FOIA Case: 79054A
18 September 2017

JOHN GREENEWALD
27305 W LIVE OAK RD
SUITE 1203
CASTAIC, CA 91384

Dear Mr. Greenewald:

This responds to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, of
7 September 2014 for "a copy of records, electronic or otherwise, pertaining
to: all Gabby the Grammar Geek columns published internally by the NSA
during the calendar year 2013." As provided in our previous responses, your
request has been assigned Case Number 79054. Since processing fees were
minimal, no fees were assessed. A copy of your request is enclosed. Your
request has been processed under the FOIA and the documents you requested
are enclosed (7 documents, 19 pages). Certain information, however, has been
deleted from the enclosures.

This Agency is authorized by various statutes to protect certain
information concerning its activities. We have determined that such
information exists in this document. Accordingly, those portions are exempt
from disclosure pursuant to the third exemption of the FOIA, which provides
for the withholding of information specifically protected from disclosure by
statute. The specific statute applicable in this case is Section 6, Public Law
86-36 (50 U.S. Code 3605).

Since these deletions may be construed as a partial denial of your
request, you are hereby advised of this Agency's appeal procedures.

You may appeal this decision. If you decide to appeal, you should do so
in the manner outlined below.

- The appeal must be sent via U.S. postal mail, fax, or electronic delivery
  (e-mail) and addressed to:

  NSA/CSS FOIA/PA Appeal Authority (P132)
  National Security Agency
  9800 Savage Road STE 6932

Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-6932

The facsimile number is (443)479-3612.
The appropriate email address to submit an appeal is FOIARSC@nsa.gov.

- Request must be postmarked or delivered electronically no later than 90 calendar days from the date of this letter. Decisions appealed after 90 days will not be addressed.
- Please include the case number provided above.
- Please describe with sufficient detail why you believe the denial was unwarranted.

NSA will endeavor to respond within 20 working days of receiving your appeal, absent any unusual circumstances.

You may also contact our FOIA Public Liaison at foialo@nsa.gov for any further assistance and to discuss any aspect of your request. Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows:

Office of Government Information Services
National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Rd - OGIS
College Park, MD 20740
ogis@nara.gov
(877)684-6448
(202)741-5770
Fax (202)741-5769

Enclosed is the material you requested. If you need further assistance or would like to discuss any aspect of your request, please do not hesitate to contact me at foialo@nsa.gov or you may call (301)688-6527.

Sincerely,

Paul N
for

JOHN R. CHAPMAN
Chief, FOIA/PA Office
FOIA Public Liaison Officer

Encl(s):
a/s

Name: John   Greenewald

Email: john@greenewald.com

Company: The Black Vault

Postal Address: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Postal 2nd Line: None

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Postal State-prov: ▮▮▮▮▮▮

Zip Code: ▮▮▮

Country: United States of America

Home Phone: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Work Phone: ▮▮▮▮▮▮

Records Requested: To whom it may concern,

This is a non-commercial request made under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 5 U.S.C. S 552. My FOIA requester status as a "representative of the news media" however due to your agency's denial of this status, I hereby submit this request as an "All other" requester.

I prefer electronic delivery of the requested material either via email to john@greenewald.com or via CD-ROM or DVD via postal mail. Please contact me should this FOIA request should incur a charge.

I respectfully request a copy of records, electronic or otherwise, pertaining to: all Gabby the Grammar Geek columns published internally by the NSA during the calendar year 2013.

Thank you so much for your time, and I am very much looking forward to your response.

Sincerely,

John Greenewald, Jr.

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(U) Meet the New Grammar Geek, and "Whose" Right?

FROM: (U//~~FOUO~~) [redacted]
aka "Gabby" the Grammar Geek
Run Date: 06/13/2013

(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

(b) (3)-P.L. 86-36

(U//~~FOUO~~) A note from the editor: After [redacted] aka "Gigi," **retired from NSA**, we found an ideal candidate to take over the Grammar Geek column right under our noses! Assistant SID*today* editor [redacted] will fill the spot. [redacted] describes her credentials this way:

(U//~~FOUO~~) *I came to NSA 30 years ago with a communications degree and a lot of curiosity. I've worked in many different parts of the Agency and done all kinds of work, including writing, editing, liaison work, tech support, project management, and even a little management. Some of my favorite jobs were the ones that included writing--I've worked on SIDtoday, NSADaily, Tech Trend Notes (in Research, now known as The Next Wave), and an IT newsletter. I don't claim to know all the answers, but I promise to find them for you!*

(U) Without further ado, here is [redacted] first column. As is customary with write-in columns, she will henceforth use a pen name: Gabby. The below text is unclassified in its entirety.

Dear Grammar Geek,

There are some in my office who argue that "who's" should be used instead of "whose" when dealing with possession. I have always been under the impression that "who's" is a contraction for "who is" and "whose" dealt only with possession. So who's correct?

Sincerely,
Whomever

To whom it may concern,

Ah, an easy one! In many cases, when responding to a question about grammar, the answer begins with "It depends," because there are often exceptions or complicated variations. In this case, though, there's no variation. You are correct.

I'm sure you believe me, but since your officemates will want an explanation, here it is:

Whose is a possessive word meaning "of whom" or "of which." It's used both in questions and statements. For example:

- Whose sandwich is in the refrigerator?
- Whose car is being towed?
- It was an event whose significance was not appreciated until many years later.
- She was a person whose voice carried throughout the office, even when she whispered.

Who's, on the other hand, is a contraction of **who is** or **who has**.

- Who's been taking my sandwiches from the refrigerator?
- Who's leaving early today?
- I have a friend who's never traveled west of Maryland.

The distinction is very much like the difference between **its** and **it's**. **Its** is possessive; **it's** is a contraction for **it is** or **it has**.

- It's my sandwich, so please don't eat it.

Doc ID: 6590914

- Every country has its traditions.

Getting back to "whose," the rules are simple, but to make them even simpler, just ask yourself:

Can I substitute **who is** or **who has**?

Yes... use **who's**
No... use **whose**

(U) Editor's comment: Looking for an old article? Here's a **link to Gigi's (wrapped up) column**. Do YOU have a new question for Gabby--some grammatical dilemma that needs to be resolved? Send in your questions for consideration via the "comments/suggestions about this article" function below right.

(U) The Grammar Geek: Trying Not to Get Hysterical over "Historical," and R-E-S-P-E-C-T

FROM: Gabby, the Grammar Geek

Run Date: 07/10/2013

(U) Editor's note: The below column is unclassified in its entirety.

Dear Grammar Geek,

*Why do some people write (and speak) **"an** historical..." instead of "**a** historical..."? Isn't the latter correct? The first letter in "historical" isn't silent, is it?*

Signed, Gimmee an "H"

My friend, I want you to know that your question nearly drove me out of my mind! Like you, I often wondered about that very question, and a few years ago I read something that explained why you sometimes see "an historical"--but when I tried to find that explanation to share with you, I had very little luck. Fortunately, I did find a little bit of information, which I hope will clear up the confusion for all of us.

First, here's the general rule, as stated everywhere: Use **a** before consonant sounds, and use **an** before vowel sounds. It doesn't matter if it's actually a vowel or a consonant at the beginning of the word; the **sound** is what matters. These examples should leave no doubt:
An apple
A peach
A happy camper
An honorable man
A unique situation
An x-ray

That was pretty obvious, right? Now it gets a little weird. If you like, just stop reading now and you'll be just fine. But if you really want to know more, here we go.

The practice is historical, and it's waning. It comes down to which syllable of the word is stressed. Using **an** was a common variant before words beginning with **h** when the first syllable was unstressed. Based on that rule, both **a historical** and **an historical** were considered perfectly acceptable. However, **an history** would be incorrect; only **a history** was allowed, since it is stressed on the first syllable. Try saying the words aloud; you'll find that you don't pronounce (aspirate) the **h** quite as fully when the first syllable isn't stressed. (But nowadays, that distinction is very slight.)

As for what's acceptable right now, for the most part, we use **a** before words that begin with the **h** sound, but *historical, hysterical,* sometimes *hotel, heroic and horrific,* and maybe a few other words are accepted with **an** before them. Most of the sources I used, including the Oxford English Dictionary, acknowledge and accept **an** with a few of these words, but they all prefer the use of **a.**

Gabby

Dear Gabby,

Is putting "v/r" in the signature line really very respectable?

v/r, Kurt E. Yus

Dear Kurt,

I suspect your question may be tongue-in-cheek, but I'd like to respond anyway. The term (which is actually *very respectfully*, not *very respectably*) was unfamiliar to me as a way of signing off a letter, memo, or email message until I'd worked here for a while, so it sounded strange to me, too. I think it originated in the military, but my sources are skimpy. To answer your question, though, I ask that you follow me through my little thread of logic:

If you send me an email message, unless you prove otherwise, I'll give you the benefit of the doubt: as far as I know, you are both respectful and respectable. If I dig a little more deeply, though, will I find that when you signed off with "sincerely" you weren't really sincere about wanting to help me, or when you thanked me at the end of another message, you weren't actually all that thankful for my advice? I shudder to think what you were really feeling when you signed off with "cordially"--yikes!

Thanks (and I mean that sincerely!) for sticking with me this far. I have no idea if your correspondent is respectable, respectful, or sincere, but I think "v/r" is an acceptable way to close a message.

~~Love,~~

~~Hugs,~~

~~Cordially,~~

Grammatically yours,

Gabby

*(U//~~FOUO~~) SIDtoday is a forum for open communications. The views expressed in articles are those of the person(s) or organization listed in the **byline**; they are not necessarily the official, corporate stance of the SIGINT Directorate (messages from SID leadership excluded).*

(U) The Grammar Geek: The Effect of Affecting, and Like Wow!

FROM: Gabby, the Grammar Geek

Run Date: 08/09/2013

(U) Editor's note: The below column is unclassified in its entirety.

Dear Grammar Geek,

Please explain the difference between "effect" and "affect." -- Which is which?

Dear Gabby,

I'm often not sure if I should use "affect" or "effect." Will you please explain their proper usage?

-- Which one when?

Dear Whiches,

The difference between the two words is very simple...*most* of the time. Unfortunately, there are exceptions.

For the most common uses of the words, **affect** is the verb, and **effect** is the noun. To *affect* something is to influence it, and an *effect* is a result--it happens due to a cause.

His attitude in class *affected* his grade.

The *effect* of the explosion was disastrous.

For these two definitions, these tips may help you to remember which to use:

A is for **a**ction word (verb) - **A** for **affect**.

E is for **e**nd result - **E** for **effect**.

*The book **affected** my outlook on life. The **effect** of reading the book was a new outlook on life.*

The above explanation is all you really need for the most common uses of the two words. However, I'd be remiss if I neglected to tell you about the less common meanings of *effect* and *affect*. But remember, for the two words that people usually confuse, you can use the above guide!

Effect as a verb means to bring about, to accomplish. "The new machinery *effected* a decided improvement in the product." People probably get confused about this one, because the meaning is similar to affect, but they are not the same. To say that you effected change means that you brought about change; to say that you affected change means that you influenced it, not necessarily accomplishing the change.

The other meaning of **affect** is even less commonly used. In this sense, it's still a verb, but it means *to put on a false show of*--for example, you may *affect* surprise when someone gives you a gift that you

knew they would be giving you. You can also *affect* an accent. Speaking in an artificial way is referred to as *affected* speech, or *affectation*. (Imagine the voice that would go with: "DAHling, we absolutely MUST have you on our yacht before we leave for Europe.")

There are even some other meanings, but they're very obscure, so there's no need to get into them now.

Dear Grammar Geek,

Am I, like, the only person who is, like, so annoyed at the overuse of the word "like"? I mean, like, it seems that, like, the younger generation use this word in, like, every sentence they say. Many adults have, like, taken to using the word in the same way.

Annoying isn't it?? Another example is instead of saying "I told David it was time to go and he said he needed a few more minutes", it will come out as this: "I was like 'David, we need to go.' and he was like 'I need just a few more minutes'."

When did it become an acceptable form of communicating with one another? Is this really the way "like" is meant to be used?

-- Not-Liking-Like

Dear Like-Minded Soul,

Believe me when I say that I agree with you--it is annoying!--but you may come to regret asking this question! I took your question literally, and did a little research to try to find out exactly when *like* came into being as a *discourse particle, filler, hedge,* and *speech disfluency*. (These are actual terms that etymologists use for the many non-traditional uses of the word *like*. It was also referred to as a *parasite* by one blogger, Anatoly Liberman, *aka the Oxford Etymologist*.)

Not being a member of the younger generation to whom you refer, but having been a member of a previous younger generation, I can recall a similar use of *like* way, way back when I was young. This fact has been documented in pop culture, from Scooby Doo's pal, **Shaggy**, to Frank Zappa's daughter, Moon Unit (everyone's favorite **Valley Girl**). In fact, there was even a tv show in the 1950s called **The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis**, with a character named **Maynard G. Krebs**, a beatnik who never let a sentence go by without using the word *like*. And get a load of this: the same use of *like* can even be found in Robert Louis Stevenson's novel, *Kidnapped*, which was first published in 1886. ("'What's, like, wrong with him?' said she at last.")

Slang words and phrases come and go more rapidly than you can say, "far out and funky," but there's something about this one word that keeps it on the "In" list--at least as it's used in your first example. (I think the second example you gave may be a bit newer, but related.)

Liberman traced a possible origin of *like* to 1741. I won't go into all of his musings, but he eventually proposes that this use of *like* has persisted because it belongs to a branch of linguistics called pragmatics, which deals with the ways people organize their speech. It seems to function as "a marker of uncertainty and resembles 'as it were,' a common parasite in British English. People tend to safeguard themselves from a possible rebuttal and do it instinctively." He adds that successful change passes through three stages: introduction, acceptance, and spread, which could account for the increase in usage in recent years, as well as the other variations such as "I was like, 'let's go,' and he was like, 'OK!'"

As for a conclusion, Liberman didn't have one! I followed him through time and space, and all he offered me at the end was, "I am far from certain that I managed to account for the triumph of the parenthetical like and offered my ideas only to invite discussion." Well, gee, thanks, Anatoly.

I will admit, though, that he did supply food for thought, and a few of the readers' comments on his article were helpful. One commenter, Rusty, didn't place blame on social media (as many have)--he instead insisted, "With the great increase in written but still casual communication via social media, texting, blogging, and so forth, 'like' can be crucial as a tone marker. Throw in a well-placed 'like' and you can go from sounding like a pompous know-it-all to just someone talking."

I don't think Rusty's assertion covers all of your concerns either, but I think that all of this discussion has helped to ease my mind. *Like*--in its many forms and perversions--probably is here to stay, but more importantly, it doesn't mean the demise of the English language.

Gabby

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(U) The Grammar Geek: Capital Concerns, and Taking Umbrage with Homage

FROM: Gabby, the Grammar Geek

Run Date: 09/10/2013

(U) Editor's note: The below column is unclassified in its entirety.

Dear Grammar Geek,

I've tried off and on for months to find some guidance on which words don't get capitalized in the title of something. For example: the words the, and, an, on *don't get capitalized (unless they're the first word in the title). There must be at least half a dozen incidents a week where I need to know this type of info.*

Please help. Thanks!

-- Bemused Becky

Dear Becky (with a capital B),

This is one of the many grammar rules that are clear and simple, but get a little fuzzy in more complex situations.

First, the basic rules:

- Capitalize all important words in a title.
- Always capitalize the first and last words.

A few examples:

A Streetcar Named Desire
How to Build a Bookshelf
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
Of Time and the River

Just knowing these two basic rules will get you pretty far. If you remember nothing else, just remember them!

Next, a clarification:

The first rule says to capitalize all *important* words? What are the *unimportant* words?

Do not capitalize:

- Articles -- a, an, the
- Coordinating conjunctions -- and, but, or, nor, so
- Prepositions - at, by, for, in, of, on, to* (*Exception: Prepositions of four or more letters -- from, with, about, around, within, etc. -- are often capitalized.*)

And finally, some finer details:

- The elements of hyphenated compounds in titles are usually capitalized, but articles, coordinating conjunctions, and prepositions are lowercased.

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince
Knock-offs and Ready-to-Wear: Frugal Fashion

- The first word following a colon in a title is capitalized.

Jane Austen: A Literary Life

* Since writing this article, I've learned that there are differences of opinion on the capitalization of the word **to**. One reader wrote to tell me the following:

- As the first element of an infinitive, the word **to** IS capitalized.
- As a preposition, the word **to** IS NOT capitalized.

Another wrote in response to the above, saying that capitalizing **to** as part of an infinitive is no longer required, according to the *SIGINT Style and Usage Manual*. My grammar guidance is not only for SIGINT reporting, and I've seen nothing about making this distinction in any other (non-SIGINT) guidance, so I'm keeping it here in the article, but only as a footnote.

Dear Gabby,

Why do I hear people nowadays saying "oh-mazh" on the radio instead of "hom-age"? Are they just trying to be posh, or is that really the correct pronunciation?

-- Joe Ordinaire

Dear Joe,

"Posh" sounds like a diplomatic choice of words. In any dictionary you check, the two equally accepted pronunciations for the word *homage* are *HOM-ij* and *OM-ij*. It appears that *HOM-ij* has been given a slight preference in some cases in American speech in the past, but *OM-ij* seems to be gathering steam. Everywhere I checked, *oh-MAZH* (that is, rhyming with "collage") is either not mentioned at all, or cited as an erroneous pronunciation - or worse, an affectation, made by a speaker who is trying to sound sophisticated - and it's usually blamed on the entertainment industry. It seems to come from it looking like a French word, which it really isn't. (It comes from Middle English, and then from Old French, which wasn't even pronounced the same as modern French.)

Of course, rules and standards of the English language change over time, but for the foreseeable future, no self-respecting speaker, writer, or intelligent person should be pronouncing the word *homage* as "oh-MAZH."

Gabby

PS - A follow-up from Gabby: Someone wrote today to say that the people who say "oh-MAZH" are actually saying the word *hommage*, which is a different word from *homage* and therefore not an affectation. I think I can meet him halfway on this point. When I did my research, no dictionaries acknowledged *hommage* as an English word. Today I found one that called it an "English term derived from French." So perhaps *hommage* is on its way into English, and I'll have to accept it. To me, it still sounds like an affectation, but that's just me right now. Ask me again in a few years; maybe we can create a *collage* or a *montage* as an *hommage* to English! (Please don't send a *barrage* of email for my lame attempt at **badinage**!)

(U) The Grammar Geek: Bullet Dots and NOT/NOTs

FROM: Gabby, the Grammar Geek

Run Date: 10/10/2013

(U) Editor's note: The below column is unclassified in its entirety, up to the footnotes.

Dear Grammar Geek,

I have had numerous debates about bullet lists, particularly when used in PowerPoint presentations. It was my understanding from my schooling that bullet phrases should not end with a period, ever. However, others have argued that they should exist, particularly if the bullet item is a complete sentence. What is the correct thing to do with regard to the period?

-- Dot Dash

Dear Dot,

I think you're being a little hard on yourself and others. The most important thing for you to strive for in list-making is consistency. Your list can consist of words, phrases, or sentences, but the format should be the same for each bullet. Periods are needed at the end only if the items are full sentences.

If the list in question is in a PowerPoint presentation, you don't want the slides to be too wordy. Bullets should be *as short as possible*, and *the font should be large enough for everyone in the room to see*. In most cases, full sentences (with periods) are not needed. However, there are times when a sentence is the smartest choice - in which case, every bullet should contain a (short) sentence.*

Since your main interest in asking this question is regarding presentations, I'd like to share a briefing from the first **KINETICS** conference, which was held this past April.** SID*today*'s own **5-Minute Expert, Dave**, gave an excellent talk that day, called **"Dodging the Bullet: Powerful Presentations."** Fortunately, our esteemed editor, [░░░░░░░░░░░░], was feeling benevolent and let both of us out of the cramped SID*today* Columnists' Bullpen (which we share with **Jake** and **Zelda**), so that I could hear Dave speak, and he made some great points about bullets and other factors to consider when creating briefing slides.

> (b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

Dear Grammar Geek,

In recent weeks, I've seen a flurry of people using the phrase NOT/NOT to mean "not." This is NOT the English I was taught. A double negative was one of the worst mistakes I could make in front of my English teachers. Why has it become so common lately and how can anyone believe that it makes sense? If you read the sentence: This does NOT/NOT mean that such and such is happening today - it means it might be happening today. AND this is often found in high level management emails. How can they be so wrong? And how can we stop them?

Thanks Grammar Geek!

-- NOT Getting It

Dear NOT,

I understand your angst - it's truly a bizarre practice! I first noticed it a few years ago, and it confused me. I had to go through a whole conversation in my head: "Not not? Why is this sentence written this way? Are they actually using a double negative for effect, to say that the statement IS true? No, that can't be it. I think it must be for emphasis of the 'not.' Wow, that's weird."

When I first read your note, I laughed and thought, "Now, what kind of advice am I supposed to give on this topic?" I wanted to tell you not to use it ("Do NOT/NOT use it!" Argh!), but before I could do that, I had to check to find out: is there some portion of the Agency population that has to use it, for some reason that I cannot fathom?

I asked around and discovered that there are two types of people here at the Agency:

- **Those who don't see a problem with it** -- They see it as a repeat for clarification, such as writing, "There were ten (10) articles published on SID*today* this week."
- **Those who can't stand it** -- They (we) have never really gotten over that first time they read, "There will NOT/NOT be a staff meeting this week." They are appalled that anyone would do such a thing!

After asking a number of people, all I could come up with were some anecdotal observances and hypotheses on when, where, and why the practice had originated. They include:

- "I've only seen it in message traffic - typically in all caps." [NOT/NOT]
- "I think it started a few years ago with [former high-level person in SID] who always wrote it in lower case." [not/not]
- "I've only seen it in the last 12-18 months."
- "I'm pretty sure it goes back at least 10-15 years."
- "Perhaps it's from the increased military presence here..."
- "I think it came from military radio communications - e.g., 'Do not - Repeat NOT...'"
- "I don't associate it with the military, but maybe government."

I had just about given up on ever knowing the origins of NOT/NOT when I mentioned this topic to Jake, the SIGINT Philosopher (mentioned above) at the water cooler.*** He told me:

"Not/not" is a military parlance thing. It comes from the days of radio chatter. It was hard to hear things on the radio, so if you wanted to be clear that something was "NOT" the case, you said "not" twice. This, like a lot of radio terminology, was then transferred over to text systems in the early days of chat comms, when most comms operators simply typed the way that they had talked on the radio. It stuck around in e-mails - usually, when someone really wants to emphasize that you are "NOT" doing something.

At last I had some background information that made sense! Thanks, Jake!

Fortunately, no one cited ~~any rules stating that anyone *has* to use this method of emphasis, and~~ I was given some guidance from [   ]:

It should not be used in formal communications. It should be used on nothing leaving the building - nothing official, except message traffic or operational reports.

My advice: For the sake of clarity, do NOT/NOT/NOT use NOT/NOT at all!

Gabby

(b)(3) - P.L. 86-36

(U) Footnotes

* (U) I found some excellent bullet-writing tips in a business writing blog (*www.businesswritingblog.com* on the external web). Not only are these tips helpful, they're also a good example of a consistently structured list. (I've modified them a bit for brevity and relevance.) Here they are - *ten excellent tips for crisp, clear bullet points*:

1. **Emphasize the beginning** of the bullet point, as in this list, when the first few words capture the main idea. That way, readers can skim easily. Use bold type, italics, or underlining for emphasis.

2. **Make bullet points consistent** in structure. For example, make all of them sentences or fragments or questions. However, if you have two sets of bullet points in a document, you don't need to make them consistent with each other - just within themselves.

3. **Punctuate bullets consistently**. Once you've decided on sentences or fragments or questions, punctuate accordingly.

4. **Avoid ending bullet points with semicolons**. Semicolons have been used that way, but the style seems old-fashioned in today's crisp documents.

5. **Avoid making bullet points so long** that they look like paragraphs. Three lines is a reasonable maximum length. For a **briefing** or presentation, keep bullets much shorter than that!

6. **Number bullet points when you have many** - more than five or so. That way your readers can easily track the bullets and refer to them.

7. **Avoid using transition words and phrases** such as "secondly" or "another point." Such linking phrases are unnecessary, and they slow down readers.

8. **Be sure bullet points are related**, especially if you have a lot of them. When you have many, you may need two sets instead of one. For example, if your bullets contain a blend of advantages and opportunities, break them into two lists, with one labeled *Advantages* and the other labeled *Opportunities*.

9. **Avoid bullet points when you want to build rapport** or deal with a sensitive issue. Bullets communicate efficiency rather than warmth.

10. **Lay out bullet points cleanly**. Avoid a variety of fonts or a mix of margins.

** (U) The second **KINETICS** conference will be held on 12 November 2013.

*** (U//~~FOUO~~) *Great Caesar's ghost!* Our editor's name isn't really [   ] it's [   ] I may as well also admit that we columnists aren't really kept in a cramped bullpen; The SID*today* *Columnists' Suite* is actually a very luxurious facility, with topiaries and chocolate fountains. ;-)

(b)(3) - P.L. 86-36

(U//~~FOUO~~) *SIDtoday is a forum for open communications. The views expressed in articles are those of the person(s) or organization listed in the* **byline***; they are not necessarily the official, corporate stance of the SIGINT Directorate (messages from SID leadership excluded).*

(U) The Grammar Geek: Apostrophes and Quotation Marks

FROM: Gabby, the Grammar Geek

Run Date: 11/12/2013

(U) Editor's note: The below column is unclassified in its entirety.

This month, in honor of Thanksgiving, I'm hoping to make a lot of people thankful--to me, that is! ●I'm going to respond to questions about the two most commonly requested topics I've had since taking over as the Grammar Geek. (I've used excerpts in some cases.)

Apostrophe Catastrophe

Dear Gabby,

-- I'm really confused about apostrophes. (Or is it apostrophe's?) I see many people using them to make words plural (e.g., CD's, warrior's). Have the rules changed? -- Curious Cora

-- I would LOVE to see an article on when to use an apostrophe "s" and when not to. Why do folks insist on doing this to their last name in Christmas cards?! [It should be] the Smiths... not the Smith's! Am I totally off-base?! -- Ann Alytical

-- Seems a trend is developing where apostrophes are used willy-nilly. (Examples: "Crab's for sale" and from a sign on I-97: "Granite Outlet's") I've even seen improper use in NSA publications! -- Mystified Mike

-- How should one write the possessive form of a capitalized acronym? Would it be correct to write CES's ability or CES' ability? -- Possessive Paul

Dear Perplexed and Perturbed People,

There are many uses of apostrophes - and many places where they don't belong - so it can be confusing. I think many people know the rules, but they get careless, which is understandable when one is writing in a hurry. I'll include a full guide in the footnotes*, but I'll address your main concerns now. (By the way, *Mystified Mike*, I was recently driving on I-97 and saw the *Granite Outlet's* sign! Eek!)

Rule #1 - DO NOT use apostrophes for making words plural. (See the guide in the footnotes for the rare exceptions to this rule.) There's no apostrophe in a plural name, unless you're signing that greeting card from "the Smiths' dog" - but then, you'd probably just sign it "Rex" to be more informal.

Rule #2 - DO use apostrophes in contractions. Examples: can't, wasn't, nat'l.

Rule #3 - DO use apostrophes in possessives. This **quick guide** should be helpful:

Where Does the Apostrophe Go? Does it Get an S?

Noun Form	Action	Examples
Singular - doesn't end in "s"	Add **'s**	The boy's dog, Mark's car, anyone's guess
Singular - ends in "s"	Add **'s**	The boss's desk, Arkansas's capital
Plural - ends in "s"	Add **'**	The bosses' desks, the girls' games, the babies' bibs
Plural - doesn't end in "s"	Add **'s**	The children's toys, the women's movement
Abbreviation or Acronym (Even when the last letter is "S")	Add **'s**	NSA's workforce, CES's ability, the IRS's reputation

See the guide in the footnotes* for more detailed help with apostrophes.

Quotation Punctuation Hesitation

Dear Gabby,

-- How about an article on placement of quotation marks, i.e., inside or outside commas, periods, question marks, exclamation points, and semi-colons? -- Inside-out Ida

-- I learned that final punctuation should be placed outside of quotation marks if not part of the quoted material. This does not seem to be the practice. Has it changed, or was I taught improperly? -- Don't Quote Me

-- I was taught that the end quote should appear after the ending period. But it is often the case that I want to include computer-related text in quotes. I want to end the sentence with a period but I don't intend for the reader to type a period on the command line. For example: On the command line, enter "ls -l filename." *--* Tech Support

Dear Quotation Questioners,

Half of the confusion with quotation marks stems from the fact that the Yanks and the Brits don't do it all the same way. (The other half of the confusion is because--well, it's confusing!)

Periods and Commas - The American Way: When a period or comma follows text enclosed in quotation marks, it is placed within the quotation marks, even if the original language quoted was not followed by a period or comma.

- *He smiled and said, "I'm happy for you."*
- *Everyone in the class had already read "The Raven."*

Periods and Commas - The British Way: The period or comma goes outside the quoted matter whenever the original text did not include the punctuation.

- *He smiled and said, "I'm happy for you." [same as U.S.]*
- *Everyone in the class had already read "The Raven". [Different from U.S.]*

Colons and Semicolons: When a colon or semicolon follows text enclosed in quotation marks, the colon or semicolon is placed outside the quotation marks.

- *They all chimed in to sing "The Star-Spangled Banner": NSA's top leaders, the attending members of the workforce, and all of the intelligence community visitors.*
- *She spoke of her "little cottage in the country"; it was more like a mansion or an estate.*

Dashes, Question Marks, and Exclamation Points: These marks are placed inside quotation marks when they punctuate the quoted matter only, but outside when they punctuate the whole sentence.

- "I can't see how --" he started to say.
- Save us from his "mercy"!
- He asked, "When did they leave?"
- When did she tell you, "We're leaving"?

Making Sense of Technical Terms: Don't enclose verbatim commands, system messages, file names, and so forth in quotation marks. In some cases a reader may be misled into thinking that the quotation marks or other punctuation are an integral part of what is to be typed. If you must use quotation marks, do not include punctuation inside the quotes. Here are some alternatives that can help to make your text clearer:

- **Highlight** the text with something other than quotation marks (*italics*, **bold**, color). However, that can still get confusing when you put punctuation next to it.

- **Rearrange** the words. Putting the phrase in the middle of a sentence, keeping it away from the

period, can help. Combine this tip with the above tip. For example:

Type the **ls -l** command.
Type **Yes** at the bottom of the form.
Type **Yes** or **No** in the box.

- Rather than making the command a part of the sentence, **set it apart**, like this:

Execute the following commands:

ls -l
grep apple *.txt
cat fruitlist.txt

- As a desperate measure, you can **"go British"** ** - i.e., write it this way:

When you are prompted, type "ls -l".

I don't recommend this option, but it's better than including punctuation with the command in the quotes.

Gabby

Footnotes

* A Detailed Guide to Using Apostrophes (includes the above chart)

1. Show possession of nouns and indefinite pronouns.

The girl's hat
The boys' fathers

Chart for Possessives

Noun Form	Action	Examples
Singular - doesn't end in "s"	Add **'s**	The boy's dog, Mark's car, anyone's guess
Singular - ends in "s"	Add **'s**	The boss's desk, Arkansas's capital
Plural - ends in "s"	Add **'**	The bosses' desks, the girls' games, the babies' bibs
Plural - doesn't end in "s"	Add **'s**	The children's toys, the women's movement
Abbreviation or Acronym (Even when the last letter is "S")	Add **'s**	NSA's workforce, CES's ability, the IRS's reputation

2. Make plurals of letters, numerals, symbols, abbreviations, and words referred to as words, without the attached meaning. (The **ONLY** case of using apostrophes to make words plural!) *Examples:*

Letters: Cross your t's.
Numerals: 8's (also acceptable without an apostrophe: 8s)
Symbols and Words: Replace all your &'s with and's.
Abbreviations: Two UFO's (also acceptable without: UFOs)

NOTE: Some sources say that you should NOT use an apostrophe to pluralize abbreviations or numerals. I tend to agree at times. My rule of thumb is: Look at it and say it to yourself. If it helps, add the apostrophe. For example, if there are 10 Salami Sandwich Seminars, referring to the "10 **SSS's**" just looks and sounds better than "10 **SSSs**." (It sounds like there's a snake in the room!) On the other hand, **UFOs** looks just fine without the apostrophe. Use your judgment.

3. Mark where a letter or letters were omitted in contractions...

...of two or more words: wasn't, they're, she'd
...of single words: ass'n, dep't, nat'l

4. Mark letters intentionally omitted in order to imitate informal speech.

Singin' in the Rain
Snap 'em up!
(Open any book by **Mark Twain** for more examples.)

Note: Sometimes words are so consistently spelled with an apostrophe that the spelling becomes an accepted variant. Examples: ma'am (from madam), **rock 'n' roll**, nor'easter.

5. Mark the omission of digits in numerals.

Class of '98
Fashion of the '60's (or '60s)

6. (In informal writing) Produce forms of verbs that are made of individually pronounced letters (when needed to avoid confusion).

OK'ed the budget
X'ing out the mistakes
NSA'er (your choice - NSAer is easy enough to read)
49er (not needed here)

** No offense to any of our UK friends or associates. Personally, I like your way better than ours - and I have been known to use your rules in my own informal writing - but don't tell anybody!

*(U//~~FOUO~~) SIDtoday is a forum for open communications. The views expressed in articles are those of the person(s) or organization listed in the **byline**; they are not necessarily the official, corporate stance of the SIGINT Directorate (messages from SID leadership excluded).*

(U) The Grammar Geek: A Whole Lot of Questions and Answers

FROM: Gabby, the Grammar Geek

Run Dates: 12/10/2013 , 12/12/2013

(b)(3) - P.L. 86-36

(U//~~FOUO~~) Reposting today because this article was originally published on a ⌐‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾‾⌐

(U) Editor's note: The below column is unclassified in its entirety.

This month, I was busy with some end-of-year work, shopping, and festivities, so I decided to answer all the easy questions! I was able to squeeze in quite a few questions--I hope you find at least a couple of them helpful!

Discrete or Discreet?

Dear Gabby,

I would like to ask you to go over the difference between "discrete" and "discreet", a pair of homophones frequently--although I am sure unintentionally--misused by SIGINT reporters. I have tried to be discreet (circumspect) and address these misuses discretely (separately), however the breadth of misuse across SIGINT reporting elements has overwhelmed me. Please help analysts understand the difference between these two words. --A Discreet Reader

Dear Discreet Reader,

Those darn homophones! (Note to anyone who is unsure: *homophones* are words that are pronounced alike but differ in spelling, meaning, and/or origin.) You did a good job of explaining the differences, so I'll just add a little bit:

Discreet describes showing reserve, prudence, or cautiousness in one's behavior or speech. *Discrete*, on the other hand, means distinct, separate, or unrelated. A quick and easy way to remember the difference is to see that in **discrete**, unlike **discreet**, the **e's** are separated--so they're "distinct, separate" e's--just like the definition.

By the way, the noun form of discreet is discretion, which most people use correctly, but it doesn't help at all with remembering which is which! The noun form of discrete is discreteness.

For...What?

Dear Gabby,

What's the past tense of forgo? Is it forgone? Forwent? I'm serious, I've wanted to use that word for a while, but I just avoid it at all costs. --Forlorn Frannie

Dear Frannie,

I know it sounds weird, but the past tense is *forwent*. (It's like go/went/gone: forgo/forwent/forgone.) I think pretty much everyone avoids using *forwent*, because they aren't sure if it's correct. People are a lot more familiar with the word *forgone*, which sounds so much better: *It was a forgone conclusion.* If I wanted to say something like, "We forwent the wedding and went straight to the reception," I would find a way to use other words, for example: "We passed on the wedding..." or "We went straight to the reception, having forgone the wedding." My advice: If *forwent* is the word you need, use it proudly, knowing that it really is a word--but if you just don't feel like getting questions, being "corrected," or getting into long discussions about it, just continue to avoid it; with a little thought and creativity, you can *forgo* using *forwent*.

Pronouncing Plurals

Dear Gabby,

What are the rules for pluralization of words that end in 's'? A pet peeve of mine is when I hear people pronounce 'processes' as if the last syllable rhymed with 'parentheses.' --Stressed by the 'S'

Dear Stressed,

As far as rules go--well, you know how English is. There are rules for all kinds of spellings and pronunciations. But for the specific word you mention--processes--the normal pronunciation is your way: prah-sess-iz. I'm sure you're also aware that the words theses, crises, parentheses, and hypotheses are pronounced with that "seez" ending. Note that all of the singular versions of those words end in "sis" and are pronounced "sis." The plural is a spelling change ("ses") and a corresponding pronunciation change ("seez"). There seem to be people who want to carry that sound over into other words, like processes--I guess it sounds fancier and they like sounding fancy. I did find a dictionary that acknowledged that pronunciation as an alternative, so, since English is a living language, it's quite possible that we'll have to accept it in the not-too-distant future--but for now, everybody, please, pronounce it prah-sess-siz, not prah-sess-seez!

Do You Resemble This Remark?

Dear Grammar Geek,

Is there a difference between "resemble" and "resent" when used in the context, "I resemble/resent that remark." --Not Clear

Dear Not Clear,

I'm a little unclear myself, on how to respond to this question. I'm thinking that you're pulling my leg, but just in case you're not, I guess I'm going to have to give you a clear answer.

The phrase, "I resent that remark," means exactly what it says. The person speaking feels displeasure or indignation about a statement that was made. If someone says, "I resemble that remark," they are saying it in jest, usually in a self-deprecating manner. For example, if I comment, "There were a lot of rude people at that meeting," my co-worker who was at the same meeting may quip, "I resemble that remark!" It sounds like he's about to say "resent" because he's insulted, then "resemble" makes it kind of funny.

This particular quote is sometimes (but not always) attributed to **Groucho Marx**, who usually made self-deprecating, ironic, sardonic, or otherwise humorous statements like the following:

- My mother loved children--she would have given anything if I had been one.
- I never forget a face, but in your case I'll make an exception.
- She's so in love with me, she doesn't know anything. That's why she's in love with me.
- Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read.

The Avenging Editor?

Dear Grammar Geek,

Based on (Gigi's) article **"Yinz Talk Funny,"** do we have permission to take a red Sharpie to official Agency posters that say things like, "Do you have something that needs moved?", as I saw the other day? (Please say yes!) --Ed Itor

Dear Ed,

Now, I know you were just kidding around, but I feel the need to respond with a NO! I'm sorry. I wish I could say yes.

80% Rule

Dear Grammar Geek,

So have a question or maybe a suggested topic for the future. So why the big fuss on grammar when I am told time after time in operations/programs that we can't afford the 100% solution but can live with the 80% solution because that is all the money (i.e. time) to spend on it. So why in grammer do we have to be 100% correct..why can't we apply the 80% rule and have 80% of the grammer correct and 80% of the words spelled correctly. We would really all understand the message we are trying to get across with only 80% of the grammer correct? If i didn't capitalize the letter (like in this sentence) would you still understand it? If I use the wrong tense would you still understand the message (did you get my question even though the grammer was wrong?) Would maybe be an interesting concept to see how much time we would save (i.e money) if we did that. I know for fact I am spending a ton of time correctly such minor things in ACE reports right now. --Tired of all this editing

Dear Tired,

Whew! I'm tired too--reading your note took a lot of effort! To be honest, I did get your point, but it was pretty confusing. And to be even more honest, I'd say that you would be lucky if this note made it to 20% accuracy. My problem with what you're proposing is not that I think we have to be 100% accurate, but that shooting for 80% reduces the goal to quantity rather than quality. Strive to get your point across clearly; knowing the rules of grammar (not grammer--sorry, that's **the guy who played Frasier on TV**) will help you to be clear and accurate. Strive to **develop better habits**, so that it really isn't any more work to write correctly than to write poorly. If you make a few mistakes, most people won't notice or care, but if you make certain mistakes that confuse the reader, you could cause horrible misunderstandings--and around here, maybe even international incidents!

Gabby