Issues in Punctuation and Usage - Things They Didn’t Teach Us

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Workshop Overview

- Pleonasms
- Commonly confused words
- Punctuation (apostrophe and comma)
Pleonasms

- Pleonasms are also known as *redundancies*, and the use of pleonasms is known as *tautology*.
Spot the pleonasm!

- He had little prior experience.
Spot the pleonasm!

- He had little prior experience.
- He had little experience.
Spot the pleonasm!

- He had little **prior** experience.
- He had little experience.

Why?

*experience, n.* something personally encountered, undergone, or lived through
After the scandal, we realized it was necessary to meet with all the stakeholders and talk about our future plans for the company. We decided that we needed a new innovation that would increase the visibility of our brand. We agreed that this won’t be possible without joint collaboration with other big players in the market of garden gnomes. I expressed my personal opinion that we have to go for the number-one leader - Gnome & Gnome - and work with them to create something groundbreaking. Looking back in retrospect, that was a good call, because the end result was truly amazing - the Holographic Gnome.
After the scandal, we realized it was necessary to meet with all the stakeholders and talk about our future plans for the company. We decided that we needed a new innovation that would increase the visibility of our brand. We agreed that this won’t be possible without joint collaboration with other big players in the market of garden gnomes. I expressed my personal opinion that we have to go for the number-one leader - Gnome & Gnome - and work with them to create something groundbreaking. Looking back in retrospect, that was a good call, because the end result was truly amazing - the Holographic Gnome.
Commonly confused words

- *Miami is farther* (or *further*?) *from New York than Tennessee.*

Both are correct, but when referring to physical distance we usually use *farther.*

With abstract and figurative senses, we use only *further:*

- *Without further delay. Until further notice. Have you got anything further to say?*
1) below or under?

- When they decided to build the reservoir, the whole village ended up ________ water.
1) below or under?

- When they decided to build the reservoir, the whole village ended up **under** water.
- They stopped to have a break just **below** the top of the mountain.
2) eatable or edible?

- The meal they served was barely ________. 
2) eatable or edible?

- The meal they served was barely **eatable**.
- They served the mushrooms they have picked that very morning, and I was not convinced they were **edible**.
3) elicit or illicit?

- He had an __________ affair with his boss.
3) elicit or illicit?

- He had an **illicit** affair with his boss.
- I could not **elicit** a response to any of my questions.
4) complimentary or complementary?

▶ The restaurant offers valet parking as a _______________ service.
4) complimentary or complementary?

- The restaurant offers valet parking as a complimentary service.
- I truly believe that my spouse and I have complementary goals.
For everything you need, turn to the office junior in charge of ordering our ________.
5) stationary or stationery?

- For everything you need, turn to the office junior in charge of ordering our stationery.
- The weather front has remained stationary over the Southeast.
6) graceful or gracious?

- They gave everyone a ___________________ welcoming smile.
6) graceful or gracious?

- They gave everyone a **gracious**, welcoming smile.
- He couldn't but admire the **graceful** movements of the ballerina.
7) prescribe or proscribe?

- This drug should not be __________ to children.
7) prescribe or proscribe?

- This drug should not be prescribed to children.
- The use of electronic devices on board a plane while it is landing is proscribed by the company’s regulations.
8) principal or principle?

The two __________ of happiness are being kind and smiling a lot.
8) principal or principle?

- The two principles of happiness are being kind and smiling a lot.
- The school’s principal tended to avoid confrontation with parents.
9) inapt or inept?

- It was an ________ remark.
9) inapt or inept?

- It was an inapt remark.
- Maria was embarrassingly inept at household tasks.
10) discreet or discrete?

- Occupations are grouped into __________ categories.
10) discreet or discrete?

- Occupations are grouped into **discrete** categories.
- He stopped the car at a **discreet** distance from the blue van.
11) assure or insure or ensure?

The systems were established to __________ accuracy of information.
11) assure or insure or ensure?

- The systems were established to **ensure** accuracy of information.
- For our part, we **assure** them of our loyal support.
- We will **insure** you against legal liability.
12) fewer or less?

_______ than twenty students completed the course.
12) fewer or less?

- Fewer than twenty students completed the course.
- It’s a better job, but they pay you less money.
13) appraise or apprise?

- He had the stamp collection __________ by an expert.
13) appraise or apprise?

- He had the stamp collection **appraised** by an expert.
- The police were **apprised** of the situation.
A sudden ________ of the match broke through the darkness.
14) flair or flare?

- A sudden **flare** of the match broke through the darkness.
- Even as a young boy he had a **flair** for mathematics.
15) as or like?

- I’m not your friend, I’m your boss, and ________ your boss, I’m telling you to start looking for a new job.
15) as or like?

- I’m not your friend, I’m your boss, and as your boss, I’m telling you to start looking for a new job.
- Stop acting like a madman!
Every time you use an apostrophe to make a word plural, a puppy dies.
The apostrophe. Choose the word with the correctly placed apostrophe!

- They’re going to Singapore in two weeks / week’s / weeks’ time.
The apostrophe. Choose the word with the correctly placed apostrophe!

- They’re going to Singapore in two weeks / week’s / weeks’ time.
1) These girl’s / girls’ / girls parents are clearly not your average suburban moms and dads.
1) These girl’s / girls’ / girls parents are clearly not your average suburban moms and dads.
3) He blamed the party’s defeat on the MPs’ neglect of their constituencies.
3) He blamed the party’s defeat on the MPs’ neglect of their constituencies.
4) They informed him about the dos and don'ts / do’s and don’t’s / dos and don’ts / do’s and don’ts’ of the job.
4) They informed him about the dos and don'ts / do’s and don’t’s / dos and don’ts / do’s and don’ts’ of the job.
5) He OKs / OK’s / OKes everything his secretary does.
5) He OKs / OK’s / OKes everything his secretary does.
6) For goodness / goodness’s / goodness’ sake, lighten up!
6) For goodness / goodness’s / goodness’ sake, lighten up!
The comma. Correct the sentences with the misplaced comma!

It doesn’t just make you warm, it makes you happy.
1) She groped for her cigarettes, and finding them, hastily lit one.
1) She groped for her cigarettes, and finding them, hastily lit one.

1) *She groped for her cigarettes hastily lit one.

1) She groped for her cigarettes and, finding them, hastily lit one.
2) The Americans are notoriously bad at learning foreign languages, the Croats are famously good at it.
2a) The Americans are notoriously bad at learning foreign languages, whereas the Croats are famously good at it.
2b) The Americans are notoriously bad at learning foreign languages; the Croats are famously good at it.
2c) The Americans are notoriously bad at learning foreign languages. The Croats are famously good at it.

...
3) This is a provocative, disturbing book.
3) This is a provocative, disturbing book.

OK!

3) This is a provocative and disturbing book.
4) Lucille speaks French, Anita speaks Italian.
4) Lucille speaks French, and Anita speaks Italian.
5) My grandfather gave me an antique, ivory box.
5) My grandfather gave me an antique ivory box.
The Test

KEEP CALM AND ACE THE TEST
I didn’t like the movie, it was way too long.
1) I didn’t like the movie, it was way too long.
1) I didn’t like the movie - it was way too long.
1) I didn’t like the movie because it was way too long.
The Test

2) Tact not anger, is the best tactic in this case.
2) Tact, not anger, is the best tactic in this case.
3) Annie felt mislead by the new policy.
3) Annie felt misled misled by the new policy.
4) He was mesmerized by her long, dark, glossy hair.
4) He was mesmerized by her long, dark, glossy hair.

This one’s OK! 😊
5) Their education had little affect on them.
5) Their education had little affect effect on them.
6) The four students talked between themselves while waiting for the teacher.
6) The four students talked between among themselves while waiting for the teacher.
7) Brisbane is the most unique city in Australia.
7) Brisbane is the most unique city in Australia.
The Test

8) I wanted to get my moneys’ worth.
8) I wanted to get my moneys’ money’s worth.
9) A low level of unemployment should be the guiding principle of the government's economical policy.
9) A low level of unemployment should be the guiding principle of the government's economical **economic** policy.
10) They loved to visit each other for old time’s sake.
10) They loved to visit each other for old time’s sake.
11) She’s one of the biggest experts in the field of online marketing.
11) She’s one of the biggest experts in the field of online marketing.
12) Bangladesh is one of the world’s poorest countries, its annual income is only $80 per person.
12) Bangladesh is one of the world’s poorest countries, its annual income is only $80 per person.

12) Bangladesh is one of the world’s poorest countries - its annual income is only $80 per person.

...
13) I won’t tell you the reason why I quit my previous job.
13) I won’t tell you the reason why I quit my previous job.
14) Leo was persecuted by bullies for years.
14) Leo was persecuted by bullies for years.

This one’s OK! 😊

**persecute** = harass, treat cruelly or unfairly
**prosecute** = conduct legal proceedings against someone
15) The route over the mountain is too torturous. We should go straight through the tunnel.
15) The route over the mountain is too torturous **tortuous**. We should go straight through the tunnel.

- **torturous** = causing pain or suffering
- **tortuous** = full of twists and turns
Thank you for your attention!
Reference