “the” is used. The number is singular. A number is plural. Examples of correct usage:

The number of scholarships is limited.

A number of us are going to the game Saturday.

None can be singular or plural depending upon the context. However, many people prefer that none be used only in a singular construction. In sentences in which a singular usage with none isn't reasonable, get rid of the none and reword the sentence.

Uses of none that would better be reworded to eliminate the none:

None of us are going to be able to make it to the game Saturday.

None of the 40 members of the organization said they could go.

## Verbs

The verbs that give everyone the most trouble are lie/lay, sit/set, affect/effect/lend/loan and proved/proven.

Lie/lay: The principal parts are lie/lay/lain/lying and lay/laid/laid/laying. To lie is intransitive, meaning that it cannot take an object. To lay is transitive, meaning that it must take an object. Here are examples of correct usage:

She was lying on the sofa.

She lay down to take a nap.

She laid the book on the table.

Lie and lay figure in many colloquialisms. It's the lie of the ball and the lay of the land. Laying by is a farming term.

Don't confuse these words with the verb to lie, meaning to make a false statement. The principal parts are lie/lie/lie/lying. Don't use this lie unless you mean it and are able to prove it. To lie, meaning to tell a falsehood, is most derogatory.

The flowers that you get in Hawaii are a lei (singular) or leis (plural).

Sit/set: The principal parts are sit/sat/sat/sitting and set/set/set/setting. Sit is intransitive. Set is transitive. Examples of correct usage:

She sat down at the piano and began to play.

She set the bottle on the mantel.

Affect/effect: Affect is a verb. Effect can be a noun or a verb. Usually it is a noun. Examples:

Don't let her situation affect you.

What are the effects of her action?

When effect is a verb, it means to bring about, cause to occur, as in to effect a settlement.

Lend/loan: Use lend as a verb and loan as a noun. The principal parts of lend are lend/lent/lent/lending.

Proved/proven. Use proved as a verb, proven as an adjective. The principal parts of verb are prove/proved/proved/proving. A proofreader reads proofs, but the verb to prove should be used to explain that the reader had proved type that has been set (not proofed).

## Linking Verbs

Being able to recognize a linking verb can be important for two reasons: 1) you can identify situations in which you must use a predicate nominative; and 2) You can know when to use an adjective (a predicate adjective) instead of an adverb after a verb.

The common linking verb is to be in all its forms: is, are, was, were. After a to be verb, you must use a predicate nominative. Example:

It was he who called.

Other verbs can be linking also. These additional linking verbs have to do with looking, appearing and feeling. The most common linking verbs, in addition to the forms of to be, are

appear, become, feel, get, grow, look, seem, smell, sound, taste.

Knowing that these are linking verbs tells us that they take an adjective and not an adverb. Examples:

He feels bad.

He looks bad.

Some other verbs may be linking verbs in instances in which the action reverts to the subject. These include lie, sit and turn. Examples:

He lay still.

He sat erect.

This milk has turned sour.

The weather is going to turn bad.

When the emphasis is on the verb, the adverb would be correct, as in:

He sat directly across the aisle from her.

He turned slowly.

Read slowly.

Deciding whether bad or badly is correct is a common problem. Bad is an adjective and can be easily recognized as an adjective in bad storm, bad health, bad debt. Badly is, obviously, an adverb. But when is badly the appropriate word to use? Here's the rule: When the action relates to the verb and not to the subject, use the adjective.

The best sentence to use in trying to think through this problem is:

The skunk smelled (bad, badly).

Bad indicates that the skunk is bad to the smell. Badly would indicate the skunk had trouble smelling. But, knowing that smell is a linking verb is of utmost importance. Because it is, it must take an adjective. Another example:

The child felt bad about dropping the cup.

Again, felt is a linking verb and must take the adjective bad, not badly.

## **Pronouns**

A basic problem in all forms of communication is the misuse of the pronoun. Misuse of pronouns seems to have gotten more common through the years. Here's a review of the two main cases of pronouns:

Nominative: I, we, she, he, they, who.

Objective: me, us, her, him, them, whom.

Pronouns are used in the nominative case as the subject of the sentence, or as predicate nominatives. Pronouns are used in the objective case as the object of the preposition or the indirect object of the verb. Pronouns are used in the possessive case to show possession.

Predicate nominatives: This is most often a problem when the sentence is turned around, as in: Was it he? The pronouns surrounding the to be form of the verb must be in the nominative case:

I knew it was he.

If I were he ...

It was she.

Objective pronouns: One of the most common and most irritating solecisms comes from the confusion of the case of the pronoun. Me, us, her, him, them, whom are in the objective case. They must be used as the indirect object of the verb or the object of a preposition:

She gave me a present.

She gave the book to me.

I don't think anyone recognized the couple as Charlie and me.

These examples deal with me. But, of course, the situation is applicable to the other forms of the objective case. In a construction in which the preposition between is used, for example, the correct usage would be between him and me, between her and him, between her and me, between them and me, etc.

Possessives: Use the possessive in constructions such as: Is that car hers? or Is that Mary's? Also, use the possessive with a preposition in the construction: I am a friend of Mary's (not Mary).

The possessive is used before a gerund in: I don't like your going out at night by yourself. The objective form may be used when the meaning is emphatic: His mother was proud of him doing that. But, note that the objective form won't always be logically correct.

A better approach would be to use the possessive before a gerund, but change the sentence to create a prepositional construction for the emphatic meaning:

Mother discouraged my playing.

Mother discouraged me from playing.

## **Who and Whom**

Who and whom may be difficult, but they are not impossible.

Mastering their use requires a great deal of attention in writing and speaking. But the reward is the satisfaction of knowing that you have mastered grammar's most tricky construction.

Who and whom often appear in sentences that are turned around or have more than one subject and verb. This is what makes the distinction difficult.

The best way to grasp the distinction in who and whom is to establish in what situations who and whom appear, and to collect sentences that conform to each of the various usages.

Who appears in three instances:

*Notes on Editing*

1. When who is the subject of the verb and the verb is with who.

Who is it?

Who asked for me?

May I say who is calling?

Who called last night while I was away?

Maybe they just broke up with someone who meant a lot to them.

2. When who is the subject of the verb but another noun and verb are inserted between who and its verb.

She is the woman who police believe took the jewels.

Ed (Too Tall) Jones, who Landry says is playing at a more consistent level than at any time in his pro career, was named the Oak Farms Most Valuable Player for his efforts against the Cardinals.

3. As a predicate nominative.

He knows who the winner is.

Do you remember who it was we invited first?

Whom appears in two situations.

1. As the object of the preposition.

A. In one instance the preposition and whom may be together:

To whom did he give the money?

B. Or, whom can be separated from the preposition, as:

Whom did the police come for?

You know whom you are dealing with.

2. As the indirect object of the verb.

They asked whom he would name.

Who was the Black Rider whom the Hobbits saw in the foggy darkness?

It was not unusual for a team, before making a pick, to run to the phone to call one of its friends around the country to find out whom it should select.

Conner declined to say whom he contacted in the White House to arrange the meeting.

Whoever/whomever follow the same rules:

She is encouraging them to write to their favorite player, whoever that may be.

Give the package to whoever answers the door.

Here are examples of misuse of who and whom:

Since her election, Mrs. Whitmire has been silent on who she would appoint as chief.

Now he is a prophet and patriarch, looking much like Tolstoy, who he once read, with his long beard and graying hair.

Wright's last primary opponent was former City Councilman Tommy Thompson, who Wright defeated by more than 10 to 1.

Those include Jim Spanarkel, who SMU fans might remember seeing in the fall when Duke ravaged the Mustangs in Moody Coliseum.

Timothy Leary's sell-out audience at Emory University Tuesday night did not contain the ones who consider him a vile moral corrupter, but mostly curious college students who he urged, as he pranced back and forth with the microphone, to get off his planet.

## **The Conditional**

The conditional is the required tense when presenting an idea that is improbable. Examples:

If she were alive ...

If I were in her shoes ...

If I were he ...

If I were in Boston ...

Note that the concept being discussed might be possible. But it is unlikely.

Also notice that the If I were he construction creates a predicate nominative.

## Like and As

Like and as may be a preposition or conjunction, depending upon usage. Use the objective case of the pronoun after like and as in these examples:

Now you are talking like me.

She dresses like me.

They look like us.

He was posing as me.

If you don't want like and as to be preposition, change the sentences to read

Now you are talking like I talk.

She dresses like I dress.

etc.

## Comparative Constructions

One of the all-time great debates in the language has to do with whether the verb is understood at the end of a comparison. Some grammarians insist on not taking anything for granted. Others believe that the understood predicate is a time-honored approach.

The question is, is it

She is happier than me.

or

She is happier than I.

We are as happy as them.

or

We are as happy as they.

Everyone came on time but she.

or

Everyone came on time but her.

One solution is to use both subject and verb when clarity is the issue. The best example of how trying to have a verb understood can change the meaning in a sentence is this:

She loves her mother as much as me.

or  
She loves her mother as much as I love her.

### **The Exception to the Agreement Rule**

A prepositional construction does not affect the relationship between a noun and its verb or pronoun. The example is: A katch of neighborhood women gathers every Friday at the O'Reilly house.

However, an exception to that rule can be created when the material after the preposition takes over control in the sentence. Here's an example:

He has a seasoned staff of campaign workers who have spent three years building his political base.

### **The One and Only**

The phrase the only one makes a construction singular. The question that must be asked is whether the reference is to the only one among many, and therefore singular, or one among many who are, and therefore plural. Here are examples of correct usage, one singular and one plural:

Wood, a former computer expert for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, operates the only firm in Dallas to help financial institutions combat computer fraud.

Wood operates one of the few firms that help financial institutions.

### **Little-Known Rules of Grammar**

1. The subject and object of the infinitive are in the objective case:

They waited for him to call.

They didn't want to call him or me.

This rule applies even if the infinitive is to be:

They believed her to be the robber.

They believed the robber to be her.

2. The perfect infinitive has limited use. But when you need it, you need it:

I am happy to have met you.

## **Chapter Nine**

## Usage

Making distinctions between words is one of the most important aspects of the writing and editing process. Writers and editors must know a great deal about language, its logic and appropriateness. They must learn to develop a critical eye, to look askance at words. Developing this critical nature is essential to becoming an accomplished writer.

Strive for freshness in the language. Stay away from clichés, bromides and trite expressions. The distinction between the good and the bad, the acceptable and unacceptable is not easy. Nevertheless, if the word or expression has been used so much that it has become distracting it should be avoided. A writer becomes a better writer by staying away from trite expressions and searching for the new and the fresh.

Be aware of clichés and avoid them like the plague (just kidding, of course). Clichés occur because of the tendency of all of us to rely upon familiar and easy constructions in our speaking and writing. One instance of a cliché here and there wouldn't make a great difference. When they recur, however, they become noticeable and distracting.

Too much news writing relies on clichés: hailed, violence flared, flatly denied, in the wake of, no immediate comment, gutted by fire, strife-torn, probe, police nabbed.

Other words may not appear to be clichés, but they are. Examples: following, prior, prior to, due to.

Use after instead of following, use previous instead of prior, use before instead of prior to, use because of instead of due to. These other words -- after, previous, before, because of -- blend in better in construction and do not attract attention.

Don't use -wise endings. Be cautious about -ize in words. Don't use prioritize. Shun the expressions early on and at that point in time.

When writing about future events, stay away from words like scheduled, slated and set. Avoid hold, as in to hold a meeting or in a meeting will be held. Use future tense. Say that such and such a group will meet at such and such a time to do whatever it is going to do.

Another example is under and over. Use less than and more than when quantity is involved. Use fewer for numbers.

Some writers use just, very, so, get, done, only, some, really, in fact and similar words unnecessarily in their writing. Just and only are words of evaluation. While is one of the most subtle crutch words. While should be used to refer to the exact

same time. As an editor, you should watch for these crutch words and take them out. The ultimate crutch word is thing.

Writers often resort to trite expressions. It all started is the best example. Another example is the That's what so and so said construction used after a direct quotation. Other such expressions are When asked and How does so and so feel about.

Sometimes writers believe they are the first to stumble upon expressions. An example would be, So and so never thought when she was growing up on the plains of Nebraska that one day she would .... Or, So and so doesn't look like an explosives specialist.

### **Redundancies**

Another level of misuse is tautology -- the needless repetition of an idea, statement or word. This is a form of redundancy or pleonasm. Examples include:

advance reservations, advance forward, future plans, future prospects, present incumbent, past history, past experience, past records, past custom, usual custom, dates back to, old antiques, new innovation, new record, new construction, personal experience, personal friendship, personal friend, free passes, free gifts, actual fact, true fact, invited guests, another one, inside of, outside of, few in number, consensus of opinion, a distance of 10 yards, for a period of, in the year such and such, big or small in size, red (or any other) colored, rainy weather, sunny weather, at the corner of one street and another, set of twins, widow of the late, dead body, strangled to death

A fine example: the reason is because. Also, reason why is redundant.

Other expressions may not be repetitious, but may simply be trite, tired and worn from use. Examples:

last but not least, few and far between, slow but sure, goes without saying, sadder but wiser, words cannot express, easier said than done, first and foremost, ripe old age, bitter end

### **Bad Words**

Some words have negative connotations and should be avoided. Among them: connive, loot and cohorts. All involve criminal activity. Don't use them. Especially be careful with drunk for the same reason.

Be sure you know the difference in cirrhosis and sclerosis.

Avoid words that may have double meanings. Climax and affair are two of them.

### **Words Relating to Death and Injury**

*Notes on Editing*

Suffering is suffering and shouldn't be used in expressions such as suffering wounds or suffering damages. Also, don't say that someone suffered a heart attack. Sustained means to bear up under. Therefore, sustaining a fatal injury is gibberish. An all-time bad example from a headline: Wreck hurts two Navarro students.

Injured people are always rushed to the hospital.

Strangled means to die. Choked doesn't involve dying.

Say so and so died, apparently of a heart attack. Don't say apparently died and don't say of an apparent heart attack.

After a death, say funeral arrangements are pending, not funeral services are pending.

### **Amounts, Figures and Numbers**

Use more than instead of over for amounts and distances.

Use less than instead of under for amounts and distances.

Use few or fewer with numbers and less with amounts. Few were present. In less time.

Stay away from approximately. Approximate is a good verb.

Don't use some or a total of or around. Use about with a round number. Be sure the number is a round number: 20, 30, 40. Some round numbers are obviously round: 50, 100, 1,000, 5,000, 10,000. You don't need to use an about with those numbers.

Almost is better than nearly in most situations. Either could be used in reference to distance. Almost is more acceptable in reference to time, nearly in reference to position.

Another implies there was a first. Another 25 were sent means that at least 25 were sent previously. Maybe even 50 or 75.

Be careful of only. It can be unnecessarily evaluative, as in: Only 100 people showed up for the meeting.

### **Words That May be Confused**

Be careful with principle and principal, stationary and stationery, compliment and complement. Spell supersede, consensus, commitment, memento and relevant correctly.

Consensus can stand alone. Consensus of opinion and general consensus are redundant. General consensus of opinion is very redundant.

Ordinance is municipal law, ordnance is military supplies.

Different from, not different than.

Try to, not try and.

Center on, not center around or about; revolves around. Use concerns instead of centers on.

Disinterested means impartial. Not interested and uninterested are the words you may have thought disinterested was.

Verbal means in words; oral means spoken. An agreement is oral and is in words unless it is a written agreement. Say they agreed and shook hands.

Eager means looking forward to; anxious means looking to with anxiety.

A dilemma is a choice between two equally unacceptable alternatives.

It's martial law, but Marshal Dillon and junior marshals. Both Marshal and Marshall are proper nouns, but Marshall is more common: Thom Marshall, Thurgood Marshall, the Marshall Islands, Marshall, Texas.

A dais is a raised platform. Podium is a small platform, such as the one a conductor stands on. A lectern is a reading stand. A rostrum is a platform for speaking. A speaker stands in a pulpit, on a podium or rostrum, and at or behind a lectern.

Lend is a verb, loan is a noun.

Postponed means to put off. Canceled means to do away with. Use delay for a short postponement.

Rebut means to argue; refute means to succeed in rebutting.

### **Making Distinctions Between Words**

Prophecy is a noun, prophesy a verb.

A council is a group of persons, such as a city council. Counsel is advice or an attorney as a noun, or to advise as a verb.

The place of the cross is Calvary. Cavalry has to do with horses and armed vehicles.

Censor is related to censorship. Censure is a judgment, a reprimand. Sensor is another word entirely.

It's complexion, not complected. Say dark-complexioned.

The speaker implies, the listener infers. An implication is not direct.

Allude is indirect, a suggestion or implication. Refer is specific, to the point.

Comprise is best used in the sense that the whole comprises the parts. Used composed of instead of comprised of. Example: The United States comprises 50 states.

Annoy means to bother. Irritate means to displease. Aggravate means to make worse.

Prone means to lie face downward. Supine means lying face up.

Immigrate is to enter. Emigrate is to leave. An émigré is a person forced to leave his or her country for political reasons.

Imminent is impending. Eminent is prominent. Immanent is confined to consciousness. Eminence is someone who holds a position of distinction or something of distinction. Eminent domain is the right of the state to take private property for public use with adequate compensation.

Something incredible is difficult to believe. A person is incredulous if he is inclined to disbelieve what he sees or hears. Also, if a person causes disbelief he is incredible.

Liable means responsible; libel is defamation. Do not use liable as for likely.

The word is hearsay.

### **Fine Distinctions**

A pupil attends elementary school.

A lawyer practices law. An attorney is a lawyer with a client.

A building is located where it is built. After that, it is situated or just there. Locate also means to find after a search.

A group small enough so that the members may be identified individually consists of persons. Otherwise, the term is people. Thousands of people. Four persons came to see us.

An audience hears. Spectators watch.

A grown-up female person is a woman.

A house is where you live. A home is what you make of living there. Your house can burn down, but your home can't.

Sky is preferred to skies.

It's evidently, not evidentially. Evidently and apparently are very close. Simplest way to deal with them is this: Use apparently for what you see and evidently for what you figure out.

Data can be singular or plural. But note the difference in phenomenon and phenomena, criterion and criteria, memorandum and memoranda, referendum and referenda, and medium and media.

Media may be singular or plural depending on the construction.

A resolution is adopted, not passed.

Don't use jurist as a synonym for judge. A jurist is a person knowledgeable in the law.

Not all lawmakers are solons. A solon is a wise person.

Use v. in citing legal cases, not vs.: *Sullivan v. The New York Times*.

Surgery is the art of operating. Doctors don't perform surgery, but they may perform surgical procedures.

Compared to is to liken. Compared with is to bring out points of resemblance or difference, such as the poetry of Keats compared with the poetry of Shelley.

Idiomatically, sense meaning logic or sensibleness is followed by in. However, if the sense signifies meaning it is followed by of. Can you get the sense of that poem?

Parameter doesn't mean boundaries of. Parameter and perimeter are different words. Appraise and apprise are different words. So are maze and maize.

The word you want is discreet to describe prudence and the ability to hold a confidence. Discrete means individual, distinct.

Cows, chickens, goats, horses, cain, hell and prices are raised; people are reared.

Continual means recurring at brief intervals but never stopping. Continuous

means to occur without interruption. Continual best applies to time. Continuous best applies to movement.

Sensuous implies delight in beauty of color, sound, texture or artistic form. Sensual stresses indulgence of appetite, especially sexual appetite. Sensuous is not a synonym for sexy.

Masterful implies strength of personality: a masterful conductor. Masterly shows masterful ability: a masterly job, a masterly performance.

Ingenious (in-jeen-yus) comes from ingenuity and means clever, shrewd, inventive. Ingenuous (in-jen-you-us) means artless, innocent, without sophistication and open, frank, candid. Ingenue is an artless girl, or an actress playing such a role.

Not all real estate dealers are Realtors. A Realtor belongs to the real estate board.

It is jew's-harp, jews'-harp, Jew's-harp, Jews'-harp, jew's harp, jews' harp, Jew's harp, Jews' harp, but not juice harp.

### **Slight Differences**

Some words have essentially the same meanings, but you may want to choose one over another in certain situations.

Farther is better for distances and further is better for degree, quantity.

Founder is to be at rock bottom. Flounder could imply a flopping around.

Ensure implies making certain and inevitable. Don't use insure for that. Assure implies a making sure in the mind by removing all doubt. Secure implies action taken to guard against loss.

### **Sexism, Racism and Prejudiced Writing**

Be alert to possible discrimination in writing. Most of us are not going to make conscious decisions that might be called sexist, racist, etc. But differences can occur in the way we write about people, and words that are discriminatory can creep into writing.

Here are some examples of that kind of writing:

1. The deaf accountant spotted the error.
2. John Johnson and Kathy Mata were recently promoted. Johnson has been with the company for five years and Kathy for seven.

3. Marianne Jones, an African-American teacher, was chosen the outstanding member of the faculty for the 1997-98 school year. She teaches mathematics.

The basic rule in avoiding sexism, racism and ageism is this: Don't treat people differently because of race, sex, age, handicaps, etc. Don't call women girls or ladies. Don't use clichés like ripe old age. Don't be surprised because someone accomplishes something even though he or she is handicapped. Don't make derogatory remarks about people who are not like us.

Don't use age – either young or older – if it isn't pertinent.

### **Athletes Who Say They'll Go Somewhere to School**

Athletes who tell coaches that they will go to such and such a school simply have announced their intentions. They've said they will attend TCU, or wherever. Such an announcement is not a firm commitment, and it's definitely not a verbal commitment, which is a redundancy.

All they've said is that they will sign with this particular school on the signing date. Until then, they can change their minds -- and often do. They commit themselves when they sign the letter of intent.

### **A Footnote**

Add these words to the list of words to stay away from:

reoccur (sometimes spelled reoccur), reoccurrence, irregardless, momento. Although they are commonly used, they aren't real words. They are words formed by mistaken identity. The real words are recur, recurrence, regardless and memento.

## **Chapter Ten**

### **Punctuation**

At this stage, little can be said about punctuation that you haven't already heard before. What's in order now is a review. Since punctuation is so vital, our study of the language won't be complete until we check one more time to be sure that you have the basics down.

Punctuation is essential to effective written communications. With proper placement of words, punctuation gives sentences guidance, order, relevance. Many editors contend that the period is the most beautiful mark and that sentences could be improved if only writers got to the period more quickly. That may be an oversimplification. But, notice how often a bad sentence can be edited by breaking it into two sentences.

The point is that marks of punctuation when used correctly complement what is being written in such a way that one depends on the other. Each mark has its own purpose, and when used consistently well punctuation can help raise the quality of writing.

Now, the review.

## Comma

1. Use a comma to set off an appositive:

Smithwick, the favorite, won handily.

One of the most interesting aspects of the study of punctuation is what can be learned once the rule is mastered. The appositive rule isn't that difficult, but misuse of the comma with an appositive is common. Some writers do use the appositive too often. The one instance when the appositive is best used is when incidental amplification can be most easily placed after the noun. Otherwise, consideration should be given to separating the information in two sentences. One form of the non sequitur occurs with the appositive. That is when nonessential and perhaps unrelated material is placed in apposition. Example: John Jones, who turned 21 the same day, was elected chairman.

2. Don't create appositives in such situations as:

Judge George Buck, of Erskine County, signed the order.

The commas aren't needed. Follow the policy of using commas only when they are needed. In this instance, the preposition performs a similar purpose to the comma: it sets aside, separates. Therefore, this prepositional phrase shouldn't be set off by commas. Sometimes a phrase might be set off by commas for emphasis, however. That is a good technique if it isn't overdone.

3. When a title modifies a name directly, no comma is necessary.

Israeli Ambassador-at-Large (no comma) Simca Pratt (no comma) ...

The title modifies the name directly in the same way that in the construction Coach Bobby Collins, coach modifies Bobby Collins directly.

However, the use of an a or a the before the title will create the need to put the name in apposition after the title:

An Israeli ambassador, Simca Pratt, ...

The Israeli ambassador, Simca Pratt, ...

In both instances the noun is ambassador. The name is an appositive. Commas are necessary to set off the name because it is an appositive.

4. Use commas in a series, but not before and; use the semicolon before and in a series.

apples, pears and oranges.

However, use a comma before and to separate dates and states:

The places he considered were Hilton Head, S.C., Jackson Hole, Wyo., and South Padre Island.

Three dates stand out in his mind: April 19, 1910, August 9, 1941, and May 20, 1978.

One difficulty here is deciding whether to stick with commas or to go to semicolons. The best approach is to stay with commas until clarity becomes a matter of concern:

The members of the committee are John Jones of Abilene, Marti Benchmark of Fargo, N.D., Elias Armstrong of Cape Cod, Mass., and Don Thornton of Newport Beach, Calif.

When appositives are used in a similar sentence, the commas must be separated by semicolons. Not going to the semicolon might be confusing:

The members of the committee are John Jones, a senior from Abilene; Marti Benchmark, a junior from Fargo, N.D.; Elias Armstrong, a senior from Cape Cod, Mass.; and Don Thornton, a graduate student from Newport Beach, Calif.

Note that our style will be to use the semicolon before and in a series.

5. Participial phrases take commas:

Sailing smoothly over the high jump, the runner ...

But, always check to make sure phrases used at the start of the sentence have the right modification. If the first word of a sentence is a participle, look down the sentence to the comma (or where the comma should be; if one isn't there, put one there) and see if the participle modifies the first word (or second, if an article is used).

A comma may be necessary to separate other introductory material at the beginning of the sentence. The comma is necessary to keep the material from running together. In this sentence, the comma is used where a pause would occur in talking. This doesn't mean a comma has to be used. Sometimes with short

introductory material, the comma slows the sentence down when the intention was to keep the sentence going. This is a matter of the ear.

Be especially careful that the material before and after the comma is in sync. That is, the material has to be technically correct. Also it has to make sense. A blatant example: Born in Canada, the milkmaid laughed over spilt milk. What usually happens is somewhat more subtle. The introductory material should not introduce she said or he said. An example:

Answering the question, he said ...

That sentence will work only if a person (that is, the name of a person) stands alone after the comma. You can't modify an idea or an action. You should modify a person who then independently takes some kind of action. You can't properly modify a possessive noun or pronoun, either.

Watch especially the word being used as the first word in the sentence. Such a construction is usually off the mark. An example:

Being a spokesman for the woman's movement, Steinem ...

6. Use a comma to set off attribution in all but one of the situations in which attribution can be used. Attribution is used with quotes and paraphrases at the beginning of the sentence, within the sentence and at the end of the sentence. The only instance in which a comma is not used is when the attribution comes at the beginning of a paraphrase, as in

He said going back home was the highlight of the year.

7. Set off dates and states with commas:

He was born on November 30, 1934, in Yazoo City, Miss.

He was born in Yazoo City, Miss., on November 30, 1934.

8. Certain words take commas: however, moreover, yet, nevertheless, etc.

The comma may be omitted if the intent of the writer is to have the words flow without interruption. The primary consideration in editing the comma is whether the comma improves the structure or detracts from it. Editing that disregards purpose, style and approach is not good editing. On the other hand, letting sloppiness get by isn't good editing either. Walking the line is what good editing is all about.

9. Use a comma with a which clause:

Sun Valley, which is their destination, can be most relaxing this time of year.

Sometimes which can be understood, thanks to the commas:

Sun Valley, their destination, can be most relaxing this time of year.

Be sure the material in a which clause is related and pertinent, not unrelated and incidental. An example of the incidental:

San Antonio, which is the 10th largest city in the country, is where the battle for the Alamo occurred.

10. Use a comma in a compound sentence:

Fish abounded in the lake, and the shore was lined with deer.

A writer might use an unbalanced compound sentence and choose not to punctuate it with a comma:

He had ridden hard and later he decided that he had put the horse away without proper care.

The use of the comma in a compound sentence applies only when both subjects and verbs are present. If the second subject is understood, don't use a comma.

## **Colon**

1. Avoid the colon after a verb.

Those selected to Who's Who were (no colon) ...

Use the colon in constructions as

Those chosen for the committee are all seniors:

Don't use include in such constructions. Include means among others. If you intend to be inclusive, use are. If the list is partially complete, say so.

The colon can also be used to introduce a statement or a quote:

As the words to the song declare: It don't come easy.

Another question comes up: Is the first word capitalized after a colon or a comma in such a construction? The answer: Yes, if the material after the colon or comma makes a complete sentence.

A comma could also be used in this situation:

As the words to the song declare, Life's been good so far.

## Semicolon

1. Semicolons should be used to separate items in a series when commas are used within individual parts of the series:

The party consisted of B.M. Jordan; R.J. Kelley, his secretary; Mrs. Jordan; Martha Brown, her nurse; and three servants.

Use the semicolon before and in a series.

2. Don't use the semicolon unless you have to. Use commas in simple constructions. If you have two separate thoughts, break them into two sentences instead of combining them in one joined by a semicolon.

3. Avoid a series in which only one semicolon would be needed. Put information in two sentences. Or rearrange the sentence if possible.

## Apostrophe

Use the apostrophe

1. To make contractions, as in

let's, don't, isn't, it's, can't, who's, John's (for John is), there's, you've

It's is a contraction for it is. Every time you use an its or an it's, stop and think about the construction. Be sure you are using the right one.

2. To show where figures have been deleted, as in '60s. Don't use 60's or 1960's.

3. To show where letters have been deleted, as in

wash 'n' wear, rock 'n' roll, rhythm 'n' blues

4. For possession, as in John's, Mary's, Smith's, dog's. Don't confuse a plural with a possessive: The Smiths are going on vacation. But use the apostrophe with plural possession: The Alexanders' cat is missing.

5. Use the possessive before a gerund: David's going, or his going.

6. If the proper noun ends in an s, style dictates whether usage is to be Jones' or Jones's. Jones' is more common today. Exception: the Court of St. James's.

7. For clarity, use the apostrophe with the plural of letters, as in

She made three A's and four B's. The Oakland A's.

8. Some words are spelled with apostrophes: collectors' item, athlete's foot, bull's-eye, maitre d'.

9. Others aren't: citizens band.

Don't use the apostrophe

1. With possessive pronouns: his, its, theirs

2. Before the s in the plurals of numbers, as: '30s, 1970s, in his 50s, temperature in the 90s.

3. Where no possession exists, as in: The Smiths (not Smith's) will be away for the summer.

4. Don't use the possessive construction with inanimate objects: chair's color. Instead, use a prepositional construction: color of the chair.

## Hyphen

1. In general, when two words are placed together in modification, use a hyphen:

She was indeed an old-fashioned girl.

Her favorite meal is chicken-fried steak and potatoes.

An exception would be if the words used in modification are normally used together. Examples: Sunday school teacher, wire service reporter, high school quarterback, etc.

2. Use the hyphen in suspensive modification:

Earlier he missed 42- and 29-yard field goals.

Investments have been particularly great in time- and labor-saving technology.

The fear of abductions has spawned new programs in child-tracking and -identification.

3. Otherwise, the hyphen is a matter of spelling style:

drive-in, T-shirt, teen-age, teen-ager, re-elect, co-worker, court-martial, correspondent, flip-flop, V-J Day, half-mast, half-staff, H-bomb, fire-fighting, lily-white, far-fetched, ill-gotten, Anglo-Saxon, twenty-one, brothers-in-law, well-wishers, X-rated, passer-by

4. Some words take hyphens according to their use:

She works part time in the library.

She has a part-time job in the library.

5. Don't use the hyphen to take the place of through or and. Make it April 19 and 20 and May 15 through 22. One step further: January 6, 7 and 8 is the best way of putting three days together, instead of January 6 through 8.

6. Adverbs ending in ly do not take a hyphen. However, our style will be to use a hyphen with well, as in well-trained, well-dressed and well-liked.

Other examples of hyphens in modification:

The company's share of the hand- and bath-soap market declined in the first half of the year.

A recent series of tests on truck drivers revealed they responded much quicker when they stopped for a full hour for lunch during an eight-hour driving span.

Foreign teachers are more willing to go to up-and-coming universities.

Joining Snider and Kaline in the Hall of Fame inductions were Chuck Klein, the one-time Philadelphia Phillies outfielder, and former Boston Red Sox owner Tom Yawkey, both of whom are deceased.

They are to receive 10 percent across-the-board increases.

## Quotation Marks

1. Place commas and period inside quotation marks. Place semicolons and colons outside quotation marks. The question mark depends on the sense of the sentence:

Of whom did he ask, "Why did you go to see *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*???"

2. Avoid nice Nellie quotes as in, Nellie is a "nice" girl.

3. Use quotes in ironic usage. This can be a good technique in headlines: 'Pastor' held by police. Use single quotes in headlines.

4. Use partial quotes only when to do so clarifies a point or casts it in the exact language used by the speaker.

5. As a matter of style, use single quotes in headlines, in one- or two-line cutlines and in blurbs taken from a story for display purposes.
6. Use single quotes in advertising copy unless the material is presented in complete sentences.
7. Use single quotes inside double quotes.
8. Single quotes follow the same rules as double quotes:

“The best quotation I know,” he said, “is ‘A penny saved is a penny earned.’”

9. When quoted matter is used in two consecutive paragraphs, don't close the quotes at the end of the first paragraph. This will hold whether the quoted matter in the first paragraph is full or partial.

... and that he was “happy to be going home for Thanksgiving.

“This has been my goal since school started,” he said.

If the material is not consecutive -- that is, if it wasn't said consecutively -- break it up in some way:

...and that he was “happy to be going home for Thanksgiving.”

Then he said, “This is something I've been looking forward to for a long time.”

The catch here is that the editor isn't going to know whether the quotes are consecutive or not. Number 9, then, is a writer's rule. But when the writer is close at hand, the editor can ask for clarification.

10. That leads to this conclusion on editing when quotation marks are involved: Don't change quotes. If you need to take material out of quotes, that's acceptable. But put quotation marks around material that was presented as a paraphrase.

### **Names, Titles, Etc.**

Take care with hyphens, apostrophes, periods and commas in names, titles, etc.:

*New York Herald Tribune*, Houghton Mifflin, *Reader's Digest*, *Harper's*, Dr Pepper, Cola-Cola, Jell-O, Hodgkin's disease, Mother's Day, *The Star-Spangled Banner*, *Look Homeward*, *Angel*, bachelor's degree, master's degree, *Cry*, *The Beloved Country*, and *Lay Lady, Lay*

### **Punctuation in Headlines**

1. Use single quotes in headlines.
2. Use commas when the construction has a single subject but more than one verb:

Governor signs bill, will talk with senators

3. Use semicolon when the headline has more than one subject:

Governor signs bill; visitors watch ceremony

## Footnotes

Commas and periods go inside quotation marks.

Colons and semicolons go outside quotation marks.

Don't use a comma before and in a series.

Separate states and dates with commas.

Use a comma before and in a series if the comma separates states and dates.

Use a semicolon before and in a series.

Use single quotes inside double quotes.

Single quotes follow the same style as double quotes.

Quotation marks go where they logically go.

## Chapter Eleven

### Specialized Language

Communications is concerned with terminology. Communicators take the jargon of other fields and translate it into language that can be understood by nonspecialists.

People who work in print journalism, in broadcasting, in public relations and advertising don't spend their days talking about journalism, broadcasting -- or whatever area they're in. They get involved in other areas: medicine, real estate, banking, sports, computers, manufacturing, marketing, etc., etc., etc.

Those who work as reporters, in public relations or whatever, deal with all sorts of people in all sorts of careers, businesses or professions. And to be effective they have to learn to talk the language of these specialists. People who work in advertising, for example, must master the business of their clients. And when the clients change, the subject matter changes.

Keeping up requires additional study to master new terminology, and in a career in communications the process of study and meeting new challenges never ends. That is one of the appeals of communications as a career.

Our purpose here is to take some random areas of specialization and try to learn to deal with the subject matter as editors.

## **Academia**

People who teach in college are teachers, not professors. Teachers have ranks. Rank is based upon accomplishments and years of service. Being on the tenure track means that after six years the teacher can either be terminated (with an additional year to make the transition) or given what amounts to lifetime job security.

Teachers just beginning to teach will either be instructors or assistant professors, depending on the school and the qualifications of the new teacher. If they are on a tenure track, they more than likely will be assistant professors. In their sixth year, these teachers will be considered for tenure. At that time they may be promoted to associate professor. The rank of professor comes usually after extensive service and significant accomplishments.

Some schools have non-tenure track teachers. These are people who agree not to pursue tenure and are hired year to year or on, say, three-year contracts. They may be called instructors or lecturers, depending upon the school.

Students work toward associate of arts degrees in two-year colleges that may be called community colleges or junior colleges.

A four-year school is either a college or a university. The difference in a college and university is that a university offers significant graduate and professional work.

At colleges and universities, students work toward bachelor's degrees in various disciplines. They may earn bachelor's degrees in various disciplines -- bachelor of arts (BA), bachelor of science (BS), bachelor of business administration degrees (BBA), bachelor of fine arts degrees (BFA), etc. The graduate earns a bachelor of science in geology, for example.

Students earn honors depending upon their grade point average. In many schools, a 4.0 is an A, a 3.0 a B and a 2.0 a C. In many schools, graduates who

have a grade point average of 3.9 graduate summa cum laude, 3.7 magna cum laude and 3.5 cum laude.

What constitutes grade points and honors differs from school to school.

## **Religion**

The confusion starts with names: American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Seventh-day Adventists, the Baptist General Convention of Texas. From that point on, almost everything dealing with religion continues to be confusing to all but those associated with that religion.

Some churches have ministers, some don't. Some don't use musical instruments in their churches.

In the Catholic church, Mass is celebrated daily. Requiem Mass is said at funerals. Nuptial Mass is said at weddings. High Mass is mass in which some of the prayers are sung (chanted) by the priest and choir. Solemn High Mass has four participants: celebrant (priest), deacon, subdeacon and master of ceremonies. High Requiem Mass is reserved for the funeral of a prominent church layman. Solemn High Requiem Mass is reserved for the funeral of a clergyman. Solemn High Pontifical Mass is reserved for rare occasions.

A funeral and a Requiem Mass are not the same in the Catholic church. Thus, in obituaries say that a Requiem Mass and funeral were together. A Requiem Mass is not always offered at a funeral.

Masses are offered or celebrated. The people who go to Mass attend Mass or hear Mass. A priest celebrates Mass or says Mass. Rosaries are said or recited. Benediction is given. Confessions are heard. Communion is received (usually at Mass).

Such detail descriptions are used in most denominations.

For instance, the news media sometimes report that delegates to Baptist conventions do such and such. Southern Baptists use the term messengers. Those attending are sent as messengers from local churches. Within a state, churches belong to organizations called conventions. The Southern Baptist Convention has seminaries. But state conventions own and operate schools and hospitals

Also, Baptists have several national bodies, among them the American Baptists, German Baptists. Therefore, the term Baptist is best applied to the organization to which the individual Baptist belongs.

All Methodist churches and schools and hospitals are owned by the United Methodist Church.

Remember that a person is an Episcopalian and a church is Episcopal.

## **Obituaries**

Agreement seems impossible. That is provable through the various obituaries in print. The disagreement is not about the major, feature-type obituaries. They are usually well-written. The differences come on the so-called routine. The death of a person shouldn't be treated as routine, but it tends to be by writers and editors.

Some guidelines: First, avoid euphemisms. Say a person died or was buried, not "went to his reward" or "was laid to rest." Note the difference in dying and being killed. Be careful in ascribing the cause. The cause is both technical and legal. It shouldn't be handled lightly. If no one in a position of authority has come to a conclusion, be wary of any cause that might be derogatory.

One of the most common causes of death is heart attack. Not, this is not heart failure. Everyone dies of heart failure. The statement, "He died of an apparent heart attack," however, is not a sound one. Apparent should be used to refer to what can be seen. The better wording would be, "He died, apparently of a heart attack." Don't say: "He apparently died ..."

In the first account of death, the funeral arrangements may not have been completed. If that's the situation, don't say, "The funeral is pending." Funerals are always pending after someone dies. Instead say, "Funeral arrangements for so and so are pending." The term funeral services is a colloquialism that resists change. It's cemetery.

## **Government**

What's important here are the differences in city, county, state and federal forms of government and the related activities. In Texas, counties are run by commissioners courts. Four commissioners are elected from districts of fairly equal population. The county judge, elected at large, presides over the commissioners court. Texas has 254 counties. The Texas Legislature meets every two years in the odd-numbered years. The Texas Senate has 31 members and the Texas House of Representatives 150 members.

Some states, New Jersey among them, have townships. Louisiana has parishes, not counties. Four states are commonwealths: Virginia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Kentucky. Nebraska has only one body in the legislature, and the representatives to that body are called senators.

Each state sends representatives to the House of Representatives in the United States Congress depending upon the population of the state as determined by the census every 10 years. Members of the United States House of Representatives are elected in districts. Each state has two United States senators, elected state-wide. Members of the House are referred to as Congressmen, or

Congresswomen. Members of the Senate, while in the Congress, are not referred to as Congressmen or Congresswomen.

A bill, not a law, is introduced in the legislative process. A bill becomes a law when passed by both houses and signed by the chief executive. Bills are debated, laws are enacted. Cities pass ordinances, in Texas on a series of votes called readings.

Government offers the opportunity for side trips into highly specialized areas. One example is sewage, sewer and sewerage. Sewage is the waste and sewerage is the system that carries the waste. Sewers are drains for carrying rain water off the streets.

Note that an election and a referendum are different, as are the primary and general elections. On election night, the returns are counted (not the results). The results are the final, total numbers.

Much government nomenclature changes from state to state and peculiar or unusual names are more typical than you would think. For example, the Texas regulatory body of the oil and gas industry is the Railroad Commission.

## **The Military**

The major branches of service in the United States are the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps. They have soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines. A GI is an infantryman in the Army. The term came from a reference to the uniform – general issue. A Marine is a Marine, not a GI.

Each branch of the service has its own ranking system. The Army and Air Force ranks are somewhat similar. The Air Force was once a division of the Army known as the Army Air Corps. The Marine Corps designations are not greatly different. The most unusual designations are those of the Navy.

Officers and enlisted personnel have different ranks.

This can be complicated for a person with little background. A good rule is, when in doubt, ask.

## **Guns**

The designations .22, .45 and .243 are, in principle, the bore diameter of a rifled firearm measured groove to groove and expressed in hundredths of an inch. That's caliber. The size is in millimeters when the gun was manufactured in a country using the metric system.

But, principle and practice often do not coincide. A .38 special may be bored out to .350 caliber. The manufacturer keeps the .38 designation from a previous model. A .32 automatic may actually measure .305 and take a .312 bullet.

A revolver stores the bullets behind the chamber in a rotating casing. An automatic has a place in the handle or under the barrel for a clip that holds the bullets. Where the clip goes depends in part on whether the weapon is a pistol (handgun) or a rifle.

Gauge refers to the bore diameter of a shotgun and the terminology is of ancient origin. Gauge is determined by the number of the same size of bore-diameter lead balls that total one pound. This means that for a certain weapon, 20 round lead balls the size of the diameter of the bore may be made from a pound of lead. Hence, the gauge would be 20. If 12 or 16 balls could be made from a pound of lead, the gauge would be that.

Bore refers to the inside diameter of a gun, rifled or otherwise. Rifling is the grooves that make the bullet spin. When preceded by a decimal figure, the designation is caliber. When a whole number is used, that's gauge. Therefore, we have pistols that are .38 and .45 caliber, rifles that are .30 caliber and shotguns that are 12, 16 and 20 gauge.

The only designation that doesn't follow that pattern is the .410. The gun was brought out originally as a .44 rifle, then made smaller. At one time it was a combination rifle and shotgun. Now the gun appears mostly as a shotgun. The designation .410 remains. The best way to refer to the gun is as a .410 shotgun.

Other terms: .30/30 and .38/40 refer to weapons of .30 and .38 caliber that were originally designated to handle shells holding 30 and 40 grams of black powder respectively. Although black powder is no longer used, the designation remains. And, .30-'06 refers to a .30 caliber rifle introduced by the United States Army in 1906. The designation remains on modern weapons as a merchandising device. Magnum ammunition is stepped up in powder beyond what is normally expected. Usually the powder charge is larger and the shell casing longer.

## **The Court Structure**

Courts exist at the various levels of government, and the terms differ from state to state. In general, towns and cities have municipal courts, counties have a variety of courts and take care of all the civil and criminal matters for the state except appeals. The federal government has trial and appellate courts.

Matters before the courts are either civil, which mostly involves disputes among citizens, and criminal, which means the state takes action against a citizen accused of violating the law.

Civil disputes begin with suits being filed and progress through depositions and interrogatories to the trial. No one is found guilty or innocent in a civil matter. The judge or jury must side with the plaintiff, the one bringing the suit, or with the defendant.

Civil matters, in Texas, are not privileged until they become part of a trial. Until then a suit is an allegation by one party against another. The accused party should be given the opportunity to respond in news accounts.

A good example of this is the divorce story. Remember that a civil suit can be dropped at any time along the way. The news media can't afford to get caught having made allegations in a case that ends when the person who brings the suit decides to drop it.

Criminal matters are divided into misdemeanors and felonies. A misdemeanor is punishable by a fine and/or by serving time in the county jail. A person convicted of a misdemeanor is not a felon or an ex-convict. A felony is punishable by a fine and/or by serving time in the state prison system, the penitentiary.

In Texas, misdemeanors are divided into classes and felonies into degrees. What determines whether something is a felony or a misdemeanor and what determines the category of the offense is the state legislature. Legislators must vote to create a criminal offense and at the same time they affix the punishment.

Misdemeanors and felonies are divided into classifications, depending on the severity of the offense. A capital offense is a crime for which a person may be given a death sentence.

Terminology differs from state to state. Texas has only assault, not assault and battery. But some terminology is consistent and often consistently misused. Best examples are the differences in jail and prison and in robbery and burglary. A person convicted of a misdemeanor serves time in jail. A person convicted of a felony serves time in prison. Robbery is stealing from a person. Burglary involves breaking in with the intent to steal from a car, apartment, house, store, office, etc.

In Texas, both civil and criminal appeals go from county or district courts to courts of appeals. After that, civil appeals go to the Supreme Court of Texas and criminal appeals go to the Court of Criminal Appeals. Texas is unusual in that it has two high courts, one for civil and one for criminal.

Federal courts in Texas are in four districts: northern, southern, eastern and western. Appeals go from district courts to circuit courts of appeals. Texas is in the 5th Circuit. The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals sits in New Orleans. The highest appellate court in the land is the United States Supreme Court. The title of the presiding officer of the Supreme Court is chief justice of the United States. The other members of the court are technically associate justices, although they may be called justices: Former Supreme Court Justice Tom Clark was from Dallas.

Civil and criminal matters are referred to with a v. not a vs.: the State of Texas v. John Doe.

Generally speaking, judges sit in trial courts; justices sit on appellate courts.

## The Police Story

Writing about arrests is the single most troublesome aspect of police news. The key to handling such information well is the concept of privilege. Privilege is the right of reporting accurately and fairly on legal matters at certain states in the development of a criminal case.

In Texas, the arrest is not privileged. Therefore, you shouldn't write: Police arrested John Q. Public Monday for the murder of ... Actions in a court of law are privileged. Therefore, the first time privilege is involved in a criminal procedure is the filing of a complaint. Suspects are taken before a magistrate, usually a justice of the peace or a city judge, and a complaint is filed. This procedure establishes the crime of which the suspect is being accused.

That can be reported this way: Police arrested John Q. Public Monday and named him in a complaint accusing him of the murder of ... That's too wordy, and such statements can be written more smoothly. But, that's the idea. The word charge can be used as a verb, but don't use it as a noun. Charge can be used to convey the meaning of a complaint, and using charge or charged helps smooth out the writing: Police charged John Q. Public Monday in the murder of ...

Attribute information in police stories. Say police said. Don't take shortcuts. Avoid such words as allegedly, reportedly or apparently. Remember, you are reporting on and writing about a procedure. The procedure is a criminal one, involving a person who has gotten himself or herself involved in the state, or federal, criminal system. The person may be accused of a crime, may be sought on a warrant, may be arrested, charged, indicted, tried and convicted. That's the process you are writing about. You don't have to refer to guilt or innocence until the end of the process. In the meantime you report on the actions by the various parties at each step of the way.

Take the time to go to whatever length is necessary to establish that police are making the accusation against John Q. Public and that a complaint has been filed in which the police formally and officially accuse him of the crime. Separate the crime itself from the procedure. Say that Mrs. Public was found dead. Say that the police arrested and charged her husband. Remember, the police are making the accusation, not the news media and not you. No one else but police have legal standing to take such action. What the news media do is to report on what the police are doing and specifically on the procedure the police follow in making arrests and charging people with crimes.

If no complaint has been filed, you'll have to say: A bank was robbed Monday and police held a man for investigation. Keeping the name out of print (or off the air) until a complaint has been filed is the best way to avoid making a mistake.

Here's what you **should not write** in the police story:

1. John Q. Public was arrested for robbing the Mexia State Bank.

2. John Q. Public was arrested in connection with a robbery at the Mexia State Bank.
3. John Q. Public was arrested on suspicion of robbery after the Mexia State Bank was robbed at gunpoint Monday morning.
4. The Mexia State Bank was robbed Monday morning. A Dallas man, John Q. Public, was arrested in connection with the robbery.
5. The burglary of the bank occurred about 9:05 a.m. Monday when a tall, thin man wearing blue jeans and a cowboy hat entered and told the clerk, "This is a stick up." Police later identified the man as John Q. Public.

Here's what you **can write** in the police story:

1. John Q. Public was arrested Monday on a complaint charging him with robbing the Mexia State Bank.
2. Police arrested John Q. Public as he was leaving a lounge Monday night and charged him with robbing the Mexia State Bank.

Don't make unsupported allegations. Be careful of words or constructions that may carry hidden or criminal connotations. Don't use *loot* and *connive*, for example. Be extremely careful with the word *drunk*. Weigh carefully the use of any word that has a negative connotation.

To repeat, stay away from *allegedly* and similar words. Attribute. Separate the crime from the accused. *Allege* is a good word to use, as in the police *allege*. *Alleged* can be used effectively to say we aren't sure that a crime occurred, as in the *alleged* crime.

Another problem area is the accident story. To avoid affixing blame, don't say that Car A hit Car B. The word *collision* could even be troublesome.

Determine which of these sentences are acceptable and which aren't:

1. John Q. Public was arrested on suspicion of robbery after the Mexia State Bank was robbed at gunpoint Monday morning.
2. John Q. Public was arrested on a complaint charging him with robbing the Mexia State Bank.
3. The Mexia State Bank was robbed Tuesday afternoon. A Dallas man, John Q. Public, was arrested in connection with the robbery.
4. Police arrested John Q. Public at his home in Dallas on a warrant charging him with robbing the Mexia State Bank.

5. John Q. Public was arrested for robbing the Mexia State Bank.

### **More on Allegedly, Reportedly, Apparently**

Many writers suppose that allegedly and the related words reportedly and apparently are helpful in avoiding direct accusation, and therefore some how or another makes the presentation of potentially damaging information safe. They are wrong.

The misuse of these words occurs in these instances:

1. When statements are unnecessarily left open to interpretation, or when the facts are unnecessarily left unclear. Examples of misuse:

Foreman reportedly has sold his expensive cars and homes in Houston and California.

Mycoskie reportedly gave Moret five injections of sedatives before the pitcher was taken to Arlington Neuropsychiatric Center at 9:30 pm.

Benavides reportedly posted a \$10,000 bond set Monday by Allen.

Detectives have not solved the case of a 39-year-old Montrose man found dead of a wound to the back of the head last month after reportedly telling a friend he planned to pick up a “hustler” on the street.

In each of these instances, the reporter should have gone to more pains and found out the answer to the question raised by, in these examples, the word reportedly. As an editor, you must be sure to get answers to such questions and to word the sentences correctly.

Remember, the job of the professional journalist is to find out what happened. Reporting what might have happened is not just unprofessional. It is risky.

2. Often the news media fail to be careful in making accusations or unnecessarily create unanswered questions related to criminal activity. Examples of incorrect usage:

Police said Miss Thomas' name was learned from information found in a purse she allegedly left in the room.

Bouyer took the boys hostage in this San Francisco suburb Monday night after leading California Highway Patrol officers on a chase that began when he was sighted allegedly speeding.

New's brother, Billy Joe New, was shot to death by police in November as

he allegedly left the scene of a burglary and rape in the 4100 block of Simpson Street.

Noble was found slumped over the wheel of a car in the parking lot of a North Dallas restaurant, and drugs from the evidence room allegedly were found in his car and at the residence.

Officer D.H. Mayes said he shot Webster after the youth reportedly pointed a pistol at him.

In each of these instances attribution should have been used instead of the word allegedly.

3. Sometimes the words allegedly, reportedly, etc. are unnecessarily used. Examples of that misuse:

Police Chief James Cox said a small amount of marijuana allegedly was in the car.

Willis, an outspoken critic of the Internal Revenue Service and income taxes, is on trial for allegedly failing to supply required tax information to the IRS.

Police on Friday charged a man arrested at the Houston Intercontinental Airport with alleged possession of illegal drugs.

Authorities said Kuhlmann and two other Americans were arrested while allegedly loading a plane with \$1.5 million worth of marijuana.

Here are other sentences dealing with this same problem:

The substance, commonly known as DRC, and used to kill worms and bugs, reportedly can cause sterility in workers exposed to the substance for a long period of time.

"I got some bad press (including disclosures that Pickett allegedly misused county equipment), and I didn't have the financing to overcome it," the former assistant district attorney said.

And, despite her ordeal and the strain that had eased only scant hours earlier, a bleary-eyed Mrs. Lysdahl went before the grand jury Tuesday morning to testify against the woman who allegedly kidnapped her son and took him to Tennessee.

Mrs. Manahan shielded her face from photographer's flashes, left her hand over her brow and looked down silently through most of her encounter with the press. But she nodded yes when asked if she liked Grigori Rasputin, the czar's adviser who allegedly effectively treated her brother for leukemia.

A 16-year-old Andress High School girl was arrested late Monday for allegedly threatening the widow of a man whom she was accused of shooting to death last November.

## Chapter Twelve

### Brand Names, Copyright and Libel

#### Brand Names

Whether a brand name should be used in certain situations is a question of editorial policy. In general, no legal restrictions limit the use of brand names. The question occurs when the brand name is cast in an unpleasant light. Do you give the make of automobiles involved in collisions? Do you give the brand names of products involved when injuries occur? The answer to these and other questions is: It depends.

Normally you should not push the brand name on the reader. If a child gets locked in a refrigerator, the brand name is immaterial. But in certain writing the brand name may be absolutely necessary. When a plane crashes, you can't ignore the name of the airline and the name of the manufacturer.

If the brand name is used, the most important consideration is getting it correct. Don't say it was one brand when it was another. And spell it correctly. Brand names can be tricky. It's Dr Pepper, Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola, Band-Aid, Levi's, 7-Eleven, Jack Daniel's, S.O.S (no period after the last s), Kool-Aid, Diners Club, Schwinn, Procter & Gamble.

Many errors happen when writers use brand names to describe generic or general items. Xerox is not the only photocopier. Levi's is not the only company that makes blue jeans. Coke is a registered trademark of Coca-Cola, and all soft drinks are not cokes or Cokes. Fritos is a certain kind of corn chip made by Frito-Lay. Sometimes product names can be especially difficult. Cuisinart distributes a food processor. The original food processor it distributed was made by Robot-Coupe of France.

Some brand names have been lost because they have come to stand for the general item. Windbreaker, escalator, cellophane, kerosene and linoleum are examples. To maintain its brand name, the company must demonstrate that it is doing everything it can to police misuse. Trademark owners would like to see their names used as adjectives, as in Dacron polyester, Kleenex tissue, Crayola crayons, Xerox copier, Scotch brand transparent tape, Scrabble crossword game.

Other brand names you may have missed: Fig Newtons, Oreo, Sanka, Polaroid,

Ping-Pong, Popsicle, Frisbee, Crock-Pot, Jell-O, Q-tips, Chap Stick, Cracker Jack, Tupperware, Hula-Hoop, Valium, Jacuzzi, Viyella, Ultrasuede and Ultra Suede, Naugahyde, Plexiglas, Fiberglas, Styrofoam, LA-Z-Boy and Realtor. To clarify, Realtor is a membership mark owned by the National Association of Realtors and licensed by it for the use of real estate people who belong to the association. Not all real estate salespersons are Realtors.

## Copyright

Editors get into matters of copyright when they want to use something that may belong to someone else. Best examples are lyrics from songs, selections from poems and other literary works, illustrations, drawings, etc.

The concept of copyright protects the owner from someone using his or her work without remuneration. Editors must support that idea. In supporting it, they must not without permission use materials that are protected by copyright.

What's under copyright? Until 1978 the maximum copyrights could be in force was 56 years. The law provided that the original copyright of 28 years could be renewed once. Therefore, anything more than 56 years old as of 1978 is in the public domain.

Copyrights eligible for renewal during 1977 could be renewed so that the total term of subsistence would be 75 years. Copyrights issued after January 1, 1978, were subsist for the life of the owner and for 50 years after that.

The Sonny Bono amendments passed by Congress in 1998 extended personal copyrights to the life of the owner and 70 years. Corporately owned works for hire were extended even further.

The concept of fair use determines when copyrighted material may be used without permission. The provisions of fair use are: 1) the purpose and character of the use, 2) the nature of the copyrighted work, 3) the amount used, 4) the effect of use on the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

Watch particularly poetry, lyrics and similar material where the use would rob the copyright owner of income. Almost any use of poetry and lyrics could constitute infringement. However, selections from books, lines from movies, etc. won't affect the potential market.

As a matter of policy, publications should seek permission to use any copyrighted material. The statement of permission should appear with the reprinting: "(c) 1985 by Kenry Klutz. Used by permission."

Copyright covers expression and not information. Facts can't be copyrighted.

One way misuse of material protected either by trademark or copyright occurs is as a result of borrowing names and concepts without permission. You can't just use Peanuts characters or the Dallas Cowboys' name for commercial purposes.

## **Libel**

Libel is defamation expressed in any form. While some statutes may differentiate between libel and slander, for the most part libel is the concept with which editors are concerned.

Newspapers must publish many defamatory statements, and defamatory statements appear in other printed and broadcast forms. To publish defamation related to criminal activity, you need a legal safeguard. That safeguard is privilege. Remember, you are reporting on the process, not the guilt or innocence of the accused. Privilege comes as a result of actions taken before a magistrate.

Outside of criminal activity, other considerations are involved in deciding what to publish. Whoever publishes defamation is responsible. The justification can't (repeat cannot) be that someone else said whatever is in question. A publication assumes the responsibility for its own content.

While privilege is the best justification, it isn't the only one. You have other areas in which you may publish noncomplimentary information.

These include:

- 1) The actions of public officials and public figures related to their official capacity, but not to their private actions. This means that you have some leeway in what can be said about a person who holds a public office or is in the public eye.
- 2) Fair comment and criticism, which may relate to the actions of people who perform, act, play sports or are otherwise involved in public activity.

Be especially careful of words that may be defamatory: Examples: loot, bankrupt, guilty, connive, cheat, improper, unprofessional, bribery, crook, shyster, swindle, inept, incompetent. Don't use these words in making allegations against people unless you are covered by privilege.

Anything you say about someone that may affect how people think about him or her is defamatory. Defamation is the basis of a libel action.

## **Currency Reproduction**

Federal law prohibits reproduction of a host of documents including passports, stamps, money orders, gold certificates, government bonds and other items, including paper money.

The law concerning the reproduction of paper money is as follows:

No paper money can be photographed and/or printed unless the picture or illustration is for the purpose of illustrating material that is 1) educational, 2)

newsworthy, 3) historical or 4) numismatic in nature. This restriction applies regardless of the size of the illustration or of its color.