

Going Manual: 10 Common Grammar Errors

In this age of digital communication where most things are now "automated", it is easy to commit the simplest mistakes in the English language. Without "auto - correct", "spell corrector", "predictive texts" second guessing our knowledge of the English language comes to play. Its ok, mistakes are welcome because that's when we learn and remember.

To serve as reminder or a guide to all of us, Career Avenue has put together from various sources, 10 common mistakes when we go "manual" in writing ☺



Common Error #1 – Using Understood Verbs Incorrectly

- **"I love writing articles more than Sally!"**

Note:

- This sentence could mean one of two things:
 - 1) You love writing articles more than you love Sally
 - 2) You love writing articles more than Sally does. Be clear, otherwise you might find yourself in some hot water with Sally!
- Understood verbs occur when you could use an additional verb or (action word) at the close of a sentence, but you choose to not include it. In this sentence, adding "does" at the end makes it clearer.

Common Error #2 – Using Too Much Passive Voice

- **Passive: Lots of information was learned by the readers.**
Active: The readers learned lots of information.

Note:

- Notice passive voice uses words like "was," "were," "been," and "being." Avoid using too many of these.

Common Error #3 – Misusing Commas

- Compare the following two sentences:
 - 1) **"Go, get him doctors!"** – A command to go get medical help for someone.
 - 2) **"Go get him, doctors!"** – Urging doctors to go get someone.

Note:

- Entire books have been written about how, when, where and why to use them (or not). Keep it simple. Read your article out loud, and stick commas where you naturally pause.

Common Error #4 - Advice vs. Advise

- **"I need someone to give me some advice."**
- **"I advise everybody to be nice to their teacher."**

Note:

- "Advice" is a *noun*, which means an opinion that someone offers you about what you should do or how you should act in a particular situation.
- "Advise" is a *verb*, which means to give information and suggest types of action.

Common Error #5 – Either vs. Neither

- **"You can either eat your supper *or* go hungry."**
- **"I am neither tired *nor* hungry"**

Note:

- In the sentences above, "Either" (with "or") and "neither" (with "nor") are both singular adjectives meaning *one or the other, out of two options*.
- **Neither of us was able to sleep last night.**

Note:

- In the sentence above, "Neither" means not the first option and not the second option.

TIP: If you see a sentence that contains a negative...I *didn't* like the story _____ (you have to use either).
WHY? Because if you use *neither* it becomes a double negative.

Common Error #6 – Its vs. It's

- **"It's a beautiful morning; however, it's been an ugly season"**
- **"It appeared the squirrel couldn't make up its mind whether or not to run across the street."**

Note:

- Remember that "it's" is a contraction of *it is* or *it has*.
- "Its" is the *possessive form of it*, referring to something that "it" owns.

Common Error #7 - i.e. vs. e.g.

- The surface manifestations--**i.e.**, symptoms--of different neurological wiring can be seen as learning disabilities, or simply as differences in the way an individual perceives and processes information.
- Unfortunately, certain types of adults--**e.g.**, those who dislike children, those who are unstable or incompetent, and those who seek only to impose their will on people who are weaker than themselves--may actually be drawn to the profession of teaching.

Note:

- The abbreviation "i.e." stands for *id est*, which means *that is*. The abbreviation "e.g." stands for *exempli gratia*, which means *for example*.

Common Error #8 - Cite, Sight and Site

- **"This style guide explains how to cite sources in a term paper."**
- **"The sight of the stars makes me dream." (Vincent Van Gogh)"**
- **"I'm still looking for a good networking site on the web."**

Note:

- The verb "cite" means to *mention or quote* as an authority or example.
- The noun "sight" refers to something that is *seen* or the power or process of seeing.
- The noun "site" means a particular *place*.

Common Error #9 – You're vs. Your

- **"You're a good writer!"**
- **"Is your stomach growling?"**

Note:

- Write "you're" as a contraction or a combination, of the words *you and are*.
- Write "your" as the *possessive form of you*, referring to something that the person you are talking to owns or something that belongs to the person you are talking to.

Common Error #10 - There, Their and They're

- "Let's go **there**", "**There** is no hope"
- "Get **their** bags", "Those are **their** opinions"
- "**They're** my friends", "**They're** not coming"

Note:

- "There" is a pronoun and is used as a reference to a *place or existence* of something.
- "Their" is a plural possessive pronoun and indicates that a particular item *belongs to them*.
- "They're" is a contraction of the words *they* and *are*



*Notes on the photo:

- "Employee'**s**" refers only to one person in a possessive form (ex: An employee's attendance is recorded).
- If you want to refer to many, it should be "employees" (All employees should come in uniform).
- If you want to refer to many persons in possessive form, it should be "employees'" (Our employees' families are invited).

What else is wrong in this photo?

Sources:

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