

Title:

Email Grammar Quiz

Word Count:

555

Summary:

How good is your grammar? When writing email messages, proper grammar is important. By being aware of common mistakes, you can avoid them.

Keywords:

email, communication, business, marketing, customer service

Article Body:

How good is your grammar? When writing email messages, proper grammar is important. By being aware of common mistakes, you can avoid them.

In other words, you don't need to know all the rules. (What a relief!) But, . . . (You knew that was coming, didn't you?) you need to know what you don't know. If you are unsure if something is correct, look it up. Or, ask someone knowledgeable for assistance.

If you don't have the time to seek help, here's a quick tip. Use different wording. To put it another way:

If you can't determine how to make the sentence correct, re-word the sentence so it doesn't contain the item you're having trouble with. Please don't tell your high school English teacher that I made this suggestion!

Yes, it would be great if the entire country knew proper English. However, the reality is many people don't. The goal of this article is to convince you to select the grammar that you know is correct.

Quiz

Are your grammar skills good enough? Find out by taking the following quiz.

Directions: Indicate whether the specified phrase is Correct (C) or Incorrect (I).

C I 1. John is (laying) on the couch in the office.

- C I 2. Peter (laid) the file on the desk.
- C I 3. He (sat) in front of the computer.
- C I 4. (Set) the files on my desk when you are done.
- C I 5. The customers want (their) price quote now.
- C I 6. The customer wants (their) phone call returned.
- C I 7. Wilma had (less) callers on her line.
- C I 8. Fred has (fewer) employees.

Solutions

1. Incorrect.

The correct answer is lying.

To lie means to recline.

The verb is intransitive; it does not require an object.

The past tense is "lay."

2. Correct.

To lay means to put or place.

The verb is transitive; it requires an object.

The past tense is "laid."

3. Correct.

To sit means to be seated.

The verb is intransitive.

The past tense is "sat."

4. Correct.

To set means to put or place.

The verb is transitive.

The past tense is "set."

(Yes, it is the same as the present tense. This is, after all, English grammar.

It is not supposed to make sense.)

5. Correct.

The antecedent is plural which requires a plural pronoun.

In other words, the plural form of "customers" requires using a plural pronoun

"their."

6. Incorrect.

The antecedent is singular which requires a singular pronoun.

In other words, the singular form of "customer" requires using a singular pronoun "his or her."

This can also be written "his/her."

7. Incorrect.

The correct word is "fewer."

Fewer is used when you can count the quantity (e.g., "fewer students," or "fewer hours in the workday," or "fewer corn kernels").

Less is used with an indeterminate quantity (e.g., "less interest," or "less time," or "less corn").

8. Correct.

Fred can count the number of his employees, so "fewer" is correct.

Score:

8 = You're perfect. (But, you knew that already.) Keep emailing!

6 - 7 = You're okay. You could learn a few tips from my book, Email Etiquette Made Easy (see link in resource box).

3 - 5 = You could use some help. Try my book, Email Etiquette Made Easy (see link in resource box).

Less than 3 = Ugh! Call me now! We'll schedule your intense therapy immediately.