Odd Bits: Plurals/Possessives, Modifiers, & Word Choices

Plurals and Possessives [Use of the Apostrophe]

* Use an apostrophe to make nouns possessive; never use apostrophes to make nouns plural.
  + Check to see who owns what.

Ex: my aunt owns a hat = my aunt’s hat [one aunt owns one hat]

Ex: my aunt’s hats [one aunt owns many hats]

* + Check to see how many own one or more of something.

Ex: my two aunts own hats = my aunts’ hats [more than one aunt owns more than one hat]

Ex: my two aunts own one hat together = my aunts’ hat [more than one aunt shares the same hat]

NOTE: Decide if a noun is singular or plural; then make it possessive.

* boy boy’s boy’s bat
* boys boys’ boys’ bats

Dangling & Misplaced Modifiers

* To do its job correctly, a modifier must be in the right spot – as close to the word it describes as possible.
  + Misplaced modifiers are not near the item they modify so are unclear.

Ex: They noticed a loophole *reading their policy very carefully.* [the loophole reads?]

Ex: *While reading their policy very carefully*, they noticed a loophole*.* [Ah – they are reading]

* + Dangling modifiers are just “out there” and do not properly modify anything.

Ex: *After a two-hour nap*, the train pulled into the station. [who took the nap?]

Ex: *After a two-hour nap*, I awoke just as the train pulled into the station. [Ah – this makes more sense]

Word Choices

* Check the dictionary to clear up any misunderstood words!!!
  + Accept (receive willingly) – Except (excluding)

Ex: The coach *accepts* everyone’s excuses *except* mine.

* + Affect (to influence) – Effect (result)

Ex: The drug did not *affect* the disease; however, the drug had adverse side *effects*.

* + Complement (bring to perfection) – Compliment (praise)

Ex: Her *compliments* always *complement* her written feedback.

* + Every day (adj: every + n: day) – Everyday (adj: ordinary; commonplace)

Ex: He was late for work *every day*; his tardiness became an *everyday* occurrence.

* + Lead (metal) – Led (past tense of to lead)

Ex: The use of *lead* in paint has *led* to medical problems.

* + Principal (main; main administrator) – Principle (rule)

Ex: My high school *principal* taught us many *principles* for living life.

* + Than (used for comparison) – Then (denotes time)

Ex: If that pizza is more *than* we can eat, *then* we can share with our friends.

Spelling Woes

* Don’t let spellchecker fool you into making wrong word choices.
* advice vs. advise
* all ready vs. already
* brake vs. break
* choose vs. chose
* clothes vs. cloths
* conscience vs. conscious
* coarse vs. course
* defiantly vs. definitely
* desert vs. dessert
* quiet vs. quite
* weather vs. whether
* were vs. wear vs. where

Homonyms

* do vs. due
* for vs. four
* fourth vs. forth
* here vs. hear
* its vs. it’s
* knew vs. new
* know vs. no
* passed vs. past
* peace vs. piece
* right vs. write
* their vs. there vs. they’re
* threw vs. through
* two vs. to vs. too
* who’s vs. whose
* your vs. you’re