

Fish & Wildlife Service – National Conservation Training Center
Critical Writing/Critical Thinking Follow-up Web Series
Finer Points of Usage

Speakers: Michelle Baker (MB)

Karene Motivans (KM)

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KM: Welcome to another Critical Writing / Critical Thinking follow up webinar. This is Karene Motivans, and I am the course leader for the Critical Writing / Critical Thinking course. I'm really happy to have Michelle Baker back with us to deliver another great webinar on some tips that a lot of you have asked about in the past. And that is particular usage points.

So without further adieu, I'm going to kick it off and let Michelle take this away. Thanks Michelle

MB: Thanks Karene. It's good to be here again. It's good to get another chance to work with the Critical Writers, Critical Thinkers. This is always one of my favorite projects to work on.

So The Finer Points of Usage. Before we start today, I have two reminders that I'd liked to give all of our course participants. Number one, this is a supplement, not a replacement for a good grammar handbook, a good style manual, and especially if you're engaged in editing, for really being familiar with those works and knowing the rules. This is a great opportunity to review or brush up.

Second, we will be talking about some comma rules today, but there was a big chunk of comma rules that we discussed in the class. They were called Restrictive and Non-Restrictive elements. And that's in your grammar module. So I will not be covering those particular grammar rules today. As a matter of fact, I'm going to refer back to the grammar section on one or two occasions.

Just two little caveats to start today's session.

I'd also like to say, and you've heard me say this many times before, that grammar is really tough to learn in an environment like this. We need to do hands on repetition to make it work. I do have a couple of tips for how to get the most out of this webinar today.

Right now, either on a sheet of paper on your desk, or if you want to open up a Word document and keep it minimized while we're talking, jot down some of your most common problems. What do you usually have to look up? What kinds of comments do you typically get back on your written reports? And, do you have questions? Are there discussions you've had around the office that you haven't found satisfactory answers for? Are there questions from high school or college that have always plagued you in this area?

When we're done with today's session, or even as we're working through it, I suggest you grab a couple of post-it notes, and take two tips, something that just really makes sense for you, and put it on a corkboard, on your wall, or even on your computer screen so that over the next several weeks, you can keep referring back to it as you have a problem. Keep that up for about 2 weeks to one month. If after a month, you find that you haven't used the tip, go ahead and take it down and put a new one up.

You can take another look at the webinar, skip through it and see what we cover. There will be this PowerPoint available for you. And also as one of your downloads, you'll have an exercise that looks just like this, and it will be available once the recorded session is up for you to download. What you can do then is after 2 weeks or a month, take this exercise, see what you got right, and what areas are still challenges for you. You can then refer back using the answer key, which will be provided, to those slides in the PowerPoint presentation and you can review those parts of the webinar. So that way, every month, you're getting new tips to put up and practice.

So the topics that we're going to cover today. Throughout the conversation, in areas of style, or where our language is still changing, I will be talking about the current debates—what has changed recently, what changes are on the horizon. So you'll get a sense for what is still in flux. We're going to begin with commonly confused words. Words like *who* and *whose*, or *who* and *whom*.

We're going to take a look at comma rules and suggestions, since not all of our comma "rules" are hard and fast rules. We're going to take a look at the word *that* and talk about when it's necessary and when it can be excluded. We'll discuss the top 5 grammar myths, and we'll talk about why they're myths and when you can actually do these things and get away with them. And then finally, we're going to talk about some capitalization rules, some hyphenation rules, and some other things that still matter to some people, although they're becoming rather archaic with some new software programs that we have available.

So let's get started with commonly confused words. The four sets that I see most often are *who* and *whom*, *its* and *it's*, *affect* and *effect*, and *infer* and *imply*. All of your grammar handbooks have a section called Commonly Confused Words. They're listed in pairs like this in an alphabetical listing. So if there are others like *which* and *that* that give you difficulty, refer to the Commonly Confused Words section in your grammar handbook.

We're going to begin with *who* and *whom*, because the explanation is a little bit complicated. *Who* and *whom* are pronouns, and pronouns can be divided into many different categories. One way that we categorize pronouns is by subjective or objective, and that's the difference between *who* and *whom*.

Who serves as the subject of the sentence. *Who stole my bagel? You'll never believe who took it.* In those cases, *who stole* and *who took* is functioning as the subject of the verb. The word *whom* is an object. It comes as the object of a verb, or as the object of a preposition.

You're more familiar with this difference with words like *he* and *him*. *He walked to the store.* *Jim walked to the store with him.* *He* is the subjective. *Him* is the objective. *With him* is the objective, just like *with whom* is the objective form of *who*.

To whom can we turn in a time of crisis. The word *whom* is the object of the preposition *to*. *The cart was led by a horse whom the driver beat frequently.* This is where it becomes very difficult to tell the difference. If we reversed the second part of the sentence, it would read, *the driver beat him frequently.* Where we've got those two attached, right there, the easy tip is to ask yourself this question: does the verb have a subject?

If we go back to that previous example, the verb is *beat*. It does have a subject, *the driver*, so *whom* is correct. Let's take a look in another form. *Mrs. Dimwit consulted an astrologer...* *Consulted* is our verb. *Mrs. Dimwit* is our subject. *...whom she met in Seattle.* *She* is the subject. *Met* is the verb, so *whom* is the right form.

But again, you could reverse by saying, *she met her in Seattle.* *Her* is the objective form of *she*. *She walked to the store.* *Elaine walked to the store with her.* So *she met her in Seattle.* Objective form, the word *whom* is correct.

On the other hand, in this example, Joyce is the girl who got the job. The word *got* doesn't have a subject, so it needs one in the form of *who*, the subjective form. If we reverse this second part of the sentence, we see that *she got the job*.

That's a summary of *who* and *whom*. Remember that *who* is the subject of the sentence; *whom* is the object of the sentence.

Now let's move on with *its* and *it's*. The problem with this pair is that normally when we have a possessive, we add an apostrophe to indicate the possessive. However, there's always an exception to the rule, and the possessive form of *its* is this one on the right, *its*, no apostrophe. This form is a contraction for the subject-verb pair *it is*.

So the simple rule is, if you can say it is, say it is. Always spell *its* without the apostrophe. So, it is never okay to spell *its* with an apostrophe. Handy little tip that you can put by your desk, but make sure you remember to test. If you can say it is, say it is. And then, it is never okay to spell *its* with an apostrophe.

Our next pair is *affect* and *effect*. This is a usage error that we see frequently, because the word *affect* is most often a verb. To affect the outcome. The word *effect* is most a noun. The effect of the procedure. To tell the difference, I use this very simple mnemonic. *If you can say an, use e.*

The reason this works is because we can put articles—*a*, *an*, and *the*, in front of nouns, but we can't put them in front of verbs. For example, if you say *the run*, you're not talking about the verb, to run, you're talking about the thing that you took that morning. We took the run before our lunch. So articles go in front of nouns. So *if you can say an, use e*, because *e* is the noun form.

Now, you're right, there is an exception. The verb form, to effect is a real verb form, but it has a very limited meaning. It means something like to bring about, or to accomplish. As in, the president effected a major change in legislation. That is a very rare use of the word to effect. Most of the time, this rule will work for you. And because there are almost no instances of the word affect being used as a noun. Again, there's an exception, but it's an archaic noun that you would never encounter in either government or science writing.

So that's *affect* and *effect*. Our last word pair, *infer* and *imply*. Inferring is something that readers do when they're giving a text. Implying is something that writers do when they're making that text. The distinction here is sometimes a little difficult to tell, because if a writer implies something, and a reader infers it, they inferred it from the text. So you could in that case be tempted to say that the text inferred.

The distinction is whether you're doing something or whether something is being done to you. Are you, or is John, implying something, or did you get some clues, some evidence, that led you to infer something? Implying is something that is done, inferring is something that is done to us. That might be a better way for us to make sense for some occasions.

A good example of the difference. I imply that you need to revise your paper, and based on my hints, you infer that I didn't think very highly of your first draft. Let me repeat that. I imply that you need to revise your paper. That's an active thing that I'm doing. Those are hints that I give to you. Based on my hints, you infer that I didn't think highly of the first draft. You are using evidence to arrive at a conclusion. A tricky one. But remember just that readers infer, writers imply.

Probably the most difficult mark of punctuation to master in English, and because it is such a frequent mark of punctuation, is the comma. One of the reasons that it's difficult, unlike periods or semicolons, which have very limited sets of uses. There are some occasions in which a comma is required. There are some occasions in which a comma absolutely cannot be used. And there are some occasions where it's up to you to decide if you want a comma there or not.

Let's talk first about the comma rules. When do you have to have a comma? In these three situations, a comma is required. And we're going to look at each of these in detail. The first of these is in a non-restrictive situation. If you're providing additional information for your reader's information, then it is non-restrictive. The commas tell the reader they can skip that material if they need more brain space to process what's happening. We reviewed several examples in class that I'm not going to look at here.

The second comma rule. You have to use commas with coordinating conjunctions under two circumstances. Before we discuss the two circumstances, let's review coordinating conjunctions. They are FANBOYS. That's our mnemonic to remember coordinating conjunctions. FANBOYS. *For, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*. You have to use a comma with a coordinating conjunction in two circumstances.

Number one, in a list of three or more items. Now, I mentioned current debates. For about the last 10 years, editors at the Chicago Manual of Style, the Council of Science

Editors, and even the GPO have been arguing that that third comma is not necessary. This example demonstrates why it is. *I dedicate my life's work to my dogs, God and Country.*

It is possible that I have two dogs named God and Country. It is also possible that I am dedicating my life's work to three things: my dogs, God, and my country. With that comma rule being optional, the meaning here is ambiguous. And it's for that reason that I argue this comma is necessary. If you're working with the Chicago Manual of Style, with the Council of Science Editors, or with the GPO, check your style manual. If they say that it's optional, and if you don't believe this comma is necessary, you still have to be consistent. If you omit that final comma, always omit it. If you include it, always include it. This is one area that's being debated. Check your style manual and be consistent.

Coordinating conjunctions—FANBOYS—there are two rules for when you have to use a comma. The first is with a serial list. Three or more items in a row. The second is when you're joining two independent clauses. You can review back to your notebook for a definition of independent clauses. Simply speaking, they are sentences; sentences that can stand by themselves.

Here are some examples.

Jim studied in the sweet shop for his chemistry quiz. We could end the sentence right there. We have a subject *Jim*, a verb *studied*, and a series of objects where and why, *in the sweet shop, for his chemistry quiz*. The second part of the sentence is also independent. We could read it alone as a sentence. It was hard to concentrate because of the noise. *It was.* Subject, verb, complete thought.

This coordinating conjunctions—FANBOYS, for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so—is joining two independent clauses, complete sentences. We have to have a comma here. It is not an option. It is a requirement. And no one is debating that. This is a consistent rule among everyone.

But this is also why coordinating conjunctions are tricky. Because here, you should not have a comma. *Jim studied in the sweet shop for his chemistry test but was unable to concentrate.* The beginning of the sentence is the same, but let's read the second part. *Was unable to concentrate*—that's not a complete sentence. It's lacking a subject. Jim studied but was. That's what we call a compound element. It's not the same thing, and you cannot use a comma here.

So, those are the times when you have to use a comma. Coordinating conjunctions when it's at the end of a serial list or when it is joining two independent clauses. Now, some examples for when you cannot use a comma. A coordinating conjunction that is not at the end of a series list or connecting two independent clauses. The *but* that we just right here.

Another time when you cannot use a comma. Between a subject and a verb. Registering for our fitness program before September 15, will save you 40% of the membership cost. Because there's a number right here, it's very tempting to put a

comma right there. But the subject of our sentence is *registering*. The verb is *will*. You do not want a comma to come between your subject and your verb. The only exception to that is the restrictive and non-restrictive rule. Again, refer back to your notebook for that information.

You also do not want a comma preceding a list. *She traveled around the world with comma*. That comma should not be there. There are different ways you could structure this sentence where you would put right here either a colon or a dash.

In the example, *did you read about MacComber's short, happy life?* We could say short and happy, or we could say happy short life. So these are coordinate adjectives, and the comma is required. On the other hand, *the dark red dress*. We cannot say the dark and red dress. Nor can we say the red dark dress. Because it's not a dark dress. It's a dark red dress. The adjectives are building on one another. That's why they're called cumulative adjectives. You cannot use a comma to separate these.

Those are the basics for when you have to use a comma, you can't use a comma, and you have your choice of using a comma. But there's one other situation where you get to decide which commas you would like to put in. This is primarily the case with introductory phrases. If you have at the beginning of the sentence:

Before the lights went out, Georgia was functioning was fine.

Before the lights went out is an introductory phrase. Does your reader need a comma to identify the subject? Maybe. It depends on all of those elements of the writers' triangle. What really matters is that you decide. If you're a heavy comma user, you would want a comma there. If you're a light comma user, you would not want a comma there. And if you're a moderate comma user, you probably would not want a comma there. What is most important is that you remain consistent.

So primarily with introductory phrases, you have your choice whether to use a comma or not. You should remain consistent depending on whether you are a heavy, light, or moderate user.

Now let's talk about some grammar myths that have been going around for about the last three decades. Never split an infinitive is the first. Never end a sentence with a preposition or start one with a conjunction. Don't never use a double negative, and don't use the passive voice. Every single one of these is a myth, and we're going to look at the reasons why.

If we were never to split infinitives, then that famous phrase used at the beginning of Star Trek, *to boldly go where no man has gone before*, would never have entered the English language. It's sound a lot better than *to go boldly where no man has gone before*. There are some stylistic reasons for that having to do with the balance between the oh's and the b's and the g's in the sentence. Obviously, we're not going to get into those. You can split an infinitive, especially if it sounds better.

And an example like this. If we were to say, *the landlord claimed to refuse flatly singing in his apartment*. Trying to follow a so-called rule in this case would actually

lead to confusion, and the best purpose of language is to communicate clearly. Split an infinitive if it sounds better or if it's more clear.

Never end a sentence with a preposition. Here's another example of a time when it might sound better if we didn't follow the rule. *There is no need to notify us about problems of which we are already aware.* Doesn't it sound easier to say, *there is no need to notify us about problems that we are already aware of.*

Again, there's a good reason for this. *Of which* disguises the subject *we* and makes this sentence hard to read. This one is a lot more clear. Okay, so it ends with a preposition, but it's clear.

There's no way that this could possibly be deemed a good sentence: *That is the sort of thing up with which I will not put.* It follows the rule, but I would argue that kind of communication is very unclear.

Don't start a sentence with a conjunction. We have all heard this many times over. As a matter of fact, Word, if you have it on a particular kind of grammar check that includes grammar and style will actually mark your sentences wrong for doing this. There's only one time when it's wrong. Here's your hint. If you're using a coordinating conjunction—FANBOYS. By all means, start a sentence with a coordinating conjunction. Also, correlative conjunctions: *if ... then, not only ... but also.* These are conjunctions that come in pairs. *Whether ... or not* is another example. Feel free to start a sentence with those.

Conjunctive adverbs—however, moreover, therefore—feel free to begin a sentence with those words. Just follow them with a comma. The only time you have a problem is if you're using a subordinating conjunction, and there's no independent clause in the sentence.

Let's look at some examples. Here's a sentence beginning with a coordinating conjunction. *For thine is the power and glory forever, amen.* This is a sentence in one of the most beautiful works of literature ever created—the King James Version of the Bible, and it's a grammatically correct sentence.

Therefore, here is a conjunction adverb. *Therefore, we conclude the change to be warranted and even necessary.* We use this construction all the time. Nothing incorrect about it, although notice that little comma there.

But the subordinating conjunction. Both of these sentences begin with a subordinating conjunction. This sentence ends there. *While even we couldn't see the difference.* The word *while* makes this a dependent clause. Incomplete. It's not a sentence. It's what we call a sentence fragment. Very rarely inexperienced writers run into trouble when they start a sentence with a subordinating conjunction. That's not a problem for the vast majority of experienced writers, and this is a perfectly correct sentence.

Although we didn't see the need for the proposed change, we included it to appease the commentator. The sentence starts with a subjunctive adverb, but it has an

independent clause, right here, so it's fine. In other words, start a sentence with a conjunction—not a problem.

A double negative cancels out. This rule goes back to an old belief that language and logic are the same. Language is conveyed using logic, that's for sure, and vice versa, but they're not the same thing. *I didn't find the movie entirely unappealing.* Look at all the negatives in that sentence. *Did not* and *un*. But do you really want to tell your best friend, who loves the movie, *It stunk!?* Wouldn't it be more politic, more diplomatic, to say, *I didn't the movie entirely unappealing.*

There are times in our language when this is actually preferable. That's the great thing about style. It allows you to make choices like this.

Finally, our last grammar myth. The passive voice is unappealing. As we saw in our class, one of the greatest science writers in the history of our country, Rachel Carson, wrote extensively in the passive voice. And yet no one reading *Silent Spring* in 1962 thought that her writing was boring or unappealing. Quite the opposite. People found it really compelling. In the less than two decades since their use, synthetic pesticides have been so thoroughly distributed. By who? That question is not relevant to her argument. It's already been done. Now it's time to fix it.

Solving the problem is where she wants to concentrate. Not placing blame. This is an appropriate time and place to use the passive voice. We talked about this pretty extensively in class, particularly when we looked at sentence structures. Things like putting familiar information first or maintaining a consistent character are more important for your reader than trying to eliminate all the passive voice in your text.

Now let's talk about the occasions when the word *that* can be eliminated from your writing. This is probably a tip that you have received to help if you have any wordiness. And it's fine to get rid of the word *that* normally when it's being used a conjunction. Sometimes when it's being used as a relative pronoun, it's still okay to get rid of. But if it's being used as a demonstrative pronoun, you have to have it.

Here are those pronouns again, right? And now we've added more categories—relative and demonstrative. Well, let's look at some examples. First, let's talk about that as a conjunction. You could say, *I can't believe that he's capable of murder.* The word *that* is connecting this part of the sentence with this part of the sentence. It's a linking word or a conjunction. But you could just as easily say, *I can't believe he's capable of murder.* And your reader understands you with no difficulty.

That as a relative pronoun. *She was so tired that she nearly fell asleep at the wheel.* In this case, the word *that* refers back to how tired she was, *so tired that*. Again, you could say, *she was so tired she nearly fell asleep at the wheel*, and very few people would have difficulty understanding you.

But the demonstrative pronoun. A demonstrative pronoun literally refers to another word that has been used previously. *Do you remember what you saw that night.* You clearly can't say, *do you remember what you saw night.* You need to specify *that night*. And this question assumes a context, an ongoing conversation about a specific

night that has been referred to previously. That's a demonstrative pronoun, just like the *that* in the sentence I just used. *That's a demonstrative pronoun.* And you can't get rid of it.

The conditional is one area of grammar that is really under fire right now. Simply speaking the conditional is a verb voice. It's not a mood. It's not a tense. It's a voice. And for that reason, a lot of editors and writers have stopped making a distinction between the conditional and the regular verb voice. The problem is this. In a hypothetical situation, we should be using the conditional. This is an if clause. *If I were to say that the conditional was going out of style.*

Many people today are saying, *If I was saying that the conditional was going.* When we say it like that, most of us hear, that sounds kind of odd. But we use that a lot, as in conditional was. This word *conditional* is still under the *if*, it's still hypothetical. But we don't have a problem with the *was* here.

The reason editors say is *If I were to say that the conditional were going out of style.* Some editors that here it's uncertain whether the conditional is or is not going out of style, and the conditional, or the hypothetical is too strong in this case. It's a debate. I personally prefer the conditional. You should at least be aware of what it is, particularly if you're working as an editor.

Alright. We're going to close out today with a discussion of capitalization, particularly in title phrases, hyphens, and other relics of typesetting. Let's take a look first at caps. There are four rules for how to capitalize your titles appropriately. The first rule is to capitalize the first and last rule always, no matter what those words are. They should be capitalized.

Second—and here's where you may need a dictionary to determine what part of speech each word is—you should capitalize all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and subordinate conjunctions. That's an important difference. *As*, *because*, and *although*. We've also called those subjunctive adverbs. Those words are interchangeable. Subordinate conjunctions and subjunctive adverbs. They should be capitalized.

The third rule. Lower case all articles—remember that those are *a*, *an*, and *the*. Coordinating conjunctions, and prepositions, regardless of length, when they are other than the first or last word.

This little phrase right here is what is currently being debated. Regardless of length. There are some prepositions like *through* or *between* that are very long. And there are some editors who argue that those words should be capitalized. Check your manual of style to be sure and remain consistent.

Finally, lower case the word *to* in an infinitive. There are only two times that the word *to* is used. It's used in an infinitive and as a preposition. So essentially, you should always lower case the word *to*.

Let's go through an example. The word *a* is an article, which should be lower cased, but it's the first word in the title, so it's capital. The word *year* is the last word in the title, and so it's capital. It's also a noun, so it would have been capital anyway. *Short*, adjective. *Trip*, noun. Here's that questionable area. The word *through* is technically a preposition. Some editors are now arguing that long prepositions should be capitalized. But if you go by the strict old rules, which I just listed, it should be lower case.

Articles—*a*, *an*, and *the*—are lower case. *Grain* is an adjective. *And* is a coordinating conjunction. *To* is a preposition. *The* is an article. All lower case. You can continue to test the rest of the title yourself, or you can practice this yourself in the exercise that you can download. But here's a practical example of how those title rules play out.

Now let's talk about the hyphen, which is probably the trickiest mark of punctuation other than the comma. The hyphen, which is one dash, is commonly used to separate adjectives from other parts of speech. But there's a trick. It only does this when the adjective appears in front of the noun. As in this sentence, *that was a one-of-a-kind experience*. *Experience* is a noun. *One-of-a-kind* is the adjective. So it's hyphenated. Well, in this sentence, *experience* is still a noun, and *one of a kind* is still an adjective modifying *experience*, but we don't hyphenate it. That's a usage rule. It's just common usage. It doesn't make sense. But that's the way we normally do it.

When we don't use the hyphen is to separate adjectives from adverbs ending in *-ly*. Again the important exception to the rule. *A brightly lit room can take a dark coat of paint*. Your second example here. You cannot use a hyphen between the words *brightly* and *lit*. *Brightly* is an adverb ending in *-ly*, *lit* is an adjective, and they both modify *room*. Sometimes we're tempted to put an adjective there, but we can't.

However, the word *well* is also an adverb, as in *I am doing well today, thank you*. And the word *known* is an adjective. But because this adjective doesn't end in *-ly*, we do commonly hyphenate it. Again, a usage preference. Most of your style manuals will tell you to do this, even though it's not consistent.

If you'd like a full set of rules for the hyphen, you can refer to www.grammarbook.com. They have a number of different rules there that you can refer to. By the way, the answer to the question is only if the words *anal* and *retentive* are appearing in front of the noun as in, *my anal-retentive supervisor keeps adding hyphens to my work*.

The hyphen comes in another form, which is called an en dash. The en dash is constructed of two dashes that our Word program puts together to make something that's slightly longer than a hyphen and slightly shorter than an em dash, which I'll show you in just one moment. There are only two times when an en dash is used. Number one, in an all-inclusive numerical range. If you intended to say *5 through 7 all inclusive*, you should use an en dash, as opposed to *5 through 7 exclusive*, which you would indicate with a hyphen.

The difference is miniscule. It used to matter a lot. Today, it's very hard to tell. In the second situation, you use an en dash with a compound hyphenated adjective, such as

Civil War – era dresses. Civil War and era go together, but Civil War is itself a compound adjective, so you put an en dash between them. The words all – inclusive numerical range are also a compound hyphenated adjective. Numerical is an adjective, as is all-inclusive, which is your compound. Those are the only two situations, and they're very rare, when an en dash is employed.

The em dash, which is slightly longer than the en dash, is used to set off appositives with a comma. Remember that appositives are words that rename a noun. In this case, the noun, my list, has a lot of different things on it, and those things are separated by commas. *My list—drop off the car, visit the Laundromat, take the kids out to play—*because there are commas inside, you can't use a comma here, so you use an em dash instead.

Or you use the em dash to set off a parenthetical expression. While Congress was voting—a process infamous for its timeliness—the whips busily tallied up their supporters. This parenthetical expression is being emphasized. You could use commas here. The em dash provides an element of emotion that the commas don't have. For that reason, it's very rare to see the em dash used for this in either government or scientific writing.

The last typesetting relic that I'll talk about today is underlining versus italicizing. There used to be a major difference between these two because of the way in which books specifically were typeset. Since the invention of the computer, it hasn't mattered, and since the invention of the internet, which some of you remember is younger than most of us. Since the invention of the internet, underlining is now used primarily to indicate a hyperlink in a text.

When you are formatting titles in your document, you have your choice between using an underline or using italics. Most style manuals are moving to italics because underlining is being used for hyperlinks. Check your style manual. But if you use italics, you can never use underlining in the whole entire document. You have to remain consistent. So you can't mix the two in one document. If you're underlining your titles, underline all of your titles. Do not italicize any of them, and vice versa.

If you'd like more information about any of the topics that we discussed today, or if there are topics that we didn't discuss today that you'd like answers for, there are a number of resources you can access. And most of them are online and fairly good. www.Grammarphobia.com is a searchable database with a number of questions.

www.Grammargirl.com has searchable databases. There are also resources you can download and resources you can purchase. And she offers a daily podcast of between 4 and 10 minutes that allows you to get a little refresher every single day, which is really nice.

The woman responsible for Grammar Girl is Mignon Fogarty and she's written a book called *The Grammar Devotional* that collects a lot of her podcasts and tips. That's a handy reference work that you may want to have with you.

www.WebGrammar.com, like Grammar Phobia, has a virtual database.

www.AskOxford.com is very much like your Miriam Webster's site, except it's more interactive and more complete. Ask Oxford is a question and answer venue where you can actually input your questions and you create like a discussion thread in a forum.

And at Washington State University, a professor by the last name of Brian has put together a list of common errors. The infer / imply, affect / effect distinctions can be found here with great explanations and examples. He has also put those together in a reference book that you can purchase from this site, and he has a box calendar that goes for all 365 days of the year, so you can kind of put that list of errors on your desk and have one every day that you can flip through. Very handy way to learn these materials.

Remember that you should take a couple of tips that we learned today, post them on your corkboard or next to your computer, right up on your screen, and in a couple of weeks, come back to this exercise, answer these questions to the best of your ability, and when you download the exercise, you'll have the answer key right there. The answer key will also tell you which PowerPoint slides you should refer to for a refresher. So if you had difficulty with (e), then the answer key will say that you should go back to the PowerPoint slides having to do with comma rules and coordinating conjunctions.

Folks, I hope that you have found today's session useful, and I hope that you'll come back to it as you find the need to do so. I look forward to having great writers improving and thanks so much for being with us today. Have a great afternoon!

[audio end]