

# Writers' Humor

## The History of English

Back in the beginning, everyone spoke English. Then the Welsh, not liking how things were being run, moved over to the west side of the island, where they were attacked by the Irish, who stole all the vowels. When the Danes invaded, the Irish gave the vowel to them, telling them they were all pronounced "ooo."

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## Rules for Writers

Remember to never split an infinitive. The passive voice should never be used. Do not put statements in the negative form. Verbs have to agree with their subjects. Proofread carefully to see if you words out. If you reread your work, you can find on rereading a great deal of repetition can be avoided by rereading and editing. A writer must not shift your point of view. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction. (Remember, too, a preposition is a terrible word to end a sentence with.) Don't overuse exclamation marks!! Place pronouns as close as possible, especially in long sentences, as of 10 or more words, to their antecedents. Writing carefully, dangling participles must be avoided. If any word is improper at the end of a sentence, a linking verb is. Take the bull by the hand and avoid mixing metaphors. Avoid trendy locutions that sound flaky. Everyone should be careful to use a singular pronoun with singular nouns in their writing. Always pick on the correct idiom. The adverb always follows the verb. Last but not least, avoid cliches like the plague; seek viable alternatives.

- Never use a preposition to end a sentence with.
  - Avoid annoying alliteration.
  - Don't verb nouns.
  - Don't use no double negatives.
  - Make each pronoun agree with their antecedent.
  - When dangling, watch your participles.
  - Don't use commas, which aren't necessary.
  - Verbs has to agree with their subjects.
  - About those sentence fragments.
  - Try to not ever split infinitives.
  - Its important to use apostrophe's correctly.
  - Always read what you have written to see if you've any words out.
  - Correct spelling is esential.
  - Proofread you writing.
  - Between you and I, case is important.
  - Verbs has to agree with their antecedents.
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## Eschew Obfuscation

In promulgating your esoteric cogitations and in articulating your superficial sentimentalities and amicable philosophical or psychological observations, beware of platitudinous ponderosity. Let your extemporaneous descantings and unpremeditated expatiation have intelligibility and veracious vivacity without rhodomontade or thrasonical bombast.

Sedulously avoid all polysyllabic profundity, pompous prolixity, psittaceous vacuity, grandiloquent, maniloquent, or vaniloquent vapidty. Eschew all conglomeration of flatulent garrulity, jejune babblement and asinine affectation.

In other words, be brief, say what you mean, mean what you say, and don't use big words.

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### ENGLISH IS TOUGH STUFF

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Dearest creature in creation,  
Study English pronunciation.  
I will teach you in my verse  
Sounds like corpse, corps, horse, and worse.  
I will keep you, Suzy, busy,  
Make your head with heat grow dizzy.  
Tear in eye, your dress will tear.  
So shall I! Oh hear my prayer.

Just compare heart, beard, and heard,  
Dies and diet, lord and word,  
Sword and sward, retain and Britain.  
(Mind the latter, how it's written.)  
Now I surely will not plague you  
With such words as plaque and ague.  
But be careful how you speak:  
Say break and steak, but bleak and streak;  
Cloven, oven, how and low,  
Script, receipt, show, poem, and toe.

Hear me say, devoid of trickery,  
Daughter, laughter, and Terpsichore,  
Typhoid, measles, topsails, aisles,  
Exiles, similes, and reviles;  
Scholar, vicar, and cigar,  
Solar, mica, war and far;  
One, anemone, Balmoral,  
Kitchen, lichen, laundry, laurel;  
Gertrude, German, wind and mind,  
Scene, Melpomene, mankind.

Billet does not rhyme with ballet,

Bouquet, wallet, mallet, chalet.  
Blood and flood are not like food,  
Nor is mould like should and would.  
Viscous, viscount, load and broad,  
Toward, to forward, to reward.  
And your pronunciation's OK  
When you correctly say croquet,  
Rounded, wounded, grieve and sieve,  
Friend and fiend, alive and live.

Ivy, privy, famous; clamour  
And enamour rhyme with hammer.  
River, rival, tomb, bomb, comb,  
Doll and roll and some and home.  
Stranger does not rhyme with anger,  
Neither does devour with clangour.  
Souls but foul, haunt but aunt,  
Font, front, wont, want, grand, and grant,  
Shoes, goes, does. Now first say finger,  
And then singer, ginger, linger,  
Real, zeal, mauve, gauze, gouge and gauge,  
Marriage, foliage, mirage, and age.

Query does not rhyme with very,  
Nor does fury sound like bury.  
Dost, lost, post and doth, cloth, loth.  
Job, knob, bosom, transom, oath.  
Though the differences seem little,  
We say actual but victual.  
Refer does not rhyme with deafer.  
Foeffer does, and zephyr, heifer.  
Mint, pint, senate and sedate;  
Dull, bull, and George ate late.  
Scenic, Arabic, Pacific,  
Science, conscience, scientific.

Liberty, library, heave and heaven,  
Rachel, ache, moustache, eleven.  
We say hallowed, but allowed,  
People, leopard, towed, but vowed.  
Mark the differences, moreover,  
Between mover, cover, clover;  
Leeches, breeches, wise, precise,  
Chalice, but police and lice;  
Camel, constable, unstable,  
Principle, disciple, label.

Petal, panel, and canal,  
Wait, surprise, plait, promise, pal.  
Worm and storm, chaise, chaos, chair,  
Senator, spectator, mayor.  
Tour, but our and succour, four.

Gas, alas, and Arkansas.  
Sea, idea, Korea, area,  
Psalm, Maria, but malaria.  
Youth, south, southern, cleanse and clean.  
Doctrine, turpentine, marine.

Compare alien with Italian,  
Dandelion and battalion.  
Sally with ally, yea, ye,  
Eye, I, ay, aye, whey, and key.  
Say aver, but ever, fever,  
Neither, leisure, skein, deceiver.  
Heron, granary, canary.  
Crevice and device and aerie.

Face, but preface, not efface.  
Phlegm, phlegmatic, ass, glass, bass.  
Large, but target, gin, give, verging,  
Ought, out, joust and scour, scourging.  
Ear, but earn and wear and tear  
Do not rhyme with here but ere.  
Seven is right, but so is even,  
Hyphen, roughen, nephew Stephen,  
Monkey, donkey, Turk and jerk,  
Ask, grasp, wasp, and cork and work.

Pronunciation--think of Psyche!  
Is a paling stout and spikey?  
Won't it make you lose your wits,  
Writing groats and saying grits?  
It's a dark abyss or tunnel:  
Strewn with stones, stowed, solace, gunwale,  
Islington and Isle of Wight,  
Housewife, verdict and indict.

Finally, which rhymes with enough--  
Though, through, plough, or dough, or cough?  
Hiccough has the sound of cup.  
My advice is to give up!!!

--Author Unknown

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## A Plan for the Improvement of English Spelling

For example, in Year 1 that useless letter "c" would be dropped to be replaced either by "k" or "s," and likewise "x" would no longer be part of the alphabet. The only case in which "c" would be retained would be the "ch" formation, which will be dealt with later. Year 2 might reform "w" spelling, so that "which" and "one" would take the same consonant, while Year 3 might well abolish "y" replacing it with "i" and Year 4 might fix the "g/j" anomaly once and for all. Generally, then, the improvement would continue year by year with Year 5 doing away with useless double consonants, and Years 6-12 or so modifying vowels and the remaining voiced and unvoiced

konsonants. Bai iear 15 or sou, it wud fainali bi posibl tu meik ius ov thi ridandant letez “c,” “y,” and “x”--bai now jast a memori in the maindz ov ould doderez--tu riplais “ch,” “sh,” and “th” rispektivli. Fainali, xen, aafte sam 20 iers ov orxogrefkl riform, wi wud hev a lojikl, kohirnt speling in ius xrewawt xe Ingliy-spiking werld.

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## Canonical List of Oxymorons

“Anarchy rules!”	Bankrupt millionaire
“Free with purchase”	Beginning Finnish
“Happy Monday”	Better than new
“Never generalize”	Black light
“One size fits all”	Boring orgasm
“Slow children” (sign with a picture of a running child)	Brave politician
“Thank God I'm an Atheist”	British fashion
“This page intentionally left blank”	Budget deficit
A little big	Bug free code
Academic sorority	Business ethics
Accordion music	Butthead
Accurate stereotype	Cafeteria food
Act naturally	California culture
Advanced BASIC	California expressway
Aerobic exercise	Canadian culture
Affirmative action, equal opportunity	Casual intimacy
Affordable housing	Cat-proof
Aging yuppie	Central Intelligence Agency
Airline food	Centrally-planned economy
Almost exactly	Cheerful pessimist
Alone together	Childproof
American beer	Christian education
American chop suey	Christian militia
American culture	Christian Scientists
American education	Church of Scientology
American English	Civil engineer
American geographers	Civil servant
American history	Civil libertarian
American Honda	Civil war
Americans	Classic rock & roll
Apple tech support	Clean dirt
Arms limitation	Clean hack
Art student	Clearly confused
Artificial intelligence	Clearly misunderstood
Athletic scholarship	Clinton leadership
Australian spelling	Coca-Cola Foods
Automated data processing	Coed fraternity/sorority
Back to the future	Collective liberty
Bad health	College algebra
Balding hair	College education
	Colored music
	Committee schedule

Committee decision  
Common sense  
Communist Party  
Completely unfinished  
Compulsory volunteering  
Computer science  
Computer jock  
Computer security  
Congressional action  
Congressional ethics  
Congressional hearing  
Congressional oversight  
Conservative Democrat  
Conspicuous absence  
Constant change  
Construction worker  
Convenience store  
Cooperative multitasking  
Corporate planning  
Cost effective  
Country music  
Courtesy towing  
Creation science  
Curved line  
Customer satisfaction  
CNN style  
Debugged program  
Debutante ball  
Decent lawyer  
Definite maybe  
Degradable plastic  
Democratic Congress  
Department of the Interior  
Desktop publishing  
Diet ice cream  
Dining hall food  
Disco music  
Down escalator/elevator  
Dress pants  
Driving pleasure  
Dry beer  
Dry ice  
Dry wine  
DOS operating system  
Economic reform  
Electroshock therapy  
English syntax  
Enquiring minds

Environmentalist bumper sticker  
Ergonomic keyboard  
European Community  
Evolutionary fact  
Exact estimate  
Executive decision  
Express bus  
Express mail  
Fair reporting  
Fair trial  
Fallout shelter  
Family entertainment  
Fast food  
Federal budget  
Fighting for peace  
Final version  
First annual  
First-strike defense  
Flat-busted  
Flexible freeze  
Football scholarship  
Forth programming language  
Found missing  
Free election  
Free electron laser  
Free love  
Freezer burn  
French culture  
Fresh frozen  
Friendly advice  
Friendly competitor  
Friendly fire  
Full-length bikini  
Full service  
Functional manager  
Funny clean joke  
Fuzzy logic  
Gay drill sergeant  
Genuine imitation  
Good grief  
Good mother-in-law  
Good Alan Rudolph film  
Government aid/assistance  
Government efficiency  
Government integrity  
Government organization  
Graduate student  
Great Britain

Guest host  
Gunboat diplomacy  
Half dead  
Happily married  
Hard disk  
Hard water  
Hazardous waste disposal  
Helicopter flight  
Higher education  
Holy Roman Empire  
Holy War  
Honest crook  
Honest politician  
House Ethics Committee  
Huge market niche  
Human evolution  
Indecent exposure  
Industrial park  
Institutional Revolutionary Party  
Intelligent life-forms  
Internal Revenue Service  
IBM compatible  
Journalistic accuracy  
Journalistic integrity  
Jumbo shrimp  
Just in Time (JIT)  
Justice Rehnquist  
Justice Thomas  
Kentucky Fried Chicken  
Kosher ham  
Lace-up loafers  
Lebanese government  
Legal brief  
Legal ethics  
Legally drunk  
Liberal Party (conservative)  
Liberal, Kansas  
Liquid crystal  
Literal interpretation  
Living dead  
Long Island Expressway  
Male compassion  
Management science  
Management support  
Management action  
Management style  
Marketing strategy  
Married life

Martial law  
Math teacher  
Mature student  
McDonalds dinner  
Meatless hamburger  
Medicaid payment  
Medical ethics  
Microsoft Works  
Middle East peace process  
Military intelligence  
Military justice  
Military peace  
Modified final judgment  
Monopoly  
Moral Majority  
Mutual attraction  
Mutually exclusive  
Necessary meeting  
New Classic  
New Democrat  
New Mexico  
Nice cat  
Noble savage  
Non-alcoholic beer  
Non-denominational church  
Nonworking mother  
Now, then  
Nuclear defense  
Objective parent  
Oddly appropriate  
OpenVMS  
Operating system  
Operation Rescue  
Pacific Ocean  
Paperless office  
Partly pregnant  
Passive aggression  
Peace force  
Peace officer  
Peace-Maker missile  
People's Democratic Republic Of  
Yemen  
Personal computer  
Petty cash  
Philosophy science  
Plastic glasses  
Plastic silverware  
Pocket calculator

Police protection  
Polite cabbie  
Political leadership  
Political science  
Politically correct  
Poor Republican  
Pop art  
Portable standard Lisp  
Postal Service  
Pot luck  
Practical logic  
Precision bombing  
Presidential promises  
Pretty ugly  
Private e-mail  
Productivity committee  
Professional courtesy  
Progressive Conservative  
Proprietary standard  
Psychiatric care  
Public school education  
Quality assurance  
Quality service  
Quebec intellectual  
QuickBASIC  
Quick fix  
Quick reboot  
Rap music  
Rapid transit  
Rare steak  
Reagan memoirs  
Real fantasy  
Realistic schedule  
Reasonable female  
Recently new  
Reckless caution  
Red Indians  
Relativistic correction  
Religious education  
Religious fact  
Religious tolerance  
Religious science  
Republican initiative  
Resident alien  
Responsible committee  
Restrained grandparent  
Rolling stop  
Rush hour

Russian economy  
Safe sex  
Same difference  
Sanitary landfill  
Satisfied Democrat  
Saving price  
Savings & loan  
School food  
School vacation  
Scottish Danish  
(actual pastry sold at 7-11)  
Second best  
Sedate sex  
Semi truck  
Semi-boneless ham  
Senate Ethics Committee  
Sensitive male  
Severely/slightly killed  
Silent scream  
Small crowd  
Smart bomb  
Smart drugs  
Social Security  
Social science  
Socialist Worker  
Soft rock  
Software documentation  
Software engineering  
Solid glass  
Southern justice  
Spare rib  
Speed limit  
Sports sedan  
Stealth bomber  
Straight hook  
Student athlete  
Student teacher  
Summer school  
Suburban culture  
Supporting documentation  
Sweet sorrow  
Synthetic natural gas  
Tame cat  
Taped live  
Tax return  
Television critic  
Temporary tax increase  
Terribly pleased

Terminal initialization	User-friendly war
Tight slacks	Vegetable beef soup
Tone color	Ventura Freeway
Total Quality Management (TQM)	Violent agreement
True gossip	Virtual reality
True story	Voting power
Unbiased journalism	Waiting patiently
Unbiased news reports	War games
Unbiased opinion	War hero
Unbiased predisposition	Wilderness management
Uncontested divorce	Windows NT (New Technology)
Understanding banker	Wonder Bread
Understanding Unix	Woods Metal
Union workers	Working vacation
United States	Young Floridian
University of Nevada at Las Vegas	Yummy sushi
Unix prompt	10K fun run
Unix security	12-ounce pound cake
Unsalted Saltines	6502-based computer
Urban planning	
User friendliness	

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## Discouragement and Demotivation for Writers...

### DETERIORATA

Go placidly amid the noise and waste,  
And remember what comfort there may be in owning a piece thereof.  
Avoid quiet and passive persons, unless you are in need of sleep.  
Rotate your tires.  
Speak glowingly of those greater than yourself,  
And heed well their advice--even though they be turkeys.  
Know what to kiss--and when.  
Remember that two wrongs never make a right,  
But that three do.  
Wherever possible, put people on HOLD.  
Be comforted, that in the face of all aridity and disillusionment,  
And despite the changing fortunes of time,  
There is always a big future in computer maintenance.

You are a fluke of the universe...  
You have no right to be here.  
Whether you can hear it or not, the universe  
Is laughing behind your back.