



The Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips to Clean Up Your Writing

By Mignon Fogarty

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Are you a fool for mnemonics? If so, you'll fall head over nubucks for Mignon Fogarty--a.k.a. the Grammar Girl--and her handy new audio guide to writing and speaking well. It's chock-full of smart little anecdotes and memory tricks for felling the most common grammatical foes (who can ever remember the difference between "nauseous" and "nauseated" anyway?) and at just an hour long it's the perfect turn-to resource for students and professionals alike. I didn't try too hard to stump Grammar Girl in our Q&A, but with her eagle eyes she spotted my grammatical (typographical?) misstep without missing a beat! --*Anne Bartholomew*

Questions for the Grammar Girl

Amazon.com: Now that we communicate so often via e-mail and text messaging, do you think that people have become more desensitized to poor grammar, or in your experience is awareness more heightened as a result?

Grammar Girl: The average person seems to have become more desensitized to poor grammar, but language lovers seem to be tormented by the flood of mutilated e-mail and text messages—at least a lot of the people I hear from seem to be tormented. It might be a self-selecting group. To use one of my father's favorite phrases, language lovers seem to feel as though they are "being pecked to death by a duck."



Amazon.com: Your weekly podcast helps millions of listeners use good grammar and write more effectively. Do you think there is more value in learning by listening, as compared to reading and practical exercise?

Grammar Girl: Perhaps it's ironic, but I have a hard time learning by just listening. I need to read things, which is one of the reasons why I provide full transcripts for all my audio podcasts on the Grammar Girl Web site. People learn in different ways, so those who want to listen can listen, and those who want to read can read. In my experience, nothing beats practical exercise. I often have to look up grammar rules over and over again because I can't remember them, but once I've written a show about a rule, I always remember it.

Amazon.com: Have the grammar mnemonics you've developed come easily to you? Which ones were the

toughest to capture in an easy-to-remember tip?

Grammar Girl: Some mnemonics come easily and some don't. I had a hard time coming up with a way for people to remember the difference between "its" and "it's," and I ended up using a really complicated story about a dream I had involving the eBay "it" advertising campaign. I think the best mnemonics are the simple ones. Remembering that you should say "different from" instead of "different than" because "different" has two *f*'s and "from" starts with an *f* isn't awfully creative, but it's easy to remember.

Amazon.com: Is there a grammar rule that even Grammar Girl finds **it** hard to remember?

Grammar Girl: There are so many that it's hard to pick just one! I have a notoriously terrible memory, which is why I'm always making up mnemonics.

Often I find that when I can't remember something it's because it is a style issue instead of a hard-and-fast rule, so different people do it differently and there is no "right" answer. For example, I always have to look up the rules about whether the verb should be singular or plural after collective nouns like "team" and phrases like "the couple" and "one of the people who."

But when I look up the rule for collective nouns, I am reminded that the "rule" is that you have to just decide whether your collective noun has a sense of being a group or a sense of being many individuals. (And then there are also differences between British and American English.)

It's even worse with a phrase like "one of the people who": experts are split over whether the verb should be singular or plural. There really isn't an answer; you just have to pick a side. I have a hard time making a mnemonic for something like that!

Amazon.com: It used to be that proper grammar and thoughtful wording were the defining factors of a good piece of writing. Increasingly, however, writing is prized for the speed with which it is produced and not necessarily the craft. How can conscientious writers find the happy medium between form and efficiency?

Grammar Girl: What, didn't I answer your questions fast enough?

But seriously, I don't think I've come in contact with the people who value speed. As a Web editor, I certainly wasn't happy when people turned in bad writing, even if they turned it in early. And when I was writing magazine articles or corporate materials for a living I never felt rushed (except when I waited too long to get started).

The places where I do feel a sense of urgency are in e-mail and messaging; people seem to expect immediate responses. But writing a high-quality message doesn't take much more time than writing a careless message; it just takes more focus.

Amazon.com: Bonus question: I wrote all these questions with no more than a cursory grammar and spelling check. How did I do?

Grammar Girl: I found only one major error, and I changed the text to bold. It looked like a typo rather than an error in your understanding of the rules. Good job!

PRAISE FOR Grammar Girl:

One of iTunes's Best Classic Audio Podcasts for 2008 and 2009!

"One of the Best Audiobooks of 2007"—iTunes on the audiobook page

"Delightfully droll...Grammar Girl gives clear explanations with helpful examples." —Los Angeles Times

"At the root of all her success, of course, is a true love of language and grammar." —The Arizona Republic

"*Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing* is enthusiastically recommended for professional writers of all walks of life, from high school students crafting essays to college students working on Ph.Ds to prospective novel writers, nonfiction writers, journalists, newspaper columnists and much more." - *The Midwest Book Review*

About the Author

Mignon Fogarty is the creator of *Grammar Girl* and founder of *Quick and Dirty Tips*. A technical writer and entrepreneur, she has served as an editor and producer at a number of health and science Web sites. She has a B.A. in English and an M.S. in biology from Stanford University.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Clarence Delapaz:

This The Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips to Clean Up Your Writing book is not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you have by reading this book is usually information inside this book incredible fresh, you will get information which is getting deeper a person read a lot of information you will get. This The Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips to Clean Up Your Writing without we know teach the one who reading through it become critical in contemplating and analyzing. Don't possibly be worry The Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips to Clean Up Your Writing can bring when you are and not make your handbag space or bookshelves' become full because you can have it within your lovely laptop even mobile phone. This The Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips to Clean Up Your Writing having very good arrangement in word in addition to layout, so you will not truly feel uninterested in reading.

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