

Sound Smarter—Grammar Guru’s Greatest Guidelines

Correct language use is one of the best ways to show an employer you are ready to contribute to an organization. Below are explanations for five of the most common mistakes the Grammar Girl, aka Mignon Fogarty, addresses on her often-quoted website, [Quick and Dirty Tips](#). Use the sentences that follow the explanations to test your understanding of these confusing usage problems.

1. Who vs. whom

A simple way to choose the correct pronoun is to change the clause needing who or whom into a question and then insert *he* for *who* and *him* for *whom*. If the sentence would use *him*, use *whom*. A mnemonic device to remember this trick is to note that both him and whom end with **m**.

EXAMPLE: *To whom should the package be addressed?*

The package should be addressed to him. Therefore, the correct pronoun is *whom*.

2. E.g. vs. i.e.

E.g. is an abbreviation of the Latin phrase meaning *for example*, whereas *i.e.* is the stand in for *in other words*. To remember this confusing set of abbreviations, think of *e.g.* as example given and *i.e.* as in essence.

EXAMPLE: Use numerals for entering your birthdate, *e.g.* 05-13-1996.

3. Anyway vs. anyways

Anyway is the only correct word and is often used to confirm a point. Using *anyways* is simply wrong and exposes the user’s unsophisticated language use.

EXAMPLE: *Anyway*, we are here to support the transition, so please write to us at help@editing.com with any concerns.

4. Effect vs. affect

Effect is a noun that most often denotes a result. When used as a verb, *affect* frequently suggests influence. When used as a noun, *affect* refers to manifestations of emotions.

EXAMPLE: Poor management has a negative *effect* on employee morale. *Effecting* change is difficult when workers resist new workplace initiatives.

EXAMPLE: The marketing campaign’s objective was to *affect* (v.) consumers’ emotions so they felt a need to purchase the product. The manager’s low *affect* (n.) was difficult to read.

5. Alright vs. all right

Alright is never correct and should not be used in professional communication. The only acceptable choice is *all right*.

EXAMPLE: It is *all right* to use an electronic signature on the form.

Circle the correct word in each sentence. Be prepared to discuss why you chose that answer.

1. A recent survey noted the many **affects/effects** of the proposed changes to the organization's health care plan.
2. We will consider all candidates whose applications are complete—**e.g./i.e.** include a résumé, letters of recommendation, and writing samples.
3. The problem was resolved **anyway/anyways** when the IT staff rebooted the system.
4. The interview was **alright/all right**, but the candidate's writing samples failed to impress the hiring committee.
5. Telecommuting provides employees with a valuable perk, **e.g./i.e.** flexibility to choose when to complete work.
6. No matter **who/whom** is selected, someone is bound to be disappointed.
7. When Damian was told he was let go, his **affect/effect** was blank, so we were unable to gauge his reaction.
8. By the third interview, candidates should have a good idea whether the job is a good fit, **e.g./i.e.** whether they will seamlessly blend into the corporate culture.
9. Employees for **who/whom** childcare is an issue prefer flextime schedules.
10. Weak writing skills can negatively **affect/effect** careers.
11. Workplace harassment training is important for all **who/whom** want to be considered for managerial positions.
12. Many customers were **affected/effected** by the data breach.