GRAMMAR IS ABOUT THIS SORT OF STUFF

Our language is forever evolving, as we, indeed, do too. So do the conventions of grammar and punctuation. If you have established yourself as a *bonafide writer,* as Tim Winton has done, you are able to take liberties. For those who have read his books, you will have seen he sometimes dispenses with inverted commas completely. It is important to note that before you change grammar rules you need to know what you're changing.The questions we asked of you last week, we'd need a whole book to answer. If you'd like the book you can search for *Grammar Rules* by Craig Shrives, [or even ask to borrow it from The Written Word class].Then again, in this time of instant answers, we can Google.

Our written English is a mixture of the UK and USA conventions. It came as a surprise to us that the American form of using a comma inside speech marks, is what we follow in our writing group. The UK places them outside the inverted commas … I'm still not convinced of that. I'm pretty sure we learned to put them inside when I was at school a thousand years ago.

The most vexatious of the punctuation rules is **THE COMMA**. There are pages written on just that. And the placement of the comma is very important

When you're linking two sentences with a conjunction such as **AND, BUT, OR,** you should use a comma. *He is a great swimmer, but he prefers to play golf.*

And, you have probably heard of the famous – **EATS SHOOTS AND LEAVES** which of course should be **EATS SHOOTS, AND LEAVES.**

We tend to use too many commas. The best way to decide is to read aloud. When you stop for a breath pop in the comma. The main advice is **TO BE CONSISTENT** in your use.

COMMAS are used also in breaking up numbers with more than three digits, Now, I'm not sure if that's followed anymore, but it makes it easier. 1,235/ 13,467 / 276, 154, 989.

SPEECH MARKS: She said, "What's up Doc?" [? Inside speech marks]. Comma required after **said** and before speech marks. Double or single is a choice these days, but **be consistent.**

A **DASH** looks like a long hyphen. Most computers don't show them on keyboards so two hyphens are often used, -- They're useful to place where you might consider a comma or semi colon. Ellipsis **[…]** also do the trick

IF and **WHETHER** sometimes can be interchanged. **If**, for me, does the job quickly as in:

 If it is raining we won't go!

IF *is usually denoting a consequence. We won't go if it's raining.*

WHETHER *is between two alternatives.*

Whether or not we go depends on the rain.

If it is not raining we will go, if it rains, we won't.

Use **IF** when you have a conditional sentence and **WHETHER** when showing that two alternatives are possible.

"John, call Paul if you are going on Friday."

"John, call Paul whether or not you are going on Friday."

So in the first sentence John only needs to call Paul if he's going on Friday whereas in the second instance John needs to call Paul either way.

Nth/nth. Capitalise if you refer to a specific region and don't if it's general**.**

He comes from North Carolina.

I think I will holiday up north.

EFFECTING/AFFECTING *They can be interchanged.* However if you put **the** in front of effect as in *The* ***effect*** *of her anger was palpable. [noun]. Her anger* ***affected*** *me badly.[verb]*

INTO/IN TO   Into means movement or action… She *climbed* ***into*** *her bed.*

Whereas ***in to*** *has* ***to*** *as a preposition. The team brought the trophy in, to the cheers of supporters [with or without comma]*

INTO often answers the question; **WHERE?**

e.g. *"Where is your mother going?" "She is going into the city."*

BRACKETS. *Parentheses are in* ***round brackets****. Added information which doesn't really change the meaning of the sentence. This example (which was written in January) is used to explain parentheses.* **Square brackets:** when we want to modify another person's words. He, [the policeman] said I hit him.

WHO/WHOM If you can replace the word with he/she use **who**. If you can replace with him/her use **whom.**

Enjoy our input, and remember it's the tip of the iceberg or ice-berg?

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