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JUST WRITE RIGHT

(Part – 1)

(Sprinkled with Humour)

A handy teaser-booklet, of use to students, teachers, copywriters,
authors and English-enthusiasts

Based on
English, the Funny Language
Humorous Teaching-experiences
Humour in Accounts
And
Fun with Words

Conducted, in variation, depending on the maturity level of the
audience, for over 1,00,000 students, of class three and above, from
290 schools and more than 20 colleges and institutions of higher
learning, in 14 years.

Just for memory

This book authored in August, 2019

Just for information

I have conducted four programmes:

Humorous Teaching-experiences

Fun with Words

English, the Funny Language

Humour in Accounts

in variations, depending on the maturity level of the audience, for more than 1,00,000 students, of class 3 and above, from 290 schools and over 20 colleges and institutions of higher learning, in 14 years.

Incidentally, I am also a freelance content-writer and have written content for majors like Amazon, Walmart, ABB, Volvo, Crompton Greaves, Autodesk, Vijaya Bank, Karnataka Tourism, Siemens, etc. and for more than 100 real-estate-developers.

And, I have to my credit, stories, cartoons, comic strips, etc. published in newspapers and magazines in English, Kannada and Urdu.

I also have to my credit, a published book on English grammar. I have ghost-written a novel (published) for an aspiring author.

Based on the above experiences, I could write this book.

Just for reflection

Knowledge says, "I know so much."

Wisdom says, "I know only so much."

Ego says, "What is there for me to learn from others?"

Humility says, "Let us all learn from one another."

Just a request

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accountshariprakash@yahoo.com

Depending on the feedback, *Just Write Right Part – 2* (a bigger volume) will be compiled.

(Regret, I am not computer-savvy. Kindly excuse errors in formatting)

Just for fun

Place '*only*' anywhere in the following sentence.

He told his friend that she has started eating apples.

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.....before you proceed
02. Evolution of a language
03. Hyphenation errors
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Just for thought

Never make fun of people who speak broken English. It means they know another language.

- H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Just a minute.....

.....before you proceed

Just Write Right (Part – 1) is not an exhaustive list of all probable errors that might creep in, in English-writing. It is an effort to list out, with explanations, wherever needed, the common, noticeable mistakes that are being committed in English.

What, according to this book, is argued as an error might be treated otherwise in the future. And, what according to this book, is treated as correct might be, in future, dismissed as wrong. It is all a part of evolution of a language. Evolution of a language involves changes in meanings, spellings and positioning of words (in a sentence). Evolution, for the purposes of this discussion, could be chronological (from one period of time to another period of time) or geographical (from one place to another place).

And then, we have certain words, which are ‘unenglish’ and not found in the dictionary. But still, such words are commonly used. For example, many use the word ‘annexure’ in place of ‘enclosure’. There is no word as ‘annexure’.

Till recently, people used ‘prepone’ to suggest ‘advancement’ of an event, ie., rescheduling an event to an earlier date. There used to be no such word as ‘prepone’. But, recently, the Oxford dictionary accepted ‘prepone’ as a word thereby legitimising its usage. Similarly, ‘annexure’, too, might gain recognition in the future.

Just think it over

Why do we have noses that run, and feet that smell?

- Author unknown

Keeping this in mind, while compiling this work, a conscious decision has been taken to allow such words to appear in this book, so that the readers do feel comfortable while reading the same.

Any language, for that matter, is not a completely-evolved language, be it in terms of full vocabulary, finality of spellings and punctuation, positioning of words, and so on.

For example, with the advancement in technology, a word like 'mobile' has acquired an additional meaning 'telephone'. 'Walkman', a hearing instrument worn over the ears while the wearer is on the move, is totally a new word, thanks to technology.

Even spellings of certain words have changed over the years. For example, 'arguement' has become 'argument'. The 'e' has been dropped.

When it comes to positioning of words, the best example is a 'cheque'. Instead of saying 'pay one thousand rupees', it is written as 'pay rupees one thousand'. Before banking system came into existence, the former form of sentence used to be the norm.

That does not mean that the use of a language be given an unbridled freedom. This may lead to defacement, disfiguring and death of a language, with too many people contributing too many (at times, contradictory) ideas.

***Just put on your thinking-cap
(Honestly, no googling)***

List out all the 13 three-letter body-parts (no bad words).

Example, *eye* (12 more to go)

Just like a government does not stop making, say, traffic laws because accidents anyway do take place, we, too, should not allow the murder of a language by indiscriminately introducing newer words, altering the spellings of existing ones, and repositioning words in a sentence. Let us do our best to use a language within a set of guidelines.

In spite of this, if a few changes take place, so be it. At least, there won't be a total transformation of a language (a hilarious example can be found in the section 'English to German' in a latter part of this book).

Reader participation in the form of discussions (by email) would help us carry out corrections, if any, in our future editions, which could also become progressively voluminous.

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Just be smart

Why pay a dollar for a bookmark? Use the dollar as a bookmark.

- Fred Stole

EVOLUTION OF A LANGUAGE

The earliest man probably lived like animals, showing only a few expressions like anger, fear, affection, etc. As long as his bodily urges like hunger, thirst, etc. were met, he, like animals, did not crave for anything else. So, his need to communicate with others of his kind was satisfied by mere growling, screaming and so on.

With the introduction of agriculture, mining, farming, and domestication of animals, man became more and more refined in his behaviour. Animal-like behaviour progressively gave way to gestures. These gestures themselves became more and more dignified.

Single-word communication slowly caught-up with the evolution. As written communication, through pictorials, lines, sketches, etc., developed, unstructured group of words made way for patterned forms of sentences.

With the establishment of civilizations, grammar got introduced into the language. Grammar itself grew into a separate 'subject'. Now, we have courses and books on grammar. Certain percentage of marks, in examinations, is set aside for questions on grammar alone.

So, it may be understood that just communicating is not enough. Communicating in grammatically-correct formats is equally important.

Just not kidding

Be a slave to your studies. Soon, you will become its master.

- Author unknown

HYPHENATION ERRORS

Consider this sentence.

The employer wanted a good and an honest man to work for him.

From the above sentence, we understand that the man should be good and honest, the two characteristics the employer is looking for.

Now, read this sentence.

The employer wanted an English speaking man to work for him.

Here, the sentence, if read in a mischievous way, appears to mean that the man should be English (and not, probably, Indian, Japanese, etc.) and should be of ‘speaking’ and not of ‘dumb’ type. Or, to make it look funny in another way, we can interpret the sentence as follows. The employer wanted an English (not a Japanese, Indian, etc.), who speaks a language called ‘man’, to work for him.

Just trying to be funny

“What is your father’s name?”

“Laughing.”

“What is your mother’s name?”

“Smiling.”

“Are you kidding?”

“No. Kidding is my brother. I am Joking.”

- Author unknown

Such misinterpretation, even though deliberate, can be avoided by joining ‘English’ and ‘speaking’ with a hyphen.

The employer wanted an English-speaking man to work for him.

Lack of hyphenation is one of the commonest errors writers commit.

Hyphenation, like some other punctuation-marks, does not have any rigid rules governing its use. The first and the most important rule regarding punctuation (including hyphenation) is ‘sense’ and not ‘ritual’. As long as it makes sense to punctuate, go ahead and punctuate. If ritualistic practice demands punctuation but there appears to be no sense in it, just don’t punctuate.

Some more examples are discussed before certain guidelines regarding hyphenation are listed out.

An advertisement, in a leading daily, asked the readers:
Is your hospital pollution free?

Of course, the advertisement did not mean to ask the reader whether they had to pay for or got free of cost, the hospital pollution (ie., pollution from the hospital).

The advertisement should have been:

***Is your hospital pollution-free?
(Is your hospital free of pollution?)***

Just riddling

How does Moses make tea?
Hebrews it.

A vendor selling sweet potatoes cannot be called as ‘a sweet potato seller’ without proper hyphenation. Mischievous interpretation or a wrong pause can make it ‘*a sweet potato-seller*’ (ie., a potato seller who is cute).

The correct format is ‘*a sweet-potato seller*’ meaning a seller of sweet potatoes. Normal practice does not require ‘sweet potatoes’ to be hyphenated. But, in this case, it makes sense to hyphenate the same.

There was this headline in another leading newspaper.

No more drinking water supply problems.

Without hyphenation, we can interpret it as

From now on, no one shall drink ‘water supply problems’, but can drink something else like juice, milk, etc.

It would have been appropriate to write the above sentence as

No more drinking-water-supply problems.

In the above examples, we saw how lack of hyphenation can twist the meaning of a sentence depending on how we read the same. Sometimes, it so happens that hyphenation, when wrongly applied, can also give out a meaning different from what the writer intends.

Once a teacher scolded a student who was more interested in disco rather than in his studies, “Forget your disco. It does not fetch you

Just, let this not happen to you

Some writers write to forget. Some forget to write.

- Mokokoma Mokhonoana

any marks in the exams. Remember our great scientists, inventors, etc. They spent much of their time in libraries, laboratories, in fields, deserts, icy regions and the like. They came up with inventions, innovations and discoveries. It enriched their knowledge. Why don't you, too, do the same? Do you understand?"

The student nodded his head, "Yes, ma'am."

But the teacher was not convinced. She asked him to write, on the board, whatever she said and went away. When she came and saw what was written on the board, she was shocked. Because of wrong hyphenation (inserting hyphen at the wrong place), the meaning of the sentence the student wrote was exactly opposite of what the teacher wanted to convey.

The student, for want of space on the board that was already cluttered with a lot of information, had written the sentence that had extended to the second line. One word that was the last one in the first line could not be accommodated completely. It had to be split with the use of a hyphen. But, the student had split the word wrongly as follows:

***The teacher said that disco
-very often enriches knowledge.***

In another instance, a chief guest, who was ready to start the class,

Just makes sense

Punctuation marks are like road-signs; without them, we just may get lost.

- Nanette L. Avery

was waiting in the principal's chamber. The principal asked the class leader to announce about the chief guest's class and to ask the students to keep silent. Leader's efforts to communicate the principal's instructions failed as the students were busy talking, running around here and there and playing in the class. So, the leader thought of an idea. He wrote, on the board, what the principal said. Students' attention was drawn to the board. They read the instruction and went to their respective seats and sat down quietly.

When the chief guest, along with the principal, walked into the class and read what was written on the board, he almost fainted. Know why?

The leader, like in our previous example, had to split a word for want of space. And, he had split the word wrongly by using a hyphen. He had written

Please be quiet.
The chief guest is ready to beg
-in the class.

Readers are requested to send such humorous errors related to hyphenation (or the lack of it). Please quote the source, if possible,. If feasible, a book of such sentences shall be compiled.

Now, let us come to the general guidelines about using or avoiding wrong usage of hyphens.

Just give it a try

If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it.

— Toni Morrison

Normally, all two-word combinations, associated with human body, are single words, and not hyphenated words or two *separate* words.

Examples are *eyelid, footwear, headache, toothpaste*, etc.

Words that jointly describe another word are hyphenated. Examples are *city-based author, officer-related candidate, trouble-free service*, and so on.

Words like '*short circuit*' are not hyphenated when used as a noun, but are, when used as a verb.

Some newspapers hyphenate adverb-verb combinations, while others don't. For example, '*recently established shop*' is also written as '*recently-established shop*'. The second option is more appropriate.

Readers are requested to send similar errors, regarding hyphenation, for the proposed compilation.

Just inspiring

I cannot live without books

— Thomas Jefferson

SYNTAX ERRORS

Syntax is the arrangement of words to make well-structured sentences to tell what is meant to be told. Wrong positioning of words in a sentence could lead to, often, hilarious meanings.

This is one error that can give different meanings by just shuffling of words. This is another of the commonest errors many reporters, copywriters, authors, etc. make. Go through brochures, newsletters, newspapers and magazines. You will come cross plenty of syntax errors.

In one of the leading dailies, a photo was published. The photo showed government employees agitating in front of the General Post Office (GPO) building. According to the report, they were demanding that the bonus, they were entitled to, be paid in cash and in no other form like shares, cheques, bonds, etc.

The caption of the photo read:

Government employees agitating that they be paid bonus in cash in front of the GPO building.

Did the government employees want their bonus (in cash) to be paid in front of the GPO building, and not in their offices? Very funny!

The caption should have been

Government employees, agitating in front of the GPO building, demanding that they be paid bonus in cash.

Just beautiful

If language is a flower, then without grammar, it will not smell.

- Purushottam Muley

Use of words in proper positions and use of commas in relevant places make sentences look sensible.

Savour some more funny syntax-errors.

How about a summer camp on consumer rights for children?

It should have been

How about a summer camp for children, on consumer rights?

Or

How about a summer camp, on consumer rights, for children?

Rare Indian ant-eater found in garden killed by villagers.

Was garden killed by villagers?

An advertisement appearing in a newspaper:

Wanted a chair by a lady with carved legs.

Carved legs, chair's or lady's?

Some more of syntax errors. Find out for yourself, the hilarity of the sentences.

Just important

Each letter of the alphabet is a steadfast loyal soldier in a great army of words, sentences, paragraphs, and stories. One letter falls, and the entire language falters.

- Vera Nazarian

You can see the crocodile basking in the sun on the mud bank eight- feet long.

A monument was erected by the villagers in memory of the constable who was killed by some criminals as a token of their affection.

These poems were written by a young author who died a few years ago for his own amusement.

He advertised for a nurse to look after his baby not older than 30 years.

The government has decided to build a swimming pool exclusively for children 90 feet long and 30 feet wide.

Come on readers! Send us similar syntax-errors for the proposed compilation.

Just taste this

The roots of education are bitter, but the fruits are sweet.

- Aristotle

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