

Write It Right PDF (Limited Copy)

Jan Freeman



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Write It Right Summary

Rediscovering Language Rules from Ambrose Bierce's Timeless
Perspectives

Written by New York Central Park Page Turners Books Club

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About the book

Ambrose Bierce, best known for his sharp wit in "The Devil's Dictionary," made significant contributions to the understanding and usage of the English language. In 1909, he published "Write It Right: A Little Blacklist of Literary Faults," a critical examination of common literary mistakes. The book addresses well-established rules of grammar and style, such as the often-confused "which-that" rule and the distinctions between "less" and "fewer." However, Bierce's insights extend beyond these basics; he scrutinizes outdated misconceptions surrounding terms like "ovation" and "reliable," and even introduces his own language peeves, challenging readers to reconsider their linguistic habits.

In a contemporary reflection on Bierce's work, language columnist Jan Freeman commemorates the centenary of "Write It Right" by investigating the historical context and evolution of these linguistic taboos. She poses intriguing questions about the future of language, speculating on how our interaction with words may transform by 2109. This exploration not only highlights the enduring relevance of Bierce's insights into effective communication but also invites readers to contemplate the fluid nature of language and its potential changes over time. Together, Bierce's original critiques and Freeman's modern analysis create a thought-provoking dialogue on the nature of language.

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About the author

In the first chapters of **Write It Right**, Jan Freeman sets the stage by introducing her philosophy of writing as a skill that can be cultivated through practice and thoughtful attention to detail. Drawing from her extensive background in journalism, she emphasizes the importance of clarity and precision in communication. Freeman blends personal anecdotes with practical advice, illustrating her points with examples from her own writing journey.

Freeman's commitment to grammatical precision becomes evident as she dissects common writing pitfalls and offers strategies to avoid them. She introduces the concept of "linguistic awareness," which serves as a foundation for understanding how language operates and how writers can manipulate it effectively. This awareness not only enhances the writer's ability to convey their ideas clearly but also allows them to engage more deeply with their audience.

Throughout these chapters, Freeman highlights her role as the founder of "The Language Doctor," a platform designed to assist writers in refining their craft. She reflects on her experiences working with writers of various skill levels and shares insights into how diverse expressions of language can coexist while maintaining clarity. This section serves to motivate and empower readers, encouraging them to embrace their unique voices while

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adhering to the rules of writing.

As the chapters progress, Freeman addresses the misconceptions surrounding grammar as a rigid set of rules, promoting it instead as a flexible framework that supports effective communication. Her encouraging tone invites readers to see writing not just as a task, but as an art form that can be mastered with dedication and the right guidance.

In summary, the early chapters of **Write It Right** lay a solid foundation for understanding effective writing. Through Freeman's insightful guidance, readers are encouraged to develop their skills, appreciate the subtleties of language, and recognize the potential for improvement that lies within their own writing endeavors.

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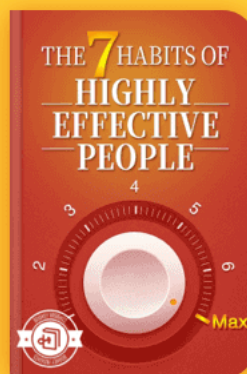
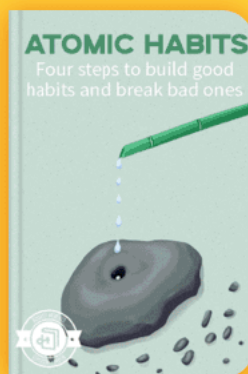
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Summary Content List

Chapter 1: 1

Chapter 2: 2

Chapter 3: 3

Chapter 4: 4

Chapter 5: 5

Chapter 6: 6

Chapter 7: 7

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Chapter 1 Summary: 1

Aims and the Plan

In the introductory chapter, "Aims and the Plan," the author outlines the primary objective of "Write It Right," which is to emphasize the importance of precision in writing as a reflection of clear thinking. The central thesis is that effective communication relies on selecting words that accurately express the writer's intentions while avoiding those that could mislead the reader. To make these concepts accessible, the book employs relatable examples rather than relying on technical jargon, ensuring readers can grasp the nuances of language usage.

The author argues for a balanced approach to language, suggesting that while colloquialisms have their place, restraint is essential to maintain clarity depending on the context. Acknowledging personal shortcomings in their own writing, the author admits that all writers, regardless of skill level, can make mistakes. This chapter sets the stage for the book's mission: to guide readers in achieving clarity and precision in their writing through practical examples and thoughtful analysis of language.

The Blacklist

Following the foundational ideas, "The Blacklist" chapter provides a

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practical resource by listing commonly misused words and phrases, accompanied by recommended substitutes for enhanced clarity. The author breaks down several examples that illustrate the importance of accurate word choice:

1. **"A hotel" vs. "an hotel"** - The author explains the phonetic rationale behind this distinction, emphasizing the correct use of unaccented aspirates.
2. **"Action" vs. "act"** - The author highlights that "act" should be used for singular events to achieve specificity.
3. **"Admit" vs. "confess"** - Here, the nuances are clarified: "admitting" often signifies conceding a point, while "confessing" typically relates to acknowledging guilt.
4. **"Aggravate" versus "irritate"** - The author advocates retaining "aggravate" for situations where something negative is intensified, reserving "irritate" for minor annoyances.

This chapter systematically addresses a variety of expressions that often lead to confusion, offering clearer alternatives to enhance communication. The overarching message reiterates the importance of precision in language, urging writers to choose their words thoughtfully to foster effective understanding. The author's commitment to clarity serves not only as a guideline for writing but also as a reminder of the power of language in shaping thought and perception.



Chapter 2 Summary: 2

Summary of Chapter 2 from "Write It Right" by Jan Freeman

In Chapter 2, titled "Introduction to Misused Words," Jan Freeman delves into the importance of precise language, targeting common words and phrases that are frequently misused or distorted into slang. She argues that clarity and correctness are essential in effective communication, encouraging writers to be vigilant about their word choices to prevent miscommunication.

Freeman starts by addressing the misuse of the word "**bogus**," which often denotes something that is false or counterfeit. She cautions against using slang terms as they can dilute meaning and professionalism.

Next, she highlights the proper application of "**both**," recommending phrases like "of both men and women" instead of the awkward "a large mob, both of men and women." This attention to grammatical structure underlines the goal of enhancing clarity.

The chapter continues with other commonly misused terms. "**Brainy**," for instance, is identified as pure slang and discouraged due to its unpleasant connotation. She stresses that "**bug**" should strictly refer to an insect,



dismissing its casual use in broader contexts. Moving on, Freeman critiques the phrase "**business**," advising writers to avoid it in constructions like "He has no business to go there," suggesting a more direct expression would be clearer.

Freeman also addresses the term "**build**," which is often incorrectly used in contexts like "build a fire"; she argues that "make" fits more appropriately. The distinction between "**but**" in terms of grammatical cases is explored, as it can accept either nominative or objective forms depending on how it's employed in a sentence.

Further distinctions are made between similar terms. For example, "**calculate**" should imply intent, not likelihood. The difference between "**can**" and "**may**" is clarified, with "**can**" indicating ability and "**may**" representing permission.

Freeman explains that a "**candidate**" is someone formally nominated for a position, contrasting it with an "**aspirant**," who simply wishes to hold an office. Additionally, the concepts of "**capable**" and "**capacity**" are differentiated, with the former relating to potential action and the latter to the ability to receive.

She addresses the euphemistic use of "**casket**" versus the straightforward "**coffin**," and clarifies the distinction between "**citizen**" and "**civilian**," explai



ning that while all soldiers are citizens, they do not fall under the civilian category.

Freeman also discusses the terms "**claim**" and "**affirm**," where the former relates to ownership and the latter to support. When it comes to **comparison terms**, she instructs readers to use "**compare to**" for similarities and "**compare with**" for differences.

Words like "**conclude**" and "**decide**" are contrasted, with the former tied to reasoning and the latter to making choices. The nuances of "**consent**" and "**assent**" are also explored: consent is agreeing to a proposal, whereas assent indicates agreement with a statement.

Other notable terms include "**conservative**," which is cautioned against due to its varied and often overused meanings, and the differences between "**continuously**" and "**continually**." Freeman clarifies that the former denotes an uninterrupted action, while the latter signifies a recurring one.

The chapter wraps up with a discussion about the terms "**cunning**" and "**amusing**," pointing out potential variances in their use concerning children or pets, and emphasizes the importance of precision when discussing terms like "**democracy**" versus the "**Democratic Party**."



Freeman concludes her analysis by promoting careful word selection as a means of avoiding miscommunication and enriching the English language. This chapter serves as a vital resource for writers seeking to refine their language usage, underscoring the importance of thoughtful expression in writing.

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Chapter 3 Summary: 3

Chapter 3: Common Misuses and Recommendations

In this chapter, the author focuses on various common misuses of English words and phrases, providing clarity and guidance on their appropriate usage. The emphasis is on achieving clear communication rather than superfluous complexity.

Donate for Give Good

Clarity is paramount; instead of using convoluted expressions like "good English," aim for straightforward language.

Doubtlessly

The term should be simplified to "doubtless" to enhance clarity.

Dress for Gown

"Dress" encompasses the entire outfit rather than being limited to a gown.

Each Other vs. One Another

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Reserve "each other" for interactions between two parties, while "one another" is appropriate for three or more.

Edify for Please or Entertain

"Edify" denotes moral or spiritual education and should not be mistaken for mere entertainment.

Electrocution

This term can be insensitive; simpler alternatives are preferable.

Empty vs. Vacant

Use "empty" when referring to containers and "vacant" to describe unoccupied spaces.

Employe vs. Employee

"Employe," a French derivative, should be replaced by the more commonly accepted "employee."

Endorse for Approve

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"Endorse" carries commercial connotations; "approve" is more suitable for literary contexts.

Endways

The correct term is "endwise."

Entitled for Authorized

"Entitled" means to have the right to something, and should not precede an infinitive verb.

Episode for Occurrence

An "episode" implies a segment of a larger narrative rather than just any event.

Equally as vs. Equally

The phrase "equally as" is redundant; simply say "equally."

Equivalent for Equal

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Use "equal" for clarity instead of the more complex "equivalent."

Essential for Necessary

Reserve "essential" for truly indispensable items or concepts.

Even for Exact

For precision, avoid "even" when "exact" is more fitting.

Every vs. Entire/Full

"Every" should not be applied in contexts that denote completeness or entirety.

Ex- vs. Former

"Former" is the more suitable choice compared to "ex."

Example for Problem

In mathematical contexts, replace "example" with "problem" for clarity.

Excessively for Exceedingly

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The term "excessively" implies an overabundance; "exceedingly" conveys a high degree without excess.

Executed

Clarify the context, emphasizing that it is the sentence that is executed, not the individual.

Executive for Secret

To avoid confusion, use "secret" where appropriate instead of "executive."

Expect for Believe

"Expect" implies a stronger certainty; use "believe" to indicate possibility.

Expectorate for Spit

This formal term can be simplified to "spit" for straightforward communication.

Experience for Suffer

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"Experience" should convey minor occurrences rather than deep suffering.

Extend for Proffer

"Extend" can suggest verbal offers; prefer "proffer" for clarity.

Fail

Implying failure should only be considered when intent is established.

Favor for Resemble

Use "favor" to indicate resemblance rather than as a general term.

Feel of for Feel

Unnecessary prepositions can obscure meaning; "feel" alone suffices.

Feminine for Female

"Feminine" pertains to gendered terms whereas "female" refers specifically to biological sex.

Fetch for Bring

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"Fetch" suggests a round trip; "bring" is clearer when discussing delivery.

Finances for Wealth

"Finances" refers to specific monetary amounts; use "money" for broader discussions about wealth.

Firstly

This term is excessive; ordinal forms do not require adverbial modifiers.

Fix

Avoid this vague term; specify the action needed.

Forebears for Ancestors

"Forebears" limits meaning; "ancestors" is the more universally understood term.

Forecasted

Question the necessity of this term; it may be redundant.

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Former and Latter

Use these terms sparingly to reduce potential confusion.

Funeral Obsequies

"Obsequies" alone suffices; pairing it with "funeral" is redundant.

Fully for Definitely

Omit "fully" as commitments need not be partial.

Funds for Money

"Funds" suggests designated sums, whereas "money" is appropriate in general discussions of currency.

Furnish for Provide

"Provide" is clearer and preferable over "furnish."

Generally for Usually

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Seek precision; use specific terms instead of broad generalities.

Gent for Gentleman

While "gent" may be fitting in informal settings, use "gentleman" for formal contexts.

Genuine for Authentic

"Genuine" should denote specific authenticity; use "authentic" where appropriate.

Given

Clarify the context to avoid ambiguity regarding what is being transferred.

Goatee

Provide clear definitions of terms to prevent misunderstandings.

Got Married for Married

Simply state "married" for brevity.

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Gotten for Got

"Gotten" is outdated; use "got" for contemporary clarity.

Graduated for Was Graduated

Simplify phrasing to enhance understanding.

Gratuitous for Unwarranted

Choose straightforward words to convey messages effectively.

Grueling

Use sparingly and only when referring to significant difficulty.

Gubernatorial

This term is often unnecessary; simpler language is preferable.

Had Better for Would Better

Avoid incorrect idiomatic constructions that confuse meaning.

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Hail for Come

Steer clear of nautical jargon; "come" offers greater universal clarity.

Have Got for Have

Simplify to "have" to ensure clear communication.

This chapter diligently guides readers through common linguistic missteps, enhancing their command of English through practical advice and reinforcing the importance of clarity in communication. By addressing these nuances, readers can avoid confusion and elevate their writing skills.

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Chapter 4: 4

In Chapter 4 of "Write It Right" by Jan Freeman, the focus is on clarifying the common misuses of words. This chapter serves as a valuable guide to understanding nuances in language that are often overlooked but critical for effective communication.

The chapter begins with the phrase "head over heels," which is commonly misused; the correct form is "heels over head," highlighting the importance of idiomatic expressions in their precise order. Freeman then addresses the term "healthy," emphasizing that it should only describe living entities, thereby refining readers' vocabulary for accuracy.

The term "helpmeet," rooted in biblical scripture from Genesis, illustrates the historical layers words can carry, reminding readers that meanings can evolve. A distinction is made between "hereafter," which refers to future occurrences, and "henceforth," which indicates an unbroken continuation into the future.

Freeman also discusses the term "honeymoon," noting its historical connection to a month-long celebration rather than an extended period. The unsettling term "horseflesh" illustrates how language can carry connotations and associations that may not be evident at first glance.



Another critical clarification involves the use of "humans," suggesting that the term should be applied with care to avoid generalizations about all people. In differentiating between "hung" and "hanged," she specifies that "hanged" is appropriate for people, while "hung" applies to inanimate objects, which is a common grammatical error.

Further explanations define "hurry" as a term implying disorder, contrasting it with "haste," which is a more orderly pursuit of speed. The chapter then delves into the distinctions between "hurt" and "harm," where the former relates to physical pain, while the latter can occur without direct sensation.

As Freeman progresses, she addresses the misuse of words like "idea," which is often confused with a mere thought. The correct terminology is crucial; for example, "identified" is better replaced with "connected," demonstrating the importance of clarity.

The chapter continues by examining various terms, such as "ilk," which is mistakenly used in broader contexts, and the improper use of "illy," which should be replaced with "ill" for grammatical accuracy. Freeman emphasizes that "imaginary line" is redundant since lines are inherently conceptual in nature.

Describing movement accurately, she notes that "into" should be used instead of "in" when indicating a change in location. The term "inaugurate,"



while ceremonious, could be simplified to "begin" for broader understanding.

Freeman also critiques the word "insane asylum," advocating for the more respectful term "asylum for the insane." She recommends the use of "despite" over "in spite of" for conciseness and explains that "inside of" is redundant; just "inside" suffices.

Further examples clarify distinctions such as "insignificant," best replaced with "trivial," and differences between "insoluble" for substances and "unsolvable" for problems. Freeman warns against using abbreviations in literature, which are primarily commercial, and urges clarity when discussing "integrity," recommending "honesty" when referring to truthfulness.

Continuing on word differentiation, she illustrates the differences between "involve" and "entail," where involvement implies participation but entailment implies a consequence. The preference for "do so" over "it" in more serious writing is highlighted.

Freeman defines "item" as a singular unit within a broader context and critiques phrases like "Jackies," an offensive term for sailors. The term "jeopardize" is suggested to be replaced with "imperil" or "endanger," and she clarifies that "juncture" should not be misapplied to describe time—its



true meaning refers to a joining of two points.

She encourages the elimination of "just" for leaner sentences and suggests using "child" instead of "juvenile," which may sound unnecessarily formal. The phrase "kind of a" should be simplified, reflecting the importance of precision in language.

Freeman draws attention to usage comments around terms like "landed estate," which should simply refer to property and warns against using "last" and "past" inaccurately in temporal contexts. The redundancy of "later on" is noted, recommending simply "later."

Clarifications continue with terms related to laundry, encouraging clearer communication, especially with "lay" versus "lie," where a distinction between placing and reclining is essential. A "leading question" is discussed, emphasizing its nature of suggesting a desired answer, thus highlighting its importance in communication.

As she closes the chapter, Freeman cautions about using "lease" due to its ambiguity, clarifies that "leave" should include a specified destination, and encourages the term "lengthwise" for precision over the informal "lengthways." Lastly, she advises careful usage of "leniency," preferring the more precise "lenity."



Ultimately, Chapter 4 encapsulates the importance of precise language, offering insights into better word choice and usage, which can enhance understanding and clarity in communication.

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Chapter 5 Summary: 5

Summary of Chapter 5: Language Usage and Misconceptions

In this chapter, we delve into the intricacies of word usage, clarifying common misconceptions to enhance our understanding of effective communication. Mastering language is crucial, as precise word choice not only conveys our thoughts accurately but also facilitates meaningful exchanges.

Common Misuses of Words

To start, we explore the distinction between "lots" and "a lot," highlighting that "lots of things" is typically the preferred usage in informal contexts. Similarly, the emotional weight between "love" and "like" is examined; the former expresses a deeper affection than the latter. Additionally, while "luncheon" once held relevance, it is now best replaced by the more straightforward term "lunch," especially since "luncheon" should not be used as a verb.

Word Choice Clarifications

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Moving on, we clarify the terms "mad" and "angry," noting that "mad" is less commonly used in the context of frustration or rage. The terms "maintain" and "contend" are dissected, with "maintain" suggesting a grounded belief or proof, and "contend" being an appropriate choice in argumentative contexts. The difference between a "majority," which represents more than half, and a "plurality," denoting the highest vote count, is also elucidated to avoid political confusion.

Common Errors in Language

We address several language missteps, such as the appropriate use of "earn" versus "make" when discussing income. The term "mansion" is critiqued for often being exaggerated, suggesting a more accurate term like "house" or "dwelling." Distinguishing "male," which refers to biological traits, from "masculine," which describes cultural characteristics, is emphasized for clarity.

Misleading Phrases

The chapter also tackles phrases that can mislead. For instance, "mend" is appropriately used in specific contexts, such as clothing repairs, while



"repair" can apply to a broader range of corrections. The term "mind" should not be extended to universally denote obedience, highlighting the need for careful phrasing.

Unnecessary Elaborations

We recognize the redundancy in phrases like "mistaken" and "moneyed," advocating for the simpler "you mistake" and "wealthy," respectively. Such streamlining aids in clarity and effectiveness in communication.

Issues with Specific Terms

Avoiding the term "most" for "almost" is advised, alongside clarifying the difference between "moved" in terms of location changes versus "removed," which implies elimination.

Clarifying Contextual Usage

The chapter discusses specific terms such as "mutual," which should refer to reciprocal relationships, contrasting it with misleading usages, such as "mutual friend." It also differentiates between a "name" and a "title,"



emphasizing that "name" should not include formal designations like "Mr." Lastly, "necessaries" versus "necessities" is clarified, asserting that "necessities" accurately refer to life essentials.

Guidance on Formal Language

We emphasize the importance of using "negotiate" correctly, as it should only refer to formal discussions rather than casual interactions. Similarly, proper syntax is reinforced with the correct placement of "nor" following "neither."

Misuse of Verbal Expressions

Attention is drawn to the phrase "pay attention," which should avoid commercial overtones in non-business contexts, and the subtle differences between "peculiar" and "odd," advocating for more careful usage based on meaning.

Final Recommendations

In summary, the chapter urges readers to use established terms over modern,

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potentially casual variants. Striving for clarity in expression is paramount; precise language prevents misunderstandings and upholds the integrity of our communication. Through careful consideration of word choices, we can enhance our interactions, fostering deeper understanding in our engagements.

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Chapter 6 Summary: 6

In Chapter 6, the focus is on the common misuses of words that frequently lead to confusion or inappropriate expression in communication.

Understanding the precise meanings of these terms enhances clarity and effectiveness in writing and speech.

The chapter begins by clarifying the difference between "perpetually" and "continually," establishing that the former implies an unending duration. It then addresses "phenomenal," which refers to phenomena, and contrasts it with "extraordinary." Moving to verb forms, it emphasizes that "pleaded" is the correct past tense of "plead," while pointing out that "plenty" is a colloquial misstep when "plentiful" is intended.

The term "poetess" is critiqued as outdated, suggesting "poet" is more appropriate. Furthermore, it explains that while all poetry is verse, not all verse qualifies as poetry. The phrase "point blank" is defined in a more technical sense related to trajectory, countering its frequent colloquial misuse.

The distinction between "poisonous" and "venomous" is highlighted using specific examples: hemlock being poisonous and rattlesnakes being venomous, emphasizing the importance of accurate language in biology discussions. The chapter further clarifies that "politics" refers to a singular



concept despite its plural appearance. When discussing ownership, "possess" is critiqued for its unnecessary emphasis compared to the simpler "have."

Misunderstandings in the usage of "practically" versus "virtually" are addressed, along with the need to differentiate "predicate" from basic argumentation terms. The chapter encapsulates how "prejudice" suggests prejudgment rather than predisposition, advocating for precision in language.

Next, "preparedness" is criticized as awkward, with "readiness" preferred, while "preside" is mentioned for its often incorrect application in various contexts. The distinction between "pretend," indicating deceit, and "profess," conveying sincerity, is also drawn.

The chapter proceeds to outline that "preventative" is often incorrectly used, while "previous" is rightly preferred over "prior to" in modern English. The use of "propose" is clarified to denote intention rather than a detailed plan, contrasting it with "proposition," which carries specific implications.

There's also a linguistic exploration of "proportions" versus "dimensions," where the former relates to form and the latter to size. Misuses of words like "proven" and "proved," along with "proverbial" in its context, are discussed for better understanding.



The chapter underscores the nuance between terms like "quit" and "cease," stressing the need for specific vocabulary choices depending on the scenario. Additionally, distinctions like "real" versus "really," and "realize" versus "comprehend" further illuminate common traps in language.

"Recollect" is described as requiring intentionality, while "redeem" is noted for its deeper meaning beyond "retrieve." The chapter explains "redound" and "conduce," noting their positive connotations versus their more straightforward counterparts.

Clarity in refusal and living terminology is emphasized, labeling "reside" as elevated and suggesting more approachable alternatives.

The importance of precise terms such as "respect" versus informal expressions is articulated, granting importance to proper contextual usage. The chapter concludes with additional misapplications such as "restive" versus "restless," "retire" as overly genteel, and the confusion between "ride" and "drive." The nuances in terminology continue with terms like "round" versus "about," as well as important distinctions related to actions like "manage" and expressions of acknowledgment.

Overall, this chapter serves as a guide to refining vocabulary and enhances one's linguistic acuity, reinforcing the significance of precise language in effective communication.



Chapter 7 Summary: 7

Summary of Chapter 7: Common Language Misuses

In this chapter, the author highlights various common misuses of language that can create confusion or ambiguity in communication. Each section discusses a specific term or phrase that is often misapplied, providing a clearer alternative for effective expression.

Shades for Shade: The term "shade," meaning a departed soul, is frequently misused in casual expressions. Clarity is key in communication about spirituality.

Show for Chance: The phrase "he didn't stand a show" is better stated as "he had no chance," simplifying the language.

Sick for Ill: While "sick" has become synonymous with nausea, it retains proper usage in contexts like "sickly." Understanding these nuances is essential for precise communication.

Side for Agree: Instead of saying "I side with the Democrats," it's clearer to say "I agree with the Democrats," eliminating jargon.



Sideburns for Burnside: Named after General Burnside, the correct term should be "burnsides," reflecting accuracy in language.

Side-hill for Hillside: The incorrect use of "side-hill" likely stems from confusion. "Hillside" is the proper term.

Smart for Bright: The American use of "smart" as a synonym for bright is waning; this reflects evolving language norms.

Snap for Period: Using "snap" to denote a time span is discouraged, as it fails to convey precise meaning.

So for True: Colloquialisms like "Is that so?" can be avoided for clearer expressions of affirmation.

Solemnize: Often misinterpreted, "solemnize" means to make something solemn but not necessarily to enact a solemn act.

Some for Somewhat: Phrases like "he was hurt some" can be better articulated for clarity.

Soon for Willingly: This older usage should be replaced with "prefer," to reflect modern language.



Space for Period: "Space" and "time" are distinct concepts and should not be combined.

Spend for Pass: Saying "we shall spend the summer in Europe" could be clarified by saying "we shall pass the summer in Europe."

Square for Block: The terms "squares" referring to distance should be replaced with "blocks" for accuracy.

Stand for Endure: To clearly articulate resilience, "he stands pain well" is better expressed as "he endures pain well."

Standpoint for Point of View: "Standpoint" is less common than the clearer "point of view."

State for Say: Using "he stated that" is unnecessary; "he said" suffices and sounds more natural.

Still Continue: Phrasing like "the rain still continues" can be simplified to "the rain continues."

Stock: Expressions like "I take no stock in it" rely on commercial terminology that can confuse.

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Stop for Stay: Confusion between "stop" and "stay" often leads to miscommunication, thus clarity is paramount.

Stunt: This term's overuse in describing tasks is seen as excessive and should be minimized.

Subsequent for Later: For clear communication, the simpler "later" is preferred over "subsequent."

Substantiate for Prove: Using "prove" is often sufficient, making "substantiate" unnecessarily complex.

Success: It is more effective to say "the project was successful" rather than "the project was a success."

Such Another for Another Such: While somewhat artistic, this phrasing can lead to ambiguity.

Such for So: Use "so" for indicating degree, as in "so great a bore," for clarity.

Suicide: The more straightforward phrase "he killed himself" replaces the incorrect "suicided."



Supererogation: This technical term can be avoided in favor of simpler language, making communication more accessible.

Sure for Surely: Phrasing like "they will come, sure" is considered slang and should be avoided.

Survive for Live: "Survival" implies outliving something, so it should not replace the more direct "live."

Sustain for Incur: The phrase "he sustained an injury" can lead to ambiguity; clearer wording is beneficial.

Talented for Gifted: Here, "gifted" is preferred as "talent" lacks an appropriate verb form.

Tantamount for Equivalent: For simplicity, "equal" should be used instead of "tantamount."

Tasty for Tasteful: To convey aesthetic appreciation, "tasteful" is more appropriate than "tasty."

Tear Down for Pull Down: Use "pull down" for accuracy in describing demolition.



The: Be cautious with the overuse of "the," especially when discussing diseases or general terms.

The Following: This phrase must reference specific nouns to avoid vagueness.

The Same: Clarifying statements with appropriate pronouns can enhance understanding.

Then as an Adjective: Utilize clear time references to avoid ambiguity with "then."

Those Kind for That Kind: "Those kind of things" should be revised for grammatical correctness.

Though for If: To maintain clarity, use "if" instead of "though" in conditional statements.

Thrifty for Thriving: Recognizing the distinction helps clarify intentions; thrift relates to saving, while thriving signifies flourishing.

Through for Done: In concluding statements, "done" is preferable to "through."

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To: Ensure each infinitive remains intact for grammatical accuracy.

Total: Instead of saying "the figures totaled," use "the total of the figures was..."

Transaction for Action: In straightforward contexts, replace "transaction" with "action" for clarity.

Transpire for Occur: "Transpire" suggests revelation rather than mere occurrence; prefer "occur."

Trifling for Trivial: Both convey similar meanings; selecting one improves clarity.

Trust for Wealthy Corporation: Outdated terminology like "trust" can obscure meaning; opt for contemporary language.

Try an Experiment: Instead of "try," use "make" to communicate experimentation more effectively.

Try and for Try to: Simplification in phrasing leads to clearer communication.



Ugly for Ill-natured: Only dispositions can be described as ugly, not individuals.

Under-handed: Avoid the obscure "under-handed" in favor of "underhand" for appropriate usage.

Unique: Something can only be unique or not; degrees do not exist in this context.

United States as a Singular Noun: "The United States are" is correct due to plurality, requiring careful grammatical consideration.

Unkempt for Disordered: Use "unkempt" primarily for hair, and other terms for general disorganized states.

Use for Treat: Phrasing like "the inmates were badly used" requires greater clarity; specificity is important.

Utter for Absolute: "Utter" should describe negative situations; it does not convey the same meaning in positive contexts.

Various for Several: "Various" is best suited to emphasize diversity, ensuring meaning is upheld.



Ventilate for Express Opt for "express" or "disclose" to communicate thoughts clearly.

Verbal for Oral: Use "oral" explicitly for spoken communication to avoid ambiguity with written forms.

Vest for Waistcoat Traditional terms promote clarity and understanding.

Vicinity for Vicinage: Prefer "vicinage" or "nearby" for clearer alternatives.

View of: "With a view to" clarifies intent more effectively in communication.

Vulgar for Immodest The term "vulgar" encompasses broader meanings; use it carefully to avoid misinterpretation.

Way for Away: Phrasing like "way out at sea" should be revised for standard language correctness.

Wed for Wedded: Instead of "wed," use the more conventional "married."

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Well: Overuse of "well" dilutes its effectiveness in conversation.

Wet for Wetted: Use the precise term "wetted" when appropriate to maintain accuracy.

Where for When: Clarity is crucial; replace "where" with "when" as it fits the context.

Which for That: Use "that" in defining clauses to ensure clarity in writing.

Whip for Chastise: Reserve "whip" for physical contexts to maintain focused meaning.

Whiskers for Beard: The term "whiskers" specifically refers to facial hair on the cheeks, not the entire beard.

Who for Whom: Correct usage of "who" and "whom" is essential for maintaining accuracy in grammar.

Widow Woman: Simply refer to someone as a "widow" to enhance clarity.

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Will and Shall: Understanding their distinct grammatical uses is paramount for clarity.

Win out: This colloquial expression is best avoided for more straightforward language.

Without for Unless: Clearing up phrases can prevent confusion; use "unless" for conditional statements.

Witness for See: Differentiate between mere observation and recounting an event for clearer communication.

Would-be: The unnecessary phrase "would-be" should be eschewed for simplicity and clarity in language.

Overall, this chapter emphasizes the importance of precise language to enhance understanding and reduce the potential for miscommunication. By implementing these suggestions, writers can improve clarity and maintain the integrity of their messages.

