



Why Good Grammar Remains Relevant (& Why The Workforce Needs Better Writers)

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Why Good Grammar Remains Relevant

(& Why the Workforce Needs Better Writers)

By Bryn Greenhalgh

Congrats!

You're a new college graduate eyeing your dream job. Your résumé is impressive, albeit a bit wordy. And you're confident you can step up your email game. But even with your innate interviewing talent, your job offers have been less than thrilling lately. Now more than ever, you're ready to enter the workforce and prove your worth. What could be missing? The answer may be as simple as developing more proficient grammar skills.

The bottom line is this: *companies want to hire effective writers*. And where does effective writing stem from? Proper, purposeful grammar usage. These next few pages will explain why learning and implementing these principles is one of the best ways to amplify your employee profile.

Let's explore why improving your personal grammar use is so relevant to communication in the workplace. We'll discuss the benefits of learning the rules, the prevalence of grammar-related issues, and the reasons why you should put this knowledge into action.

Quality Grammar Leads to Quality Writing

Communication skills are key in all fields. If you can't write clear messages, you can't be trusted to relay important information. Regardless of the subject, the way you write affects your image. Remember, it doesn't matter if you're talking about your personal brand or your business brand—your grammar...represents you in the world.¹ The way we speak and write has a profound effect on our audience. This has everything to do with grammar, which isn't just about memorizing abstract rules—it also involves concise writing and clear referencing.

¹ Megan Krause, "Good Grammar Is (Still) Important and Here's Why," ClearVoice, January 17, 2020, <https://www.clearvoice.com/blog/yes-good-grammar-still-important-heres/>.

Why It's Worth the Work

Using correct grammar improves our perceived qualifications. It shows we took time to polish [ourselves] and forms a good impression on the [readers].² Grammar use directly affects one's ability to communicate, and if it lacks proficiency, the end result will reflect a message that is not favorable to potential employers.

Ultimately, our language use can make others assume and expect things about our initial capacity and future potential as an employee. You have the power to determine whether or not those assumptions are in your favor.

Readers are turned off by a variety of factors, but the main contender is how the message is written. - *(in separate text box for effect)*

The pie chart below shows the prevalence of grammar mistakes on the Internet just last year in Poland. Notice how most of the errors lie in professional platforms, such as Facebook, websites, and forums, rather than casual social media like Instagram. This is concerning—shouldn't our best communication efforts be placed where we network? Be careful, especially on the Internet, where your words can be easily accessed by people who could potentially have a say in the matter concerning your job application.

This Is What You Meant, Right?

You might be wondering why there is so much emphasis on the topic of grammar. As shown in the graphic above, grammar mistakes exist on all social media platforms, particularly on Facebook. One reason for these mistakes is simply ignorance—whether it be uninformed or unintended. However, when sharing a message on social media, a grammar mistake could cost you correct interpretation by viewers.

The placement and usage of phrases, subjects, and even punctuation marks have the power to determine the impression that each message makes. Allow me to demonstrate why you should be concerned about professional writing.³ It is eye-opening to see how something as small as a comma, when misplaced or forgotten, can twist even the simplest of messages (below).

“I'd like to thank my managers, Sarah and Zach” has a very different meaning from *“I'd like to thank my managers, Sarah, and Zach.”* The addition of the comma suggests you are thanking your managers, as well as Sarah and Zach, rather than your managers, whose names are Sarah and Zach.

Notice how the addition of a single comma made a necessary distinction between parties. How awkward would it be if you sent this email at work and Sarah and Zach were, in fact, not your managers? It should be no secret that being formal, clear, specific, and using correct grammar are some of the most important [considerations] when it comes to office communications.⁴

Magnify your job qualifications by streamlining and proofreading your language – *(in separate*

Why Bother?

Put simply, the only purpose of writing is to be read.⁵ This begs the question—who are we writing for? It depends on the situation, but it is essential to know your audience. This will affect how you write and determine what tone, words, and format you use—you guessed it, all part of grammar. Whether you are writing personal emails or an official business pitch, the way you use your words matters, because poor grammar and spelling...contribute to writing that no one wants to read.⁶ And if no one has a desire to read what you've written, there is no point in writing it.

³ Devashish Chakravarty, "Write Your Success Story: How Strong Writing Contributes to Your Career," *The Economic Times*, May 19, 2020, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/wealth/earn/write-your-success-story-how-strong-writing-contributes-to-your-career/articleshow/75773384.cms>.

⁴ BW Online Bureau, "Importance of Formal Communication at the Workplace," *Business World*, February 20, 2019, <http://bwpeople.businessworld.in/article/Importance-Of-Formal-Communication-At-The-Workplace/20-02-2019-167366/>.

⁵ Chakravarty, "Write Your Success Story."

⁶ Matthew MacLachlan, "The Importance of 'Soft Skills' in an Interconnected World," *HR Review*, May 11, 2016, <https://www.hrreview.co.uk/hr-news/strategy-news/matthew-maclachlan-national-success-international-failure/62265>.

If you practice and implement these skills, you'll have a much better chance at securing your seat at the table. Know why?

Employees who have good communication fluency are more likely to succeed at their jobs because their writing...reflects a level of professional competency.⁷ – *(in separate text box for emphasis)*

Improving Your Grammar Is Within Your Control

Now, I feel the need to ease your growing concern that you've got to hit the usage dictionaries until you're a professional grammarian. There is no such need, nor such urgency. I merely mean to express that no one is harmed by expanding his or her knowledge of grammar, and that we are, every one of us, improving upon [our] current level of mastery and thus increasing [our] professional effectiveness and income.⁸ We can all stand to benefit from learning how to write clearer, more concise messages and thus decrease misunderstandings, which is applicable in every workplace. Strong writing communicates the ability to express oneself clearly—and when you showcase that ability, your employee profile will thank you.

There is no set age or stage of life when it is "best" to begin improving your grammar skills. I simply urge that you immerse yourself now. There is a wide variety of online grammar lessons available for you to practice with, including lessons with LinkedIn Learning and apps like Grammarly that can help you proofread your messages with more care. Regardless of how cumbersome it may seem, the truth is, soft skills are a hard necessity and are only becoming more favored by employers.⁹ Communication, to the native speaker and writer, might seem effortless, but the more thought given to clarification, the more effective you will be in the long

⁷ Reddy, “Why Is Grammar Important in Communication.”

⁸ Chakravarty, “Write Your Success Story.”

⁹ MacLachlan, “The Importance of ‘Soft Skills.’”