

Why it's important to 'get the grammar right!'

The Oxford Dictionary defines grammar as “Art and Science dealing with a language’s inflexions” and “showing relation between words as used in speech or writing”. Quite simply grammar gives us the rules which enable the writer or speaker to communicate with directness and clarity. When writing a letter of application or writing articles and memos for other people to read, great care should be taken to write grammatically. A clearly constructed grammatical letter of application will create a positive impression. Articles for publication, instructions, directions and memos should also be written with care.

Equal care should be taken with spoken language and whilst this can be less formal than written language, the basic rules of grammar should still apply, particularly if you are communicating with business colleagues, clients or members of the public. Generally spoken English is more idiomatic than written language. But still the rules of basic grammar should apply. We all speak differently when we are with our friends or family; we tend to be less structured, less formal and often less correct. The important thing is to use language that is appropriate for the occasion.

Closely linked with grammar is punctuation and in the written mode of language this is extremely important. Knowing how to use full stops, commas, capital letters and other pieces of punctuation is vital for successful communication and effectiveness of meaning. When speaking we tend naturally to insert our own punctuation; this is instinctive. When we speak we automatically put in exclamation marks, question marks and other pieces of punctuation.

A careless approach to grammar in professional or business life could well put you at a severe disadvantage. Taking care with what you write and say, however, is sure to pay dividends.

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