

When Bad Grammar Happens to Good People

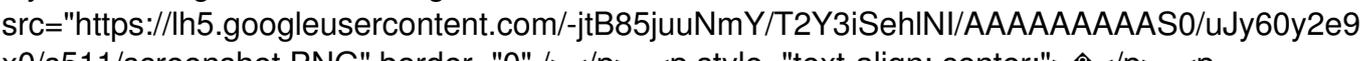
Written by Administrator

Sunday, 18 March 2012 20:02 -

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When Bad Grammar Happens to Good People

How to Avoid Common Errors in English



This book has had a long gestation. The idea was inspired by the chapter title "Do You Make These 100 Common Errors in English?" taken from one of the many books written by the late Herbert V. Prochnow, former president of the First National Bank of Chicago. I am indebted to Edward Rosenheim, the distinguished editor of this book, for the vision and direction he gave at critical points in the planning and writing. I am grateful to Tracy Weiner, associate director of the University of Chicago Writing Program, for creating the various test sections, which provide invaluable reinforcement and a welcome sense of humor. Barbara Stufflebeem, a freelance editor and former student of Edward Rosenheim's, also made valuable contributions to the manuscript.

Everyone has bad language habits. We hear language errors on TV, at work, and even from our family so many times that the errors might seem correct. But they're still errors, and they can make us sound less sophisticated, or even less intelligent, than we really are. Fortunately, you can form new, good habits the same way you got stuck with the bad ones: by repetition. This program will help you do it. Here's how:

- Get started: Find out what you know. A pretest that covers some of the most common language errors is included in this book. If you get an answer wrong, or if you're just not sure why you got it right, the pretest's key will direct you to the chapter or group of related errors that can help.
- Choose where to begin! The chapters are carefully organized in a series. The program works best if you take the units in the order you find them. However, they can stand alone if need be. After you take the pretest, you may want to jump to a particular chapter on a topic of special interest to you.
- Practice out loud when working through a unit. This will help train your ear to hear what is correct and to get you comfortable using language or phrases that may feel unfamiliar or downright wrong at first.
- Test yourself to see how far you've come. Each chapter is divided into manageable sections, and each section ends with a test. Take a test when you think you've got a handle on a section's errors. The test's key will let you know whether you've mastered the section.
- Reinforce what you know. To make your new knowledge a new habit, look for examples of the things you've learned when you're reading the paper, watching TV, or listening to a conversation at work.
- Test yourself again to make sure a good habit stays stuck. At the end of the book you'll find review tests for the more complex grammatical chapters. To find out if your good habits have really sunk in, you might want to take a chapter's review tests a week or so after you feel you've mastered the material. If you get it right, congratulations! You've formed a good habit!

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