## - A Short List of Things You Ought to Know About English -Your knowing these will prevent 90% of the most common errors in writing

### First, our spelling error of the year award goes to the word "definitely"

This word often appears as "definately," or, if the speller has a spellchecker, "defiantly." But we all know how to spell "finite," the main word in "definite." Look at it there. Right smackdab in the center of the word. Now add the prefix "de" to have correctly spelled "definite." (For some reason, "definite" isn't misspelled as often as "definitely"). Now add the suffix "ly"and you have DEFINITELY. Got it? Circle the correct one: (definately . . . defiantly . . . definitely). Use it in a sentence. Pronounce it. Write it down. Trace the letters with your fingers. Now you know it! Do it again ... the next word is "opportunity."

## Common "usage" look and/or sound-alikes

•	advice (has "ice" in it)	advise (has a "z" sound)				
•	are (verb: we are going)	our (be	longs to us)	hou	<b>ur</b> (60 mins)	
٠	bear (the animal or the verb to carry	or give birth to	) bar	e (empty or nu	de)	
•	break (lucky or unlucky break, break	your heart)	brake (wit	h your foot, yo	ur car)	
٠	choose (sounds like "chewz")		chose (past tense -	has "hose" in i	it, sounds like 'hoz	æ')
•	cite (verb: to quote or to document).		site (this is the pla	ce)	sight (see it no	ow?)
•	college (You are here)		collage (combines	media in art)		
•	effect (it's a noun special effects)		affect (it's a verb -	- how did it affe	ect you?)	
•	except (leave it out all except that	one)	accept (receive it	I can accept	that)	
•	it's (it is or it has - it's a contraction)		its (belongs to it. I	Like "his," has i	no apostrophe)	
•	<b>lead</b> (noun – a metal compound)	lead (v	erb - I will lead yo	u). led	(past tense of lead	l - he led me astray)
•	lose (sounds like "lew's" z sounding s) loose (as a goose loose enough for two o's in it)					
•	meet (me at the coffee shop)	meat (b	peef maybe?)	mete (allot	t or give out ie. p	ounishment)
•	message (Your mama wants you, Ra	phie)	massage (Don't ru	ib me the wron	g way)	
•	peak (mountain top)		· · · · · ·		• · · · ·	ll pronounced "peek"
•	principal (the main thing - has 'a' in the "pal") principle (the rule – ends with 'le')					
٠	steak (beef, maybe?)	stake (in the ground or in the vampire's heart)				
٠	then (deals with "when")		than (compares		s than that")	
٠	there (place marker)	their (t	belongs to them)	the	y're (contraction of	of "they are")
•	too (too many, too much, and also means 'also') to (to dance, to the hills) two (2)					
•	weather (sun/rain/snow)	whether (if thi	/	· · · ·	strated goat)	
•	where (wh, as in "what"	were (we were	0 0/		traction of 'we are	
٠	your (belongs to you)	you're (contra	ction of "you are)	<b>yore</b> (form	er - "in days of yo	ore")

#### Don't write this

#### Write This

Just between you and me

Should have, would have, could have

One is prejudiced (One has prejudice)

- Should of / would of / could of
- Just between you and I
- To write "I'm not prejudice" is like writing "I'm not hunger"
- A blend of "supposed" and "probably" shows up from time to time as "supposably" but should be "supposedly"

# A Few General Rules

- Use apostrophes only in possessives and contractions (or in plural forms of numbers or initials that are used as words, like "The A's won it all"). Notice that the apostrophe follows the answer to the question, "Who does it belong to?" John's hats are all brown. The hat belongs to John. John's hats' colors are all the same. The colors belong to the hats. She left it in the (girl's girls') room. Which is correct? It depends upon who the room belongs to. If it's one girl's room, it belongs to the girl: it's the girl's room. If she left it in the restroom, that room is for all the girls. It belongs to the girls. It's the girls' room.
- Some expressions use an ownership metaphor, and still require the apostrophe, as in "one day's work, or two days' pay." Notice the different placement of the apostrophe.
- Never use apostrophes in possessive forms of pronouns: his, hers, ours, yours, its, whose, theirs. "It's," the one with the apostrophe in it, is always the contraction of "it is" or "it has." Always... (look up "Always" in the book. When you write "it's," read it as "it is" or "it has" to see if it really needs the apostrophe. And there is no such word as "its'."
- When adding "ly" to a word, just add "ly." That's why it's "real ly," and "final ly," and "definite ly." But one exception is "true," which drops the "e," for "truly," which follows some OTHER rule that often drops the "e."
- And speaking of "really," it's "real estate," which is why it's pronounced "ree-al-tor" not "ree-la-tor."
- "Who" is generally used for people. "That" is more often used for things. I know a man **who** died of eating spaghetti. I know of a tree **that** is 300 feet tall.
- "Hanged" is for people. "Hung" is for things. I hung the clothes out on the bush. My Uncle Jed was hanged for plagiarism. Then he was shot for faulty usage.
- "But yet" is like saying "But but" or "Yet yet." (Isn't it?)
- Use "whom" if you'd use "him" in the same situation.
- There is no such word as "alot." It's "a lot." It's like "a little." But there is "allot," as "Allot us each a card."
- The word "sometimes" is almost always a compound word, but "everyday" means "ordinary" or "common," and other than that the term is almost always two words. You'd say "I went there every day," or "I wore my everyday shoes to school every day."
- "Karen and I are going to the store." Karen and me? We rarely mix up the "me" and "I" when the pronoun is supposed to be in the "subject" case. But we often hear such things as "Randy gave the car keys to Karen and I." Or "He left it up to my mother and I." Don't bother your little head with the difficulties of "case" to learn how to correct this one. Leave out the other person. "Randy gave the car keys to I." OUCH! And you would never say, "He left it up to I."

## - I'm sure I'll come up with other picky things before I die - Heywood Williams -