



GRAB HOLD OF GOOD GRAMMAR

When you hear the word grammar do you think of lots of boring rules you are forced to learn in school? Grammar is the study of words and the way they work together. It is what helps guide our day-to-day writing. Grammar keeps you from being misunderstood and lets you effectively express your thoughts and ideas. While we hope what we have to say is more important than some silly grammatical error, good grammar is the key to all good communications.

WHAT'S NEWS

Power play

MP WYATT Roy felt the full force of power when he was booted out of Federal Parliament's Question Time after just 10 minutes by the new Federal Speaker Peter Slipper. Roy was kicked out for an hour when he took to his feet to ask Prime Minister Julia Gillard when the last time was that Labor delivered a budget surplus. Without warning he was given the boot by Mr Slipper "for abusing standing orders, by rising on a point of order and asking a follow-up question". Mr Slipper, who was sporting a white bowtie and formal robes for day three in his new job, had previously warned he was willing to kick misbehaving MPs out of the parliament.

Lost and found

A bear-like creature native to South East Asia with a tail like a monkey that spends most of its time in forest canopies went missing from Australia Zoo nearly three weeks ago.

Jaya the 14kg binturong is the first animal of its kind to escape from the zoo but made it home safely. There were concerns for his well-being as he is captive bred and is not used to being in the wild.

The endangered mammal of South-East Asia was found in a fruit tree by members of the public in the Glasshouse Mountains, 10km from the zoo, last Thursday night. An Australia Zoo spokeswoman said a rescue team from the zoo was sent to safely rescue and transport Jaya back to the zoo.

"Jaya appears to be in good health," she said.

Common Mistakes

WHAT'S actually incorrect and what's a matter of style can be debatable but there are some rules that should always be adhered to.

Here are some common grammar and usage mistakes.

▶ A comma splice is the incorrect use of a comma to connect two independent clauses (an independent clause is a phrase that can stand on its own as a sentence).

To correct the comma splice, you can: replace the comma with a full stop forming two sentences; replace the comma with a semicolon; join the two clauses with a conjunction such as - and, because, but, so.

Eg I missed the bus this morning, I was late for school. This can be corrected to: I missed the bus this morning. I was late for school.

OR I missed the bus this morning; I was late for school. OR I missed the bus this morning so I was late for school.

TIPS FOR PROOFREADING

PROOFREADING is the process in which you read for spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.

▶ Have someone else proofread your own writing. It's hard to see your own mistakes.

▶ Read through material several times looking for different mistakes each time.

▶ Read backwards. It can help you focus on the words and not get distracted by meaning.

▶ A dangling participle is when a verb ending in -ing doesn't agree with its subject.

Eg Rushing to catch the school bus, the student's homework fell out of his bag.

In this sentence the participle (rushing) is "dangling" because it's not the student's homework rushing to catch the school bus. To correct the sentence write: The student's homework fell out of his bag when he was rushing to catch the school bus.

▶ I vs me - These two pronouns are often used incorrectly in sentences in which they are used with another noun. Eg The dog followed Lisa and I to the house. Ben and me will go to the party. These are incorrect.

A simple test is to remove the other noun from the sentence.

You wouldn't say "The dog followed I to the house". It should read The dog followed (Lisa and) me to the house. Just as you wouldn't say "Me will go to the party". It should read (Ben and) I will go to the party.

▶ Have or of - This is one of those errors that has arisen from the spoken to written form of English.

A sentence like "I would have gone to the show but I didn't have tickets" is normally spoken so that the two words "would have" are contracted to "would've".

This is heard to be "would of" and that's how it is written. This is wrong and the word "have" should be used. In all cases where would, should, could and must are used they should always be followed with have.

TASK TIME ONLINE



BE A SUBBIE

A SUB-EDITOR'S job is to check written copy for spelling and grammatical errors as well as arrange the layout and design of the stories to fit the available space on each page.

Your task is to go online and be a sub-editor for a newspaper.

Your job is to check the page and correct any errors ready for the newspaper to print.

QUIZ TIME

EACH week we will test your knowledge on what's been happening in the news. For the answers to this week's quiz visit NiE online.

1 WHAT is the lead story in today's paper? Is it a local, national or international story?

2 WHO is the Speaker for the Australian House of Representatives?

3 WHICH Australian airline was placed in voluntary administration last week, grounding all flights and leaving passengers stranded?

NiE newsletter

COMING next month is the new NiE Newsletter. Sign up now to receive a weekly update of great ideas for you to use in the classroom.

Go to your newspaper's website. You should find the address on the front page. Look for the NiE logo in the menu bar and click. Find the link to subscribe to our new NiE newsletter where you'll be able to access more information about APN's Newspapers in Education program.

NEXT WEEK'S TOPIC:

Keeping It Clean

