

TALKING BETTER FOR FUN AND PROFIT

*Make lots more money and gain the respect of others
by improving your English grammar—Really!*

How to Easily Crank Up Your English Talking Skills
(In a matter of weeks!)

Short, practical, fairly simple steps for English Speaking folks.



by

Tom Gnagey

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WHAT WILL YOU FIND HERE ?

SO HERE WE ARE

How you will quickly and easily fix up your spoken English grammar

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Pronouns

* * *

Students have found that the best and quickest results come when they work together in pairs or small groups gently helping each other spot their errors and pointing out each other's slips and progress! (family members or co-workers, perhaps)

So Here We Are!

How improving your English speaking skills will:

> Make you appear to be smarter <

> Help you make more money <

> Gain the respect of people who can make your life better <

(Like employers, supervisors, potential dates even)

Let's examine these two situations: Two young men go together to apply for a job. The business owner asks to see their references. In each example, one man speaks for both of them.

Situation ONE: Tom speaks: "Me and him ain't got no references."

Situation TWO: Sam speaks: "He and I don't have any references."

Which response will impress the owner the most?

If you say TWO you are correct. Not only that, but just recognizing it signals that cranking up your English may not really take all that much work. We will come back to the examples.

The *fact* is that folks who speak what I will call 'main stream' or 'Formal' English (the kind English teachers speak and require on written reports and such) are generally seen as both smarter and better educated than those who speak one of the 'Common English' dialects. Common English is widespread and usually everybody can understand what folks who speak it mean. In the two examples above we understand that both responses mean the very same thing, don't they – neither guy brought references.

The difference is that the two response are formed using different sets of rules about how English 'should' be put together. The fact is that educated

people and young people who grow up in educated families do speak Mainstream English – that's why when people hear it spoken they assume the speaker is educated. And, educated people are usually thought to be smart. Also, businesses that have employees who speak Mainstream English make a better impression (a more 'high class' impression) on customers or clients. Bosses like that, *a lot!* So, fair or not fair, if you speak Mainstream English you are automatically going to get a better shake in the world than if you speak Common English. You will find that promotions come easier, performance based raises come sooner, and jobs with the best pay usually go to those who speak Mainstream English (or something close to it). Those are the FACTS.

There is also a second reason for speaking Mainstream (Formal) English. Children who go to school speaking Formal English have a much easier time of it. Studies show that teachers (who should know better) even see them as being smarter (whether they are or not). And how will your children learn to speak English? By modeling the English you (parents) speak to them, right? What form of English will that be? Will that work to their advantage or disadvantage in school and later in the world of work? You see my point.

The purpose of this program is to help those who do not speak Formal English learn how to translate their form of English into a form that is acceptable to those who prefer or require Formal English (schools and many employers – even many potential dates). It is **not** a put down because you happen to have been taught some other way of speaking. The goal of oral language is to communicate and I just imagine you have been communicating rather well for many years regardless of the form of English you speak. *Facts are facts, however, and folks who speak Formal English are usually seen as smarter, more educated, and over time, tend to get the respect, the breaks, the raises, and the best jobs in the workplace.* (Dozens of studies show this.) People who speak Common English usually have no idea how unpleasant their English is to those who speak mainstream English therefore they feel no need to change it. (It is like fingernails on a chalkboard!!!)

In the long run, people who speak Formal English make lots more money whether they are *actually* educated or not. People who appear to be smart and knowledgeable get the promotions. The others don't. SO, a large part of whether you (and your children) are going to get ahead and do well in the work place (in life) really *does* depend on the kind of English you speak. Fair or unfair, that is a fact which cannot be disputed.

The steps you will find in this program are designed to quickly switch a person's oral (spoken) English from any Common English dialect to something much closer to Formal English. If you are eager to obtain the kinds of successes that can come about for you with such a change, and are willing to commit yourself to learn the information, complete the practice exercises included here, and practice what you learn in your daily speech, read on. If not, of course, just stop here (and good luck because you are going to need it.).

The first Six Hints (a mere half dozen) are extremely important in changing people's impression of you *and they are fairly easy to accomplish*. It is why they come right here at the beginning – so you can make lots of progress *that shows* early on. The several exercises that follow the *Basic Hints Section* will take a bit more work but will be extremely helpful to you on your road to success.

Don't try to accomplish all of this at once. (In fact, that just won't work.) Be patient. Build your new skills solidly and *slowly*. Work on one suggestion (hint) at a time until you feel you have it pretty well under control. You want each step to become automatic so you don't even have to think about it and in the beginning that will take thought and practice every single time you speak. I suggest spending at least a full week on each hint (keeping up with those that you have previously worked on, of course). Investing just six weeks in order to improve the impression you make and to increase your chances of earning a better wage seems very reasonable to me. How about you?

THE BRAIN BURING EXERCISE

(No fear. It won't hurt!)

The basic goal of this manual is to make Formal English Speaking patterns come *automatically* for you. That means those patterns must get 'burned' into the language pattern part of your brain so you don't have to keep stopping and thinking how to phrase things. The Brain Burning exercise will greatly speed your progress (even when it doesn't make sense in the beginning). As you move through this short program all the hints and exercises will become obvious. So, trust me. Do this exercise beginning from day one.

It will be the easiest 'school work' you have ever been asked to do.

EVERY WEEK / THE BRAIN BURING EXERCISES

Below are a number of short phrases or sets of short phrases. Your assignment (I hope that isn't a dirty word to you) is merely to repeat each one ten times, at least twice a day – the more times the better. The phrases represent language patterns that are necessary to translate your current form of English into Mainstream English. They are replacements for other phrases that have probably already been burned into your brain. The brain learns repeated patterns, such as these, rapidly. These repetition practice sessions have been shown to boost the student's progress by leaps and bounds. Make it a habit – before sleep at night and sometime during the morning (at least at those times). It is best, although not completely necessary, to relax and close your eyes during the exercise. (Not advised if you are jogging or driving, and it has been found that significant others object to having you do this while being romantic with them!)

The entire exercise should take about five minutes, but it will take whatever it takes.

Suggested approach: Say each phrase 10 to 20 times then move on to the next (keep track easily by using your fingers – once across all ten). *Italicized* explanations, themselves – they follow a phrase – in parentheses () are not to be included in the repetition, of course.

I saw (*this phrase replaces 'I seen' which is never to be used.*)

I am not

He is not, He isn't

They are

We are not, We aren't

I'm going to (*not, "I'm gonna," or "I'm going ta" - **always** make it going and to.)*)

He and I (*not me and him, ever*)

Jack and I

He and I gave it to him and her

I can't ever use the car

I can never use the car

I haven't any

He is really tall

The man runs, The men run

I don't have any

He doesn't have any

They don't have any

{Copy or print off this list and keep it with you for easy reference. When

you have time to kill, bring it out and practice. See if your friends will do it with you. It's always good to help out a friend. If you find yourself frequently making a mistake that is not on this list, add it and burn it!!!!}

THE BASIC HINTS

WEEK ONE / HINT ONE: Replacing Ain't

Teachers gripe about it all the time, right? Who knew they were actually trying to help you make more money! When you hear a person use the word *ain't*, you can almost count on the fact he or she is not educated beyond high school. SO, Step One is simply to just stop saying ain't. Think about what it means in the message you are trying to send and use the 'proper' replacement words. It is really quite simple if you will just focus on it. For example:

“He ain't happy.” (It means he *is not* happy. So, replace ain't with 'is not' or the contraction made from those two words, *isn't*.)

“They ain't happy.” (It means they *are not* happy. So, replace ain't with 'are not' or the contraction made from those two words, *aren't*.)

“I ain't happy.” (It means I *am not* happy. So, replace ain't with 'am not'. There is no good contraction to use for 'am not' – it would be *amn't* and that is just not a word – although it might get a laugh in the right setting. If it feels more comfortable you can use the contraction for *I am – I'm*. It then becomes *I'm not happy*.)

While we are on the topic of words and phrases that Formal English speakers would rather never hear, consider the two word phrase, '*done got*'. It is often used like this: 'I done got paid', or 'They done got paid'. It means, 'I got paid' or 'They got paid'. The 'done' adds no meaning. Make it a rule for yourself to just never use the '*done got*' duo.

Making just this one change (well, two, I guess) will improve your 'Grammar Quotient' by more than you can imagine. Often it is what others *do not* hear that makes the positive difference about which we are talking, here.

Remember: work on this for ONE FULL WEEK before going on to the next hint.

WEEK TWO / HINT TWO: Replacing “gonna” and “gotta” (and their relatives.)

The 'word' gonna means *going to*, doesn't it. (“He's gonna go home”, means “He's *going to* go home.”) The 'word' gotta means *have to*. (“I gotta go home”, means “I *have to* go home.”)

People in charge, hear *gonna* and *gotta* and think, “lazy speech” or 'short cut speech' and that often makes them think 'lazy person'. Just like the situation with 'ain't', you need to just stop using the words '*gonna*' and '*gotta*'. (Of course they really aren't words.)

More than that, however, make it a point to always pronounce the 'ing' endings to words. In Common English, the 'ing' (rhymes with 'bring') is typically shortened to, 'in' (rhymes with 'chin') – going becomes *goin'*, talking becomes *talkin'*, laughing becomes *laughin'*, OR, “Sue is puffin' while she is runnin',” needs to become, “Sue is puffing while she is running.” (The apostrophe ['] I added after those words is often used in formal writing to show one or more important letters are missing. That's why it occurs in contractions – like in *that's* it shows that the i (in *is*) has been left out and in *weren't* it shows that the o (in *not*) has been omitted.).

Remember, take a full week to play with these changes – *gonna*, *gotta*, and *ing*. Human brains are not made to take shortcuts here! You are training right over a lifelong brain pattern for forming sentences. Be patient. When you make a mistake, immediately say it correctly (at least inside your head if not aloud).

WEEK THREE / HINT THREE: Replacing 'ta'

('ta' pronounced as in taco)

This appears to be another 'lazy' speaker's habit and degrades a speaker in status among the people you always need to impress. Combining these last two suggestions (Hints 2 and 3), this sentence – *I'm gonna go ta the store*, becomes, *I'm going to go to the store*. Train yourself to just never say 'ta' for 'to'. (You might enlist the help of somebody with whom you talk often ta help – I mean to help – point it out.) This one tiny thing will improve your image immediately and dramatically. REMEMBER, A FULL WEEK. It's difficult to replace life long habits that are already burned into you brain.

WEEK FOUR / HINT FOUR: Taking a Back Seat to Others.

When referring to you *and* somebody else in the same phrase, the other person is always listed first. Bill and I, Sally and I, Rumpelstiltskin and I. In Common English it is almost always reversed with the reference to the speaker coming first – Me and him, Me and Jake, me and the team. (Hint Five, just below, also deals with this situation.) It is just a matter of concentration and practice. (If you hear yourself about to begin a sentence with the word *me*, stop, because it is not going to be Mainstream English – so, never begin a sentence with the word ____.)

REMEMBER. A FULL WEEK!!!

WEEK FIVE / HINT FIVE: Fixing the BIG 'Me and Him' problem

At or near the beginning of a sentence the pronouns must be *I and he* (never *me and him*). And, now that you understand step four above, it really becomes *He and I*, doesn't it? (Why? Because the *other* person is always mentioned first.)

[We could get technical here and talk about subject pronouns (like, *I, She, and He*) having to be used in the subject of a sentence and that object pronouns (like, *Me, Her and Him*) have to be used toward the end of a sentence after a preposition (Example: *He and I gave it to him and her. She and Sally gave it to him and me.*) – where *to* is the preposition making the 'him and her' and the 'him and me' object pronouns) **BUT** you can learn about that later if you want to. See the APPENDIX if you want more detailed information. I suggest you wait a while on that.]

For now, here is a secret that will help you choose the right pronouns for starting a sentence about 95% of the time (because you *really* already know). In your head, try out the pronouns, which you are considering using, one at a time (it is the *and* that sits in between them that makes it confusing). Consider, “*Me and her* gave it to Tommy.” Using *the one at a time trial approach*, would you say, “*Me* gave it to Tommy,” or would you say, “*I* gave it to Tommy.” I'm sure you would chose '*I*'. How about this: “*Him* gave it to her,” or “*He* gave it to her.” Now that you have silently tried out each of the pronouns by itself, ahead of speaking it out loud, what will you say? ____ and ____ gave it to her. (He and I.)

Now, do the same – trying out one pronoun at a time – with the phrase toward the end of the sentence (*after the preposition*). Would you say, “He and I gave it to *she*,” or “He and I gave it to *her*.” *To her*, right? How about this choice? “He and she gave it to I”, or “He and she gave it to me?” (To me.)

How about this sentence: “He and I gave it to him and her.” Is that

correct? If not, fix it. (It is correct.) See how much you already know when you apply the 'try it one at a time' secret!

REMEMBER, WORK ON THIS FOR A FULL WEEK BEFORE MOVING ON.

WEEK SIX /HINT SIX: Replacing Double Negatives

As you already understand, the words *no*, *not*, *never*, and *nothing* are negative words – they set things up to be against something. (No money, not fair, never said that, nothing doing) In Formal English you can only have one negative per sentence (or clause in complex sentences – don't fret over that clause thing!). In most dialects of Common English multiple negative words are common. Example: *He didn't never say that*. Both *didn't* and *never* are negatives. Get rid of one of them. He never said that, or he didn't say that, or he didn't ever say that, but not, he didn't never say that. When there is a contraction present – like *didn't*, expand the contraction into its two words, in this case *did* and *not*. All words ending in *n't* are negatives which means virtually every contraction is a negative word. (won't, weren't, can't, couldn't, aren't, wasn't, wouldn't, shouldn't, don't and so on.) So, if you can count on all contractions to be negative words just never add another negative word to a sentence you are creating if it already contains a contraction. It's actually pretty easy with just a little practice. The word 'never' is frequently the second (and therefore not allowable) negative word with a contraction. So, when you want to use a contraction, never also use *never*. When you want to use *never*, never use a contraction. It is really quite simple once you begin working on it.

Hearing two negatives together (called double negatives by English teachers - "I can't never get ahead.") hurts the mind of an educated person like fingernails scraping down a chalkboard. So, if you are trying to use language patterns that are acceptable (impressive) to boss and supervisor type people, work hard to lose the double negatives. It is just about the most offensive speaking pattern you can use in front of one of 'those kind' of folks. (So, don't never do it – I mean, don't ____ do it!) [ever]

Examine these examples and set them free from the double negatives they demonstrate:

She didn't never like liver.

Dan and Jack couldn't never get an 'A' on a test. [to keep the same meaning you might use *couldn't ever* or *could never*]

Dad don't never let me use the car. [the best form of don't here would be *doesn't*, then drop *never* – more about why later on.] (Dad doesn't let me use the car, or Dad doesn't ever let me use the car.)

Sue isn't never going to win a race.

In the heat of battle, don't never look up.

I can't never save no money.* (could become: “I can't save money,” or “I can't ever save any money”.)

*Special Hint about no and any. Treat 'no' like the negative indicator that it is. Instead of saying, “I don't never have no money,” (a doozy of a triple negative there with don't, never, and no all in the same phrase, you could say, “I don't have *any* money”, or “I have no money” (only one negative in those sentences). You could say, “I haven't any money.” You could say, “I never have any money.”

RULE: In general you can use the word 'any' in place of 'no' when you need to eliminate the word 'no' because it makes the double negative. When you use a contraction – n't – think *any*, instead of *no*. (I don't have any/no money.)

[Let me make it just a little more complicated. (I already hear you saying, “Gee, thanks, Tom!) Read this but don't let it get to you. Come back later and work on it if it seems like too big a deal right now. Sentences that have the form, “I don't have any money,” answer the question 'what' – *money*. It could say, “I don't have any *candy*.” or “I don't have any *self-confidence*” or “I don't have any clean *jeans*”. In these examples the words money, candy, self-confidence and jeans all answer the question set up in the first part of the sentence – “What don't I have?” The words that provide the answers are called *objects*. Some objects sound better when set up by the word 'any' like those above. Sometimes,

however 'any' just doesn't feel right. For example which of these 'feels' or sounds right: "I don't have *any* car," or "I don't have *a* car." The second example sounds better, I believe. Which word would you choose in these? [Answers below. From here on look for the numbered answers just below the exercises.]

1- I don't have (a or any) pennies. I don't have (a or any) penny.

2- She doesn't have (a or any) pencil. She doesn't have (a or any) pencils.

3-They don't have (a or any) hamburgers. They don't have (a or any) hamburger.

I just imagine you can already see the general rule: if the object is singular (pencil) 'a' will usually sound better. If the object is plural (hamburgers) 'any' will usually sound better. There are other rules that deal with the original examples (words like candy, money, and self-confidence, but we aren't going to be bothered with them here. For now, just trust your 'ear'.]

[ANSWERS: 1- any, a 2- a, any 3- any, a]

SO, HERE'S THE DEAL. Make the six simple changes presented above, and you will immediately be speaking *well above* the level of 'Common English' and your English just may even make it seem to others that you have completed a year or more of college. (Even if it doesn't, people WILL see you as being a *smarter* person.)

BONUS HINTS:

Below are two BONUS HINTS. (*Important* but not essential to begin with. If I were you, though, I would work on them as soon as I felt comfortable with the first six, above. Why stop when you're on a roll?)

WEEK SEVEN / BONUS HINT SEVEN: Things That Happened Before Right Now (the past tense of verbs)

Some things are happening right now – the present. (I *am* typing this manuscript.) Some things happened before right now – the past. (Yesterday I *was* typing another manuscript.) Most folks have little or no trouble with verbs (action words) when they are speaking about the present. (“I am thinking,” “She is running,” “They are sleeping.” “I like candy.”) However, many forms of Common English ignore the rules about the past tense of verbs (the before this moment form of verbs).

Yesterday I (show or showed) the ring to my girlfriend. ('ed' at the end of a verb almost always means past tense and almost never present tense. Is yesterday present or past?)

Last month I (play or played) with my sled. Now I (play or played) with my bike.

The verbs *am, is, are, was, and were* cause more problems than the 'ed' verbs illustrated above.

Hints:

The pronoun I uses the verb am (never *is*) when speaking in the present. (*I am happy. I am running. I am eighteen. I am sleepy.*) I uses 'was' in the past tense. (*Yesterday, I was sick. Last night I was lucky.*)

The pronoun you uses the verb are (never *is*) when speaking in the

present. (You are strong. You are a fast runner. You are handsome.) You uses were in the past tense. (You were asleep last night. You were happy at your birthday party yesterday.) The common mistake is saying, “You was.” Just NEVER say, “You was,” and you will sound more educated immediately.

[NOTE: It does not matter how many people the word *you* refers to – one person or a thousand – it is always treated like it is plural – always use the plural forms – *they are* or *they were* – and never the singular form – *they is* or *they was*.]

The plural pronoun *they* uses the verb 'are' in the present tense. (*They are happy. They are good athletes. They are having fun.*) *They* uses 'were' in the past tense. (*They were happy last week. They were ready to leave an hour early. They were late for school yesterday morning.*) **Never say, they was!**

Just remember, the two 'w' words (was and were) are used when referring to the past.

The first trick is to know if you are about to refer to the present or the past in what you are going to say. Examine the following sentences and determine if they are going to be present or past. The blanks are where one of the verbs we just discussed will go (is, am, are, was, were):

1- It ____ hot before we took it out of the fire. (present – 'is' – or past – 'was'?)

2- They ____ happy now.

3- We ____ tired last night.

4- They ____ tired after the race last week.

5- He ____ sick for a week.

6- He ____ still sick.

7- Today, Bob and Mike ____ happy they just won the game.

8- Yesterday, Bob and Mike _____ happy they had just won the game.

[ANSWERS: 1- past, verb = was 2- present, verb = are 3- past, verb = were 4- past, verb = were 5- past, verb = was 6- present, verb = is 7- present, verb = are 8- past, verb = were

Most verbs are *regular verbs* meaning they form the past tense in the regular way – usually by just adding 'ed'. (like – liked, work – worked, heat – heated, kiss – kissed, and so on.) There are a few verbs (only about 75 out of the thousands of English verbs) that are called *irregular verbs*. I'm afraid there is no short cut to learning these. You already know lots of them and probably use them correctly. The section below lists the present and past forms of the fifty most common irregular verbs (that is close to 90% of all of them). They are listed in the order of how frequently they are used. For example, of all the irregular verbs, the verb 'say' is used most frequently (it is listed first) and the verb 'choose' is used least frequently (it is listed last). Practice by making up lots of sentences using the information. Make some in the present and then change it to the past. (*Today I say hello. Yesterday I said hello.*) You will be amazed at the progress you will make by just going over and over this exercise. Repeating it that way will 'burn' a new pattern into your brain and help make it automatic.

PRESENT TENSE PAST TENSE

say	said
make	made
go	went
take	took

come	came
see	saw
know	knew
get	got
give	gave
find	found
think	thought
tell	told
become	became
show	showed
leave	left
feel	felt
put	put (the same words)
bring	brought
begin	began
keep	kept
hold	held
write	wrote
stand	stood
hear (with ears)	heard
let	let (the same words)
mean	meant
set	sat
meet	met

run	ran
pay	paid
sit	sat
speak	spoke
lie (recline)	lay
lead (guide)	led
read	read (pronounced 'red')
grow	grew
lose (misplace)	lost
fall	fell
send	sent
build	built
understand	understood
draw	drew
break	broke
spend	spent
cut	cut (the same word)
rise	rose
drive	drove
buy	bought
wear	wore
choose (select)	chose (rhymes with 'hose')

[List thanks to *Lancaster-Bergen Corpus*]

WEEK EIGHT / BONUS HINT EIGHT: Getting Comfortable With The 'ly' Words

This section is about adjectives and adverbs. (Don't panic! Neither of them bite!) You have probably already mastered the use of adjectives. They modify (help explain) nouns. *The tall man was a basketball player.* The word *tall*, is an adjective. Why? Because it tells about the man, and man is a noun (a person, place, or thing). We aren't going to dwell on adjectives because they probably don't give you any major problems as you go about speaking. *Adverbs*, however, may be a different situation.

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. (again, don't panic) If, in the example above, we wanted to explain even more about the man's height and skill, we might change the sentence to be: *The extremely tall man was a really great basketball player.* The word *great* modifies or tells more about *player* doesn't it. Player is a noun so great is an adjective (adjectives modify nouns). What about the word *basketball*? It lets us know the player is not a baseball or soccer player but a basketball player. So basketball tells about or modifies the noun, player, so it is also an adjective. The word *really* tells us more about how *great* a player he is. *Really* modifies *great*. Great is a what? (adjective). What modifies adjectives? Adverbs. So, *really* is an adverb. Go back to the beginning of the sentence. We added the word *extremely*. Does it mean *extremely man* or *extremely tall*? Tall, of course, and tall is what part of speech? An adjective because it modifies the noun, man. So, *extremely* adds meaning to the adjective, *tall*. Words that modify adjectives are _____ (adverbs). Extremely and really are adverbs. Tall, great, and basketball are adjectives. (Do you notice something that both of those adverbs have in common? - really and extremely.) Adverbs often end in 'ly' and that is the case here. It is easier to find an adverb in a written passage (look for the 'ly' word) than it is to say an adverb where an adverb needs to be said when speaking.

Adverbs frequently pose problems for speakers of Common English. In the example we have been analyzing it is likely that the correct adverb, *'really'*, would be replaced by *'real'* (a *real* great basketball player), in Common English.

HERE IS A HINT TO FIND WHERE ADVERBS (often the 'ly' form) SHOULD BE USED. If the modifying word answers the question, "how", it takes an adverb (an 'ly' form).

Look at the example again. The *how tall* man? – the extremelyly tall man. The *how great* basketball player? – the reallyly great basketball player. Do the modifying words tall, great, or basketball answer the question, how? No, they come closer to answering 'what', so they are not adverb forms.

Take a big breath and don't _____ (panic!!!).

Some more examples:

(Remember, adverbs are often formed by adding 'ly' to the end of an adjective.)

Joe is a *full* grown man, or Joe is a *fully* grown man? What does the word modify – grown or man? A full or fully man, or full or fully grown? It tells about grown and grown tells about man (what kind of a man? A *grown* man.) Full or fully must answer the question *how* grown (fully grown), therefore it needs the 'ly' adverb form. Also, it modifies an adjective (grown) so it must be the adverb form. The adverb form will be *fully*, won't it? Joe is a fully grown man. (It may sound wrong to a Common English speaker but work at it and make it a speaking habit. Remember, the 'ly' words answer *how*. In reverse, when the word you need is going to answer, how, you need to use the 'ly' form.)

Adverb problems usually come about when they need to modify adjectives or other adverbs. Here are some examples of adverbs modifying plain old verbs. You will see that you have probably already mastered this.

Should it be: Sue *really* likes Tom, or Sue *real* like Tom?

The fire *slowly* burned the building, or The fire *slow* burned the building?

Jack *nearly* lost the race or Jack *near* lost the race?

See, adverbs modifying verbs pose few problems for you. Great! It will just be those adverbs that modify (tell about) adjectives that you will need to practice.

The proper placement of adverbs while speaking, simply takes a lot of practice because the decision must be made so quickly. People who were raised speaking Formal English do it all automatically and seldom have to even think about it. It is a pattern burned deep into the grammatical system of their brains. The earlier these patterns are learned (like from day-one) the more automatic they will become. Keep after it and you will gradually find it happening more automatically for you. There is only one way to achieve proper adverb use in speaking and that is to practice.

Another Hint: When you see how you should have used an adverb, write down the whole phrase and practice using it that way over and over again. (Burn, Burn, Burn that old brain!) It will help make that particular combination become more automatic. Begin with *real* (the adjective that modifies nouns) *and really* (the adverb that modifies adjectives) because these contribute to some of the most common errors that are immediately obvious to your Formal English speaking bosses and employers.

ADDITIONAL HELPFUL STUFF

APPENDIX

WEEK NINE / APPENDIX PART ONE: How Nouns and Verbs Must Both Indicate The Same Number Of Things

(Like any conflict out in public, disagreements between nouns and verbs can be quite unpleasant for those listening.)

A short review of stuff you probably remember:

Nouns represent persons (Jack), places (Arkansas), or things (cars), and are found in subjects (among other places).

Nouns may vary in number, that is they may be singular (represent one thing - car) or plural (represent more than one thing – cars).

Examples:

Person = John or Beth

Place = house or America or basement

Thing = ball, dress, dog, idea, party, happiness, dreams (and thousands more). In this last set of seven examples which ONE word is plural? Hint. An 'S' often makes nouns plural. (Happiness is just one thing because the 's' wasn't added to the basic form of the word. He same for dress.) Dreams represents more than one thing so it is plural.)

Verbs show action and are found in predicates – run (and sometimes in other places).

Verbs can also vary in number – appear to be singular (is), or plural

(were). "He is great." "They are great." "The boy jumps high." "The birds hop across the grass."

Examples of verbs: (answers below)

1- Run, jump, chew, eat, ate, write, speak, go, sit, is, are, were, went, jog, sing, read (and thousands more) all showing what? _____

2- What is the noun in this sentence? Jack ran. Why is it a noun? Because it is a _____.

3- What is the verb in that sentence? Why is it a verb? Because it shows _____.

4-Ted and his dog ate and then went to sleep.

4a- What are the 2 nouns _____.

4b- Why are they nouns? _____

4c- What are the 2 verbs _____.

4-d Why are *ate* and *went* verbs? _____

5- America and Canada are countries in North America.

5a- List the 4 nouns _____.

5b- Why are those four words nouns?

5c-The one verb is _____.

5d- Why is it a verb? _____

[ANSWERS: 1- action 2- person 3- ran, action 4a- Ted and dog 4b- Ted is a person and dog is a thing 4c- (*Sleep* is wrong. More later about why.) ate and went are the verbs. 4d- They show action. 5a- America, Canada, countries, and the second America. 5b- (They are places.) 5c- Are 5d- It shows action.]

Now the new stuff:

RULE: Nouns (or pronouns) and verbs have to agree in number!
(No fighting allowed!!!)

(1) NOUNS AND VERBS CAN ONLY SHARE ONE FINAL 'S' BETWEEN THEM

A- If the noun has the 'S' the verb has to do without it. If the verb has the 'S' the noun has to do without it. Said another way, if the noun has no 'S' the verb must use it.

EXAMPLES: The boy runs. ('Boy' doesn't use the 'S' so the verb run *must* use it.)

The boys run. ('Boys uses the 'S' so the verb *can't* have it.)

Bob writes. (Why must *writes* get the 'S'? Because the word Bob doesn't use the __.)

B- When connecting singular nouns in sequence, the connecting word AND always puts the 'S' in its pocket so the verb can't have it.

EXAMPLE: Bob *and* Beth run. (AND has the 'S' in its pocket so *run* can't use it.)

The boy and girl *kiss*. (The boy *kisseS* the girl and the girl *kisseS* the boy, but the boy AND girl *kiss* each other. Why? Where does the 'S' go when 'and' is present? That's right – in *and's* pocket.)

C- Plural nouns and pronouns (like 'THEY') that don't end in 'S' act like they put the 'S' in their pocket, anyway.

EXAMPLE: *They* run. (Maybe meaning, "Jack and Bob run," OR, "He

and she run.” He and she are not nouns but pronouns – words used in place of nouns. In the *he and she run* example see how pronouns get the same S treatment as nouns.)

The gentlemen talk. (If singular it would be, “the gentleman talks.” Why?” All plural nouns keep the 'S' in their pockets – men. All singular nouns – man – set the 'S' free to be used by the verb.)

(2) SOME NOUNS AND PRONOUNS THAT SEEM LIKE THEY SHOULD BE PLURAL ARE REALLY SINGULAR AND WE JUST HAVE TO LEARN WHICH ONES THEY ARE. Add to these lists as you find them.

Everybody: “Everybody IS happy ,” not, “Everybody ARE happy.” Think of *everybody* as being just one big group and *one* is singular.

Bunch: “The bunch of grapes looks delicious.” (Only one bunch even if it is made up of lots of grapes.)

Group: “The group stops.” “Group” represents a bunch of people but it is just one gathering or group, so it is singular and a singular noun leaves that ‘S’ floating around, needing to find a home at the end of the verb (*stops*).

There are some nouns that are the same whether singular or plural. (For example “The deer likes tree leaves.” - meaning one deer likes tree leaves. “The deer like tree leaves.” – meaning several deer like tree leaves.) To say *deers* is incorrect because deer is both singular and plural.

Analyze this sentence. “The deer run fast.” Is it one deer or several deer? How can you tell? Look at the verb (run). Does it have the 's'? No. So the 's' is where? In the pocket of the deer. If the 's' is with the deer does that make deer singular or plural? It

has the 's' so it is plural. So, is it one or several deer? Several.
Go back through that example until you are sure you understand it.

Other singular/plural combination nouns include: *deer, buffalo, fish, offspring, series, sheep, species*

REVIEW: Choose the *correct* match-ups in terms of the *Only One Available 'S' Rule*.

(Think about where the 's' is and therefore where it cannot be.)

1- a- Susan likes Math. b- Susan like Math.

2- a-Trucks travel fast. b- Trucks travels fast.

3- a- Boys often get dirty. b- Boys often gets dirty.

4- a- Butch and Sundance jump off a cliff. b- Butch and Sundance jumps off a cliff.

(Remember the rule about 'and' keeping the 'S' in its pocket.)

5- a- The two dogs drinks from the stream. b- The two dogs drink from the stream.

6- a- Everybody eats vegetables. b- Everybody eat vegetables.

7- a- They runs away. b- They run away.

8- a- We eats the dessert. b- We eat the dessert.

9- a- He *and* Jack runs fast. b- He and Jack run fast.

10- a- He and I slide down the hill. b- He and I slides down the hill.

11- a- The teacher ask us to be quiet. b- The teacher asks us to be quiet.

12- a- The teacher says for us to start. b- The teacher say for us to start.

13- a- The train runs all day. b- The train run all day.

14- a- The trains run all day. b- The trains runs all day.

15- a- A man likes the woman. b- A man like the woman.

[ANSWERS 1- A, 2- A, 3- A, 4- A, 5- B, 6- A, 7- B, 8- B, 9- B,
10- A, 11- B, 12- A]

WEEK TEN / APPENDIX PART TWO:

Still More About PRONOUNS And The 'Me and Him' Problem

This is another of those 'just don't say it' rules, and here, like in the case of *ain't*, you just need to understand what to say instead. Here we will discuss two aspects to the *Me and Him* problem.

FIRST: When referring to you and somebody else in the same phrase the other person is always put first. So, in the least 'me and him' would have to become 'him and me'. That, however, leads us to the second aspect of the Me and Him problem.

SECOND: (There are a few things to review and remember.)

Pronouns are words that replace nouns. *He* might replace John, for example. *She* might replace Sally. *They* might replace John and Sally. It might replace the car or the ball or the spoon. And so on. So, in the example, "me and him", both *me* and *him* are pronouns. (Think of the 'pro' in *pronoun* as meaning 'in place of the' – in place of the noun.) The pronouns *me* and *him* might be replacing the names, Jimmy and Tom or Jake and Elmo or Santa and Elf.

You will remember that sentences have several parts. The noun or subject (person, place or thing) usually comes at the beginning. (It is unlikely that you have trouble in the use of nouns so we are skipping to the pronouns.) The *verb* or predicate (action word or words) comes next.

Tommy (*noun or subject*) ran. (*verb or predicate*)

He (*pronoun used in place of the noun, Tommy*) ran. (*same verb or predicate*).

Let's examine two kinds of pronouns (there are more kinds but these will do for now.)

Subject Pronouns are used in place of a subject noun (Like Tommy) I, we, he, she, you, they, it

Object Pronouns are used in place of the object as in a prepositional phrase – like the target or object of a preposition and include these: me, us, him, her, them, it, you (Looking at the two lists you can see that 'it' and 'you' can be used in both forms – that makes it easy!)

This is all lots simpler than it may sound. Just remember the subject pronoun always *receives* the action. The object pronoun *is part of* the activity, but it does not do any acting. Let's examine some examples and see how simple it really is.

He likes talking to her.

He is the subject; *He* is liking and talking. *Her* is the object; all the liking and talking is done *to* her but not *by* her.

Here are some more Subject Pronouns:

I might see you later. (Would you say, “*Me* might see you later?” No. Why? The sentence needs a *Subject* Pronoun because it is doing the acting and 'me' is only used as an Object (takes the action)

Once again: Subject Pronouns = I, we, he, she, they, it, you

Object Pronouns = me, us, him, her, them, it, you

She lives in Nebraska. (Would you say, “*Her* lives in Nebraska?” No. Why? The sentence needs a Subject Pronoun because it is doing the acting (she does what? *lives*) and *her* is objective (*takes* the action).

He makes me angry. (Would you say, “*Him* makes me angry?” No. Why? The sentence needs a Subject Pronoun because it is doing the acting (he does what? *makes*) and *him* is objective (*takes* the action).

They or *them* caught the last train [They.] Why? [They is a subject pronoun]

We or *us* can't see the end. [We] Why? [We is the subject pronoun]

You have to come now.

(The sentence is correct. Why?) [Some might want to say *yous* but *yous* is not a word so just never 'use' it. Others might want to say *you all, especially when there are several people being talked about* but the all is never needed with the word *you*. In the southern United States, '*you all*' is actually considered acceptable in all but the most formal settings.)

Now let's examine some Object Pronouns:

Jack hit *me* on the arm. (Jack hit *I* . . .? No. Why? The sentence needs an Object Pronoun because it is receiving the action – the hitting – and '*I*' is a Sub_____ Pronoun. (See the lists above.)

Larry took *him* aside. (Larry took *he* aside? No. Why? The *him* is receiving the action so it must come from the Object Pronoun list.)

The message wasn't for *her*. (...wasn't for *she*? No. Why? - use the hints above. Her is a _____

Pronoun. When a pronoun follows a preposition, like for, it must be an Obj_____ Pro_____.)

Summer is fun for *us*. (... fun for *we*? No. Why? Same as example just above.)

Margaret took *them* downstairs. (took *they* downstairs? No. Why?)

THE GOOD NEWS IS you probably understood most of the above examples immediately. In most of your speaking you don't usually confuse Subject Pronouns and Object Pronouns even if you don't know what they are.

That's great! Long established language habits that reflect proper rules of English make speaking 'well' far easier.

Now, back to that 'Me and him' phrase (Let's place it into a sentence: "Me and him were late'.) Remember that it is the *and* that often causes the problems. You would probably not say, "Me was late" or "Him was late." You would say, 'I was late' and 'He was late.' So, instead of 'Me and him,' you need to say "I and he were late". EXCEPT for *'the other guy always gets mentioned first'* thing. The phrase, therefore, really needs to be, "*He* (the other guy first) *and I were late.*" You need to use two *subject pronouns* at the beginning of the sentence even when the sentence is plural (held together by the word and), don't you. Understand? Yes, I'll bet you do. When you aren't sure which form to use in a plural setting like that (He *and* I) try each pronoun alone (He was late. Him was late. I was late. Me was late. It almost always solves the problem when you do them separately).

WEEK ELEVEN / APPENDIX PART THREE: How Prepositions Effect Pronouns

(You've come this far so please don't skip it!)

This is a list of most of the prepositions in the English language: (You need to become familiar enough with them that you recognize them as being prepositions whenever you see or hear them.)

about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, at, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, but, by, despite, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, into, like, near, of, off, on, onto, out, outside, over, past, since, through, throughout, till, to, toward, under, underneath, until, up, upon, with, within, and without.

Sometimes there are phrases that start with a preposition. You can guess what those kinds of phrases are called. (Answer: preposition phrases, or more commonly, prepositional phrases.) “*Along the river*”, is a prepositional phrase. A preposition links nouns or pronouns to other words in a sentence. (They ran along the river.) The word or phrase that the preposition introduces is called the *object of the preposition*. Think of the object as the target of the preposition. (In the example above, *along* what? – along the *river*. So, *along* is the preposition – see the list – and *river* is the object.) A preposition usually indicates a relationship of its object (target) to the rest of the sentence. You can often find the object by asking 'what' or 'where' ('*on* what', '*in* what'). Examine these examples and state the preposition and its object:

- 1- The lamp is **on** the table.
- 2- The rug is **beneath** the chair.
- 3- The cane is leaning **against** the wall.
- 4- The dog is **beside** the couch.

5- The plane flew **over** the house.

6- She got a job **during** the summer.

[ANSWERS: 1- *On* is the preposition and table is the object – *on* what? The table. 2- *Beneath* is the preposition and chair is the object – *beneath* what? 3- *Against* is the preposition and wall is the object – *against* what? 4- *Beside* is the p_____ and couch is the o_____. 5- o_____ is the preposition and h_____ is the object. 6- _____ is the _____ and _____ is the _____.

(the blanks in 6 above = during, preposition, summer, object)

See how easy that is! Good for you. Using each of the prepositions listed in the paragraph above make up some interesting prepositional phrases – the preposition plus some object. (Like: *near* the monster, or *for* the blond, or *into* a black hole, or *for* the fun of it. Tell yourself which word is the preposition and which is the object. It will be helpful to write the phrases down so you can review them a few times later. Look through any kind of reading material and search for the prepositions and their objects.)

SO WHAT? Knowing about prepositions and prepositional phrases helps you determine which forms of pronouns you need to use. After a preposition the pronoun **must** be the *object* form. (Remember them: *me, us, him, her, them, you*) and never the subject form (*I, we, he, she, the*). Note that the pronouns *it* and *you* can be used either as a subject pronoun (*It* is big.) or as an object pronoun (The chemical was part *of it*.) How about the two *its* in this sentence: *It* was so small we had to look for *it*. What is the first *it* – (a subject pronoun). What is the second? – (an object pronoun because it follows a p_____ .)

ANSWER: preposition.

A FINAL WORD: Just because you stop saying ain't or gonna is not immediately going to make the extra bucks jump from your boss's cash drawer into your wallet. This is a more gradual process. Hang in there and it WILL happen. My grandpa used to tell me, "Always put your best foot forward and good things will happen for you." He was a wise old man. He meant that I should always show my best side and do my best wherever I was. What we show others is what they react to – how they see us – how they define who we are, even. *Show your best* (your best work, the best side of your cooperative personality, your best English) *and you will be impressive*. Show your 'unbest' and others will often write you off in a hurry.

REMEMBER: One short section (Hint) per week but during each week Practice, Practice, Practice and build a wonderful life.

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