



Mu Sigma

Paying Attention to Detail

What to look for and How to look for while reviewing

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December 26, 2015

Proprietary Information

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Attention to Detail – what it is and it is not?

- ▶ It is not the inability to do a task correctly
- ▶ It is not about not noticing something that is done poorly
- ▶ Lack of attention to detail is the habit of not noticing something that you are doing badly but you know how to do well
- ▶ It happens because we are in a rush or because we lack focus
- ▶ It manifests as lack of pride in one's work
- ▶ Good news – Habits can be changed and better habits can be learnt



Rush personality trait

- ▶ A lot of us have a 'rush' personality trait
- ▶ We tend to rush through much of our work
- ▶ We make errors not because we don't have the skill to perform the task but because we don't take the time to perform it correctly
- ▶ The best way to slow this 'impatient' behavior down is to STOP every time you make a mistake and have them back up and re-do the entire task.
- ▶ Because we are impatient to finish we begin to pay closer attention so we are not forced to stop

Attention to Detail – in the context of errors

- ▶ This deck will focus on attention to detail in the context of detecting errors either in your own work or while reviewing someone else's work

- ▶ In your day-to-day work you will find yourself reviewing/QC-ing any of the following artefacts:
 - Storyboards (Power point decks)
 - Codes
 - Numbers (Excel sheets, SAS/R datasets etc.)
 - Documentation (Word etc.)

- ▶ Given the diverse nature of each of these activities, we will focus on providing some guiding principles, best practices, tips for devising strategies that will increase attention to detail in your work, but refrain from suggesting exact solutions

- ▶ Each team should determine the best strategy for the context of their work while adhering to the overall principles laid out in this deck



Do we have any basic science for attention to details?

Guidelines for review of decks, emails, documents, storyboards etc.

- ▶ **Always turn the spell check on** (please take time NOW to verify it is on in your laptops now)
- ▶ **Don't rely entirely on spelling checkers and grammar checkers** (for instance if you type "your" instead of "you're," or "to" instead of "too," or "there" instead of "their," the spell checker won't catch the error.)
- ▶ **Beware of the unconscious corrections your brain makes** (our brain reads by matching patterns and hence naturally tends to overlook errors by autocorrecting the words. In the last sentence there were two errors your brain corrected for. To avoid this natural bias, you need to put extra dedicated focus while reviewing for errors/typos/grammar)
- ▶ **Read slow, and read every word and try reading out loud** (It forces you to say each word and also lets you hear how the words sound together.)
- ▶ **Get familiar with your frequent mistakes** (Create a list of frequent mistakes for each deliverable)



Guidelines for review of decks, emails, documents, storyboards etc. (continued)

- ▶ **Learn the MOP technique (multiple one-pass technique: look for only one kind of error at a time)**
- ▶ **Check format last.** Every document has format, even an email, whether it's paragraph spacing, text wrap, indentations, spaces above and below a bullet list or between subheadings and text, and so on.
- ▶ **Forget the content or story while reviewing for formats, grammar, etc.**
- ▶ **Check facts, dates, quotes, tables, references, text boxes, and anything repetitive or outside of the main text separately**

Multiple One-Pass Technique (MOP)

- ▶ Focus is a very important resource while paying attention to details
- ▶ Task switching is a distraction and can make one lose focus
- ▶ However in practice, while looking for errors, we tend to look for multiple errors at the same time
- ▶ Multiple One-Pass Technique is a way to avoid task switching
- ▶ It involves focusing on just one kind of error at any given point in time. You review the entire document from start to finish looking for just one kind of error (for instance header font size)
- ▶ You do multiple similar passes looking for different kinds of errors
- ▶ Create a list of passes for each deliverable (depending on the context of the deliverable, there could be very different passes)

Multiple One-Pass Technique (MOP) – Potential Passes

- ▶ **BASIC SPELLING/GRAMMAR/VERB TENSES PASS:** (Check out [Grammar Book](#). There's a huge discrepancy between how people speak and write and how proper grammar says you should speak and write. So, familiarize with [verb tenses](#))
- ▶ **SENTENCE STRUCTURE PASS:** Take a look at the length of your sentences. Do you notice a lot of commas, semicolons, and conjunctions? Some of your sentences might be run-ons, so see if you can clean them up by making them shorter.
- ▶ **CONSISTENCY PASS:** Make sure that there is consistency throughout the document, especially in numbers, symbols, or contractions. Are you using “%” or “percent”? Man-power or manpower? Neither is wrong, but it's important to pick one and use it consistently throughout.
- ▶ **BUSINESS CONTEXT PASS:** Usually the last pass because after you've edited and tweaked your work, it's easy for it to start sounding disjointed or incoherent.
- ▶ **OVERALL FLOW PASS:** Usually done after you've edited and tweaked all your work to ensure the work is not sounding disjointed or incoherent
- ▶ **FORMATTING PASS:** Keep it as the last pass(es). Click through each page quickly and check for inconsistent font sizes, shapes, header positions, missing logo etc. But do it one check at a time)



Guidelines for review of numbers, datasets, excel sheets

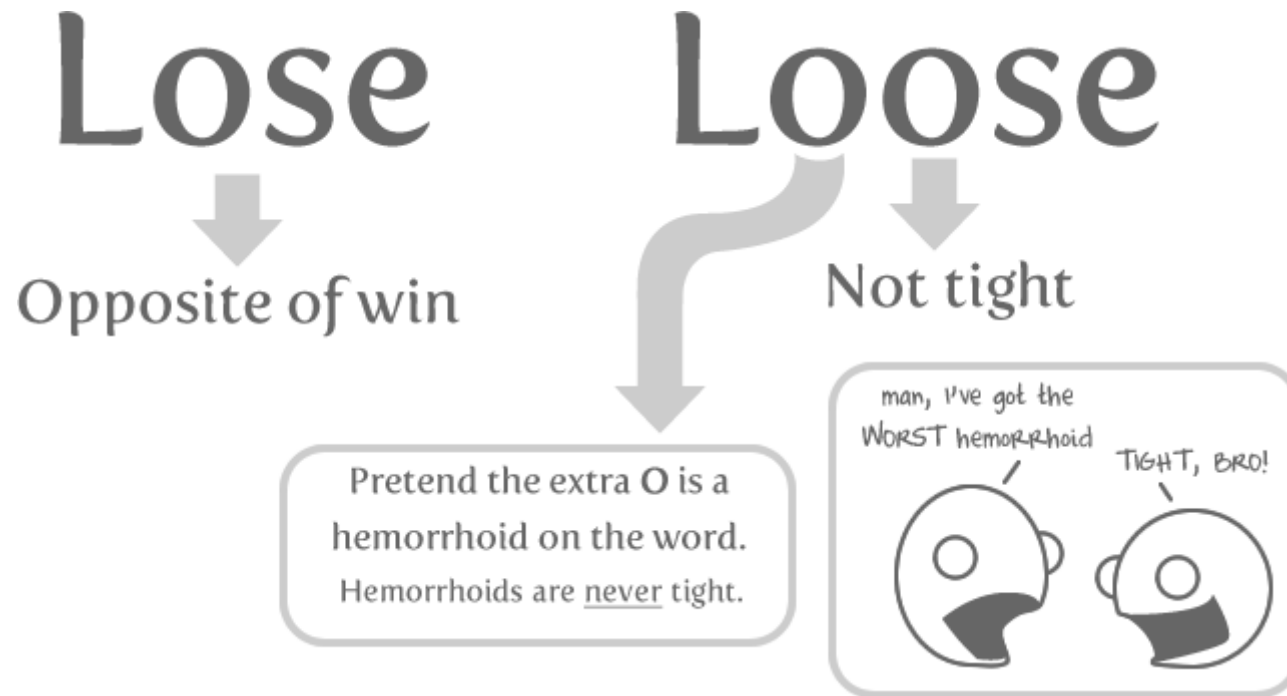
- ▶ TBD

Remember...

- ▶ **Reviewing is a learning process:** You're not just looking for errors that you recognize; you're also learning to recognize and correct new errors.
- ▶ **You can become more efficient as you develop and practice a systematic strategy**
- ▶ **Document** and share your learnings for future
- ▶ Paying attention to detail is a life skill, and not just a work skill
- ▶ When an attention to detail mindset is developed and used in conjunction with an exception handling mindset, it can be extremely powerful in reducing error-proneness

Most Common Typos/Errors in Grammar

- ▶ <http://theoatmeal.com/comics/misspelling>
- ▶ http://waxy.org/2003/04/typo_popularity/



Weird



e then i

Remember it like this:

We ... ir ... d =

We ... are (ir) dangerous (d)
to those dumb, dirty dolphins.

Not wierd



Every time you spell it this way,
a dolphin gets run over by a jet ski.



Their

Their is possessive, meaning it owns something.



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

They're

They're is a contraction for "they are."



In this case, *they're* means "they are."

There

There refers to a place or idea.

Use this form if you're unsure.



In this case, *there* is referring to a location.



It can also refer to something more abstract:

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

Your You're

These both use the same rules as "their" and "they're."

Your is possessive.

In other words, you own something.

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

This is referring to **your** alien
and **your** refrigerator.

You're is a contraction
of "you are."

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

This translates to "you are
definitely cleaning..."

It's



This is a contraction for
it is or *it has*.

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

For example:

It's not fair that Randy gets to ride a wolverine
to school, but I have to ride this stupid manatee!



Confused by
apostrophes?

[Click here](#) to learn
how to use them.

Its



This is indicating
possession.

Use this when one
thing owns another.

For example:

The wolverine knows only death,
pain, and slaughter.
Also, its thick, black fur is good for
exfoliating the thighs during a long ride.



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

Definitely

There is no A in “definitely.”

To help you remember, use this:

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

Effect Affect

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

If you're unsure, try substituting a different verb and see if it works.

{
As a child, he was affected by his parents.
As a child, he was ~~affected~~ eaten by his parents.
 }

A verb works here so you should use "affected."



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



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

Weather



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

I'm the sun, I make super happy sunshine!

Also, one day I'll explode and burn
you all alive like the miserable little
sausages that you are!



Whether



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



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



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

Alot is not a word.

You don't write
alittle, abunch, acantaloupe, aporkchop
So don't write *alot*.

Then

is used for time.

First I stole a panda bear, then we drank malt liquor together.

↑
The sequence of actions indicates time: first stealing the panda, and then drinking.

Than

is used for comparison.

I'm much better at holding my liquor than a panda bear.

↑
This is comparing a panda's drinking ability with your own, so you should use "than."

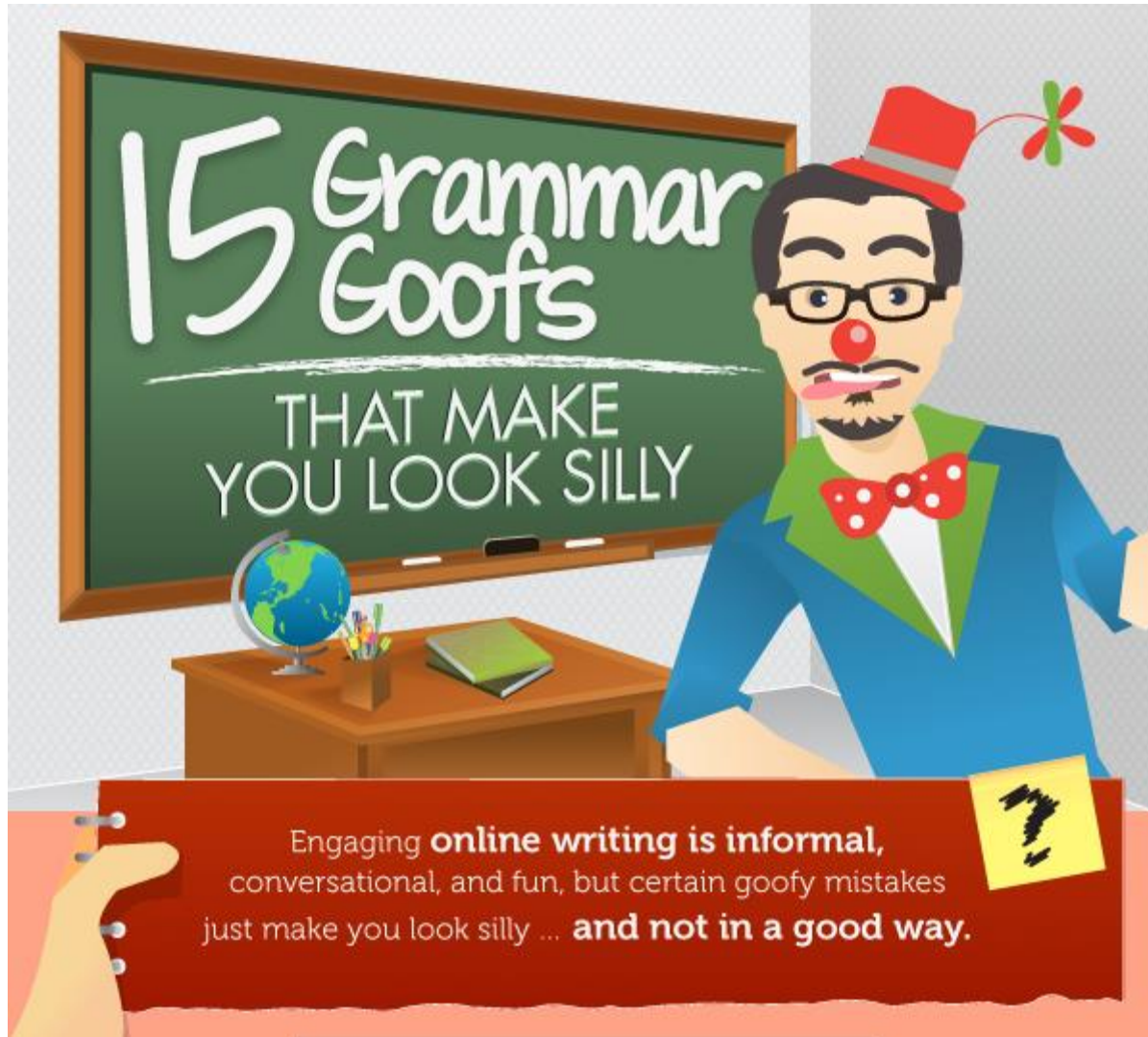


Most commonly misspelled words on the web

- ▶ transexual (2860k)
- ▶ didnt (1230k)
- ▶ doesnt (1080k)
- ▶ seperate (804k)
- ▶ calender (727k)
- ▶ definatly (693k)
- ▶ recieve (667k)
- ▶ offical (366k)
- ▶ managment (359k)
- ▶ goverment (317k)
- ▶ commerical (277k)
- ▶ Febuary (245k)
- ▶ enviroment (242k)
- ▶ occurence (186k)
- ▶ commision (167k)
- ▶ assocation (134k)
- ▶ Cincinatti (70k)
- ▶ millennium (32k)

Grammar

- ▶ <http://www3.telus.net/linguisticsissues/commonerrorsinenglish.html>
- ▶ <http://www.copyblogger.com/grammar-goofs/>



1. YOUR / YOU'RE

Your


"Your" is a possessive pronoun, as in "**your car**" or "**your blog.**"



You're

"You're" is a **contraction** of "**you are,**" as in: "**You're** screwing up your writing by using 'your' when you mean '**you are.**'"

2. IT'S / ITS

It's	Its
<p>"It's" is a contraction of "it is" or "it has."</p>	<p>"Its" is a possessive pronoun, as in: "This infographic has got its groove on." Say your sentence out loud using "it is" instead. If that sounds goofy, "its" is likely correct.</p>
	
<p><i><u>It's an apple!</u></i></p>	

3. THERE / THEIR / THEY'RE

There / Their

Always do the **"That's ours!" test**: Are you **talking about more than one person and something they possess**? If so, **"their"** will get you **there**.

They're

"They're" is a contraction of "they are," so talk it out to be sure.

4. AFFECT / EFFECT

Affect

"Affect" is a verb, as in: "Your ability to communicate clearly will **affect** your income."



Effect

"Effect" is most often a noun, as in: "The **effect** of poor grammar on a person's income is well documented."



5. THEN / THAN

Then

The word "**then**" can have a variety of meanings, including "**at a point in time**" or "**in addition to.**" As a rule, use the word "**than**" when comparing and "**then**" in all other instances.

Than

The word "**than**" is used to compare two different things: "This is bigger than that."





6. LOOSE / LOSE

Please don't mess this up. If your pants are **too loose**, you might **lose your pants.**

Be careful!

The illustration shows a person from the waist down, wearing a blue t-shirt and dark grey pants that are extremely loose and sagging. The person's hands are in their pockets. To the left of the person is a white sign with a green border. The sign has a green header with the text '6. LOOSE / LOSE'. Below the header, the text reads: 'Please don't mess this up. If your pants are **too loose**, you might **lose your pants.**' A red arrow points from the handwritten text 'Be careful!' to the sign. On the left side of the sign, there are three red binder rings. The background is a simple green and white pattern.

7. ME, MYSELF, AND I

Me/I



Choose between **"me"** and **"I"** by removing the other person from the sentence and using what doesn't sound silly.

Myself

"Myself" is only proper two ways, both used here:

"Many despise asparagus, but I myself tolerate it. I thought to **myself**, 'Why?'"

?





8.
**IMPROPER
USE OF THE
APOSTROPHE**

You need an apostrophe in two cases:

For contractions ("don't" for "do not forget the apostrophe") **and to show possession** ("Frank's apostrophe means the apostrophe belongs to Frank").



9. COULD OF, WOULD OF, SHOULD OF

"Could've," "would've," and "should've" are legitimate verb contractions, but when spoken, they sound like they end in "of" (wrong) instead of "have" (correct). "Could of," "would of," and "should of" all make you look silly.

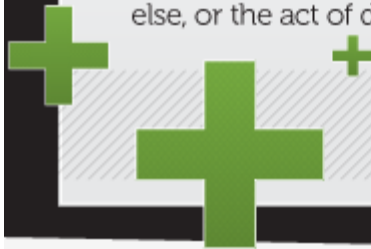
Could of...

Wrong! Fool!

10. COMPLEMENT / COMPLIMENT

Complement

"**Complement**" is something that **adds to** or supplements something else, or the act of doing so.



Compliment

"**Compliment**" is something **nice** someone says about you.

Thanks!

You're pretty.



11. FEWER / LESS

Fewer	Less
<p>If you can count it, use "fewer."</p> <p>> "Robert has written fewer poems since he got a real job."</p>	<p>If you can't, use "less."</p> <p>> "Sonia has less incentive to do what I say."</p>



12. HISTORIC / HISTORICAL

Historic	Historical
<p>Silly alert! "Historic" means an important event.</p> 	<p>"Historical" means something that happened in the past.</p> 

13. PRINCIPAL / PRINCIPLE

Principal



As a noun, "principal" means the **highest in rank** or the main participant; as an adjective, it means the most important of a set.

Principle

"Principle" is a noun meaning a **fundamental truth, law, or standard.**



14. LITERALLY

"I'm literally dying of shame." Bet not.
"Literally" means that exactly what you say
is true – no metaphors or analogies.
Everything else is figurative.



OK!

15. THE DANGLING PARTICIPLE

A dangling participle occurs when you order a sentence in a confusing way.

For example:

"After rotting in the cellar for weeks, my brother brought up some oranges."

This means your brother is a zombie who delivers fruit.

Try instead:

"My brother brought up some oranges that had been rotting in the cellar for weeks."

An illustration of a zombie in a red shirt and black pants holding an orange. A speech bubble points to the zombie with the text "This means your brother is a zombie who delivers fruit." To the right, a man in a red shirt and black pants looks confused, holding a tray of oranges. A speech bubble points to the oranges with the text "Try instead: 'My brother brought up some oranges that had been rotting in the cellar for weeks.'" A green checkmark is next to the corrected sentence.