

Resource 5.5 Avoid Mechanical Missteps in Online Communication

Name _____ Date _____

Avoid Mechanical Missteps in Online Communication

Remember that our online discussion platform is an extension of our physical classroom. Your writing should reflect time, energy, and editing. Please review the following.

Capitalization

- Always capitalize "I" when speaking in first person.
- Capitalize the first letter of sentences, the first letter of your peers' names, titles (*To Kill a Mockingbird*), and all proper nouns (i.e., specific names of people, places, and events).

Punctuation Problems

- Remember to use a question mark when you ask a question.
- Do not overuse exclamation marks. They should be used sparingly for emphasis.
- Apostrophes are needed to indicate possession (e.g., Christine's comment made me consider an alternative perspective.).
- When quoting, periods and commas go inside quotation marks.

Commonly Confused Words

- *Then vs. Than.* "Then" indicates a sequence of time, and "than" is used for comparison (e.g., We went to the museum and then had lunch. I like action movies better than romance movies.).
- *Accept vs. Except.* "Accept" is a verb that means "to receive, admit, regard as true, or say yes." "Except" is a preposition that means "to exclude" (e.g., I accept the truth in your statement. I ate everything except my peas.).
- *Loose vs. Lose.* "Loose" is an adjective, the opposite of "tight." "Lose" is a verb meaning to no longer have possession of or to misplace (e.g., If your pants are too loose, you might lose your pants.).
- *Lay vs. Lie.* Use "lay" when there is a direct object, and use "lie" when there is no direct object (e.g., I lay my books on the table. I lie down when I am tired.).
- *Raise vs. Rise.* Use "raise" when there is a direct object, and use "rise" when there is no direct object (e.g., I raise my hand in class. The sun will rise each morning.).
- *Who vs. Whom.* "Who" is a pronoun used in the place of a subject, and "whom" is a pronoun used in place of an object (e.g., Who is coming for dinner? Whom did you invite for dinner?).

Homophone Errors

- *Who's vs. Whose.* "Who's" is the contraction for "who is," and "whose" is the possessive of "who" (e.g., Who's coming to the party? Whose purse is this?).
- *Weather vs. Whether.* "Weather" is a noun referring to the atmospheric conditions in a specific place, and "whether" is a conjunction that introduces possibilities or alternatives (e.g., The weather outside will determine whether we go swimming or not.).
- *Your vs. You're.* "Your" is a possessive pronoun (e.g., your house), and "you're" is the contraction meaning "you are."
- *There vs. They're vs. Their.* "There" is used as a pronoun or to refer to a place, "they're" is the contraction for "they are," while "their" is a possessive pronoun (e.g., I put it over there. They're coming to the party. I read their blog.).
- *It's vs. Its.* "Its" is a possessive pronoun, and "it's" is the contraction for "it is" (e.g., It's a beautiful day for a walk. The dog pulled its leash.).
- *To vs. Too.* "To" is a preposition. "Too" means "also" or "to an excessive extent or degree" (e.g., I want help, too. It is too hot to eat.).

Spelling Errors

- Always spellcheck your work prior to posting. Spelling errors distract your reader from the quality of your content.
- "A lot" is always two words.

Using Italics vs. Quotes

- When referring to a book title, large publication (such as a book, magazine, or newspaper), or movie title, *italicize* it.
- When referring to a poem, short story, or article, use quotation marks.

Sentence Structure

- Keep sentences clear and concise.
- Avoid sentence fragments that fail to communicate a complete thought.
- Break up long sentences to avoid unnecessarily lengthy and confusing sentences.

Retrieved from the companion website for *Blended Learning in Grades 4–12: Leveraging the Power of Technology to Create Student-Centered Classrooms* by Catlin R. Tucker. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.