

15 Grammar Goofs

THAT MAKE YOU LOOK SILLY



Engaging **online writing is informal,** conversational, and fun, but certain goofy mistakes just make you look silly ... **and not in a good way.**



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.'"**

Ex :(

You're house is very nice!

Your the light of my life. Xo.

Ex :)

1.

2.

2.

IT'S / ITS

It's

"It's" is a **contraction** of "it is" or "it has."



It's an apple!

Its

"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.



Ex :(

Its been brought to my attention that we need more supplies for the project.

The radio has it is own connection.

Ex :)

1.

2.

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.

They're ...



Ex :(

Their going to the movies later.

I like to ride on there sail boat.

The park is over they're next to the mall.

Ex :)

1.

2.

3.

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."



Ex :(

Forgetting to practice effects an athlete's performance on the field.

The affect of our school's recycling initiative will positively impact our environment.

Ex :)

1.

2.

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."



Ex :(

The boys talk more then the girls.

"Well than, I will see you later."

Ex :)

1.

2.



Ex :(

My tooth is so lose it may fall out later today.

Why does my team continually loose in the play-offs?

Ex :)

1.

2.

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?'"

?



Ex :(

The toy belongs to I.

I enjoy sitting outside by me.

Charlie and myself go skiing.

Ex :)

1.

2.

3.

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").

Ex :(

Mrs. Howells car needs to be washed.

Sometimes children do'not remember to look both ways before crossing the street.

Ex :)

1.

2.

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!

Ex :(

I could of studied harder for the test.

My class should of won the contest.

"I would of if I had known."

Ex :)

1.

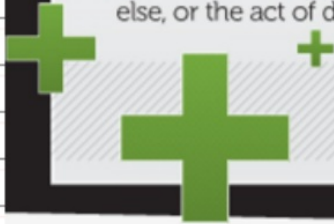
2.

3.

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.

Ex :(

The poster complimented the book report.

Star Girl loves to complement her friends.

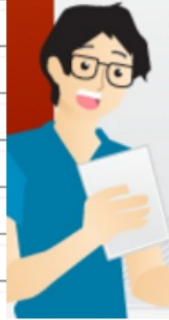
Ex :)

1.

2.

11. FEWER / LESS

Fewer



If you **can count it**, use "fewer."

> "Robert has written **fewer** poems since he got a real job."

Less



If you **can't**, use "less."

> "Sonia has **less** incentive to do what I say."

Ex :(

There are less apples than bananas in the basket.

She has fewer things to say than I do.

Ex :)

1.

2.

12. HISTORIC / HISTORICAL

Historic

Silly alert!

"Historic" means an important event.



Historical

"Historical" means something that happened in the past.



Ex :(

Historic, certain groups of individuals have been treated unfairly.

The wedding marks a historically occasion.

Ex :)

1.

2.

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**.

Ex :(

The principle at my school enjoys visiting our classroom.

There are so many principals to follow in Science and Math.

Ex :)

1.

2.

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!



Ex :(

"I literally jumped out of my skin, I was
so scared."

Ex :)

1.

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."

Try instead:

"My brother brought up some oranges that had been rotting"



Ex :(

After baking all day, I set the turkey out to serve on Thanksgiving day.

Ex :)

1.



