

The Writers Network News: November 2023

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The Writers Network News

No Rules; Just Write!

Editor: Bobbie Christmas

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Notes

Some links in this newsletter are created through TinyUrl.com, which converts long links into shorter ones.

Our format doesn't support italics, so italics are indicated with underlines before and after words.  
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Writer's Quote of the Month

"Those who write clearly have readers; those who write obscurely have commentators."

-Albert Camus

Albert Camus was an Algerian-French philosopher, author, dramatist, journalist, and political activist. He was the recipient of the 1957 Nobel Prize in Literature at the age of 44, the second-youngest recipient in history. His works include _The Stranger_, _The Plague_, _The Myth of Sisyphus_, _The Fall_, and _The Rebel_.
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One: From the Editor's Desk: Writing As Catharsis

Dear Fellow Writers:

I awoke on the morning of October 24 with gloom hanging over my head. It was the anniversary of my sister's death more almost sixty years ago, yet I still grieve over losing my best friend and biggest supporter in an unnecessary accident. Yes, all accidents are unnecessary, but hers was, as are most, avoidable.

The grieving process is an odd one, as those of us who have losses in our lives know. It doesn't always follow the order of what has become thought of as the traditional stages of grief: shock, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally acceptance. This morning, even after fifty-nine years had passed, I felt as if I'd just gotten the news that my sister was dead. As a writer how do I handle grief when it's consuming my every thought? I write.

I wrote a long memorial message about my sister Sandi on Facebook and posted an unposed photo of her that I'd taken two years before her demise. I bawled my eyes out as I wrote, experiencing a near panic attack. I had to take time to return my breathing to normal, but I did feel a little better. Writing is my catharsis; it's how I deal with my strongest emotions.

To see my Facebook post, go here: <https://tinyurl.com/bdj6fpnt>

Does writing help you deal with your emotions?

Yours in writing,
Bobbie Christmas Bobbie@zebraeditor.com or bzebra@aol.com
Author of two award-winning editions of Write In Style, owner of Zebra Communications, editor of "The Writers Network News," and senior editor of Enjoy Cherokee Magazine

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Members Write

Mark Peresich thanked me for offering a free report on how to pick the right editor for a manuscript. He added, "This is something I've wondered about, and I'm nearing the point where one will soon be needed." He added a postscript that warmed my heart: "P.S. I'm working my way through your Write In Style (2nd edition) and enjoying it."

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Marlene Clark made a point about reflexive pronouns, as addressed in the last newsletter. She wrote, "I don't believe that 'I, myself,' is incorrect in your sentence. I think it's redundant and possibly pompous, but grammar books use examples such as that because it operates as it should."

She added, "I edit activity reports, and I do see mistakes with 'myself,' mostly in the form of 'Jane and myself received the award,' or, 'The award went to Jane and myself.' The errors have to do with 'I' and 'me' uncertainty. If a writer uses it correctly, I might leave it in."

Marlene is right; "I, myself" is often redundant, and strong creative writing avoids redundancy. I should clearly differentiate the usage as redundant, rather than saying it's incorrect.

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Kathy Halgren, a subscriber and client, wrote, "Thank you so much for the time you spent making my manuscript so much clearer. I am pleased to see your many remarks."

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Thank everyone for writing. Your responses inspire me to keep providing this free newsletter for writers.
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### Two: Ask the Book Doctor: About Common Errors

By Bobbie Christmas

Q: I was watching a reality show some years back wherein celebrities were competing in attempts to win money for their favorite charities. Something happened in it that has bothered me for years. Cyndi Lauper said something like, "I felt bad about that." The MC, who I thought was supposed to be the smartest person in the show, corrected her and said, "You felt badly, Cyndi. The correct word is badly." Cyndi dropped her head and with embarrassment "corrected" herself and said, "I felt badly."

Am I crazy? Wasn't she right in the first place?

A: You're not crazy. You felt bad about the MC's response, because he was wrong. To feel badly means that you aren't able to feel with your fingers. To not feel well emotionally, you feel bad. I could go into great grammatical explanation of the difference, but grammar is boring. Just know that your gut feeling was right. I feel bad for Cyndi for having been correctly so badly.

Q: For some reason I keep seeing and hearing people say "I's," as in "That was the end of John and I's relationship." Is "I's" now accepted in the English language?

A: Oddly the answer is yes, but not when "my" is the correct pronoun. "I's" can mean "self," but it's rarely used in that sense these days. In your example, "John's and my relationship" would be the correct form.

Q: Lately it seems everyone is saying "based off of" instead of "based on" and "based out of" instead of "based in." For example, I've heard "Based off a survey we learned that our home office should be based out of Chicago." What do you think of these uses?

A: First, while both "based out of" and "based in" are correct, they need to be used to mean what they intended.

"Based out of" means that a place may have headquarters in a specific place, but most of the work is done at other locations. "Based in" means that the person or company is in one location most of the time.

"Based off of," however, is a variant, whereas "based on" is the preferred usage. "Based on the better roads in that area, we chose to drive the southern route."

Q: I want to know what you think about the use of "me and," as in the following example: "Me and my mother went to the store."

A: What I think doesn't matter. It's wrong. The correct usage would be "My mother and I went to the store." We wouldn't say "Me went to the store," so the correct pronoun is "I."

Send your questions to Bobbie Christmas, book editor, author of Write In Style: Use Your Computer to Improve Your Writing, and owner of Zebra Communications. Bobbie@zebraeditor.com or BZebra@aol.com. Read Bobbie's Zebra Communications blog at <https://www.zebraeditor.com/blog/>.

For much more information on hundreds of subjects of vital importance to writers, order Purge Your Prose of Problems, a Book Doctor's Desk Reference Book\_ at <http://tinyurl.com/4ptjnr>. An excellent reference book for all writing groups.

Bobbie Christmas's award-winning second edition of Write In Style: How to Use Your Computer to Improve Your Writing is available from Amazon at <https://tinyurl.com/y7ppcdkd> or buy it directly at <https://tinyurl.com/y7p9xkbb>.  
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Three: Subjects of interest to writers

Really

Really is a word that often is unnecessary. Unlike very, really does sometimes have a purpose in some sentences; however, like most adverbs, it adds little. Consider deleting really to make the sentence tighter. Always avoid using really in unclear ways, such as this: After he got his cosmetology license, he met a young barber who taught him how to really cut hair. If the man went to school to learn how to cut hair, the example sentence implies he did not actually learn to cut hair until a friend showed him, which is not the intended meaning. Better: After he got his cosmetology license, he met a young barber who taught him to cut hair even better than school had taught him.

Really is the same as literally, so be sure not to use it in cases where literally would be incorrect, as in the following: He really hit the ceiling when he heard the news. Because the person did not actually strike the ceiling, really needs to be deleted in such a case.

Reserve the use of really to the following cases:

1. In actual truth or fact: The horseshoe crab isn't really a crab at all.
2. Indeed (especially in dialogue): "Really, you shouldn't have done it."

(Excerpt from Purge Your Prose of Problems, a book doctor's desk reference\_, available only at ZebraEditor.com.)

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NaNoWriMo

National Novel Writing Month began in 1999 as a daunting but straightforward challenge: to write 50,000 words of a novel in thirty days. Now, each year on November 1, hundreds of thousands of people around the world begin to write, determined to end the month with a first draft. They enter the month as elementary school teachers, mechanics, or stay-at-home parents. They leave novelists. Learn more and sign up at <https://nanowrimo.org/national-novel-writing-month>

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Words Writers Should Know

Verso/Recto

Verso: a left-hand page

Recto: a right-hand page

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Do You Know What You Don't Know?

Which word is correct? When is it one word or two words? When should it be hyphenated? You're not the only person confused, but a professional editor knows the answer.

Where do the commas go? What is the prudent and correct use of exclamation marks? You don't know what you don't know, and you may think you're right when you're wrong. Every book deserves a professional editor.

Zebra Communications offers three levels of service, two of which include developmental editing and an extensive report filled with advice, explanations, and suggestions on how to improve the manuscript's marketability. See our services, pricing, reviews, and more at www.ZebraEditor.com. Zebra Communications: Excellent Editing for Maximum Marketability

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Is Proofreading More Than Catching Surface Errors?

[from The Edge, an NAIWE newsletter]

Proofreading is usually performed on a manuscript that has already been through developmental editing or copyediting and has been laid out by a designer into page proofs. It provides a last review of egregious errors, such as basic grammar, punctuation, spelling, and inconsistencies, and any other errors that were introduced during the design process. Proofreaders may also check copy for conformity to type specifications and the style sheet and ensure attractive typography by checking kerning (spacing between characters), margins, word spacing, repetitive word breaks, and the like.

Proofreading is not editing. Some people expect proofreaders to lightly edit the text, while still being paid the proofreader's rate. If the proofreader is doing more than catching typos, spelling errors, and layout mistakes, the proofreader is providing the service known as editorial proofreading.

An editorial proofreader should have strong grammar and editing skills because he or she may only be working with laid-out pages and not have an edited manuscript as a reference. However, editorial proofreading may be done before the manuscript has been laid out. Editorial proofreading combines proofreading with some copyediting tasks, such as correcting misspellings, typos, misnumbering or mislabeling, subject-verb disagreement, word usage, and incorrect or outdated cross-references. If copy (portions of the text) is missing, the proofreader should request it. Editorial

proofreading may involve typemarking and making marginal notes to show the first citation of illustrations, tables, and other display elements. If so instructed, the proofreader may change single quotation marks to double quotation marks.

The proofreader also checks for incorrect word breaks at the ends of lines. Publishers often request editorial proofreading when previously published material is to be reprinted or when there are concerns about possible input errors in material that has been heavily edited or dramatically reformatted.

To learn more about proofreading, check out Editing 101's Lesson 1.

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Bobbie's Blogs

Where Do You Get Your Ideas?
<https://www.zebraeditor.com/blog/where-do-you-get-your-ideas/>

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Manuslips

Can you tell what's wrong with the following sentences? [See answers below.]

1. For several weeks, sitting in a corner of the room she shared with three other girls, she remained quiet or mumbling.
2. I helped getting the wounded young man in shock and still babbling in the truck.
3. Nearly falling, her heart wrenched painfully.

Answers

1. She shared the room, not the corner, with the girls. Corrected: In the room she shared with three other girls, she sat in the corner, either quietly or mumbling to herself, for several weeks.
2. Avoid the overuse of words ending in "ing." Stronger: I helped get the wounded young man into the truck while he was still in shock and babbling.
3. Her heart didn't nearly fall; she did. Also avoid adverbs. Corrected and stronger: Her heart wrenched when she nearly fell.

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Manuslip: a slip in grammar, punctuation, or other error in a manuscript that often results in humor; a manuscript blooper

Etymology  
Coined by Bobbie Christmas (1944 -) in Write In Style: How to Use Your Computer to Improve Your Writing (2004, 2015).

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Be My Friend on Facebook

Follow my adventures, opinions, and observations: <http://www.facebook.com/bobbie.christmas>

Follow Zebra Communications on Facebook for news for writers, writing-related cartoons, immediate updates, and other good stuff. <https://tinyurl.com/ydyn3pcu>.

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CMOS Online Q&A

This month someone posed the following question to The Chicago Manual of Style Online:

Q. Does CMOS have a rule for using one el or two in verbs ending in "ing"? For example, "traveling" or "travelling"? "exceling" or "excelling"?

To get the answer to this question and many more based on Chicago style, go to <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/latest.html>.

The Chicago Manual of Style sets the standard in book publishing for issues such as punctuation, capitalization, and much more. If you write fiction or nonfiction books, you will want to know about Chicago style or be sure to use a professional book editor intimately familiar with Chicago style.

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Write Tight: Learn What To Look For, How to Look for It, and What to Delete

In five-time award-winning Write In Style you'll learn how to find and delete or rewrite words, sentences, and phrases that weaken your writing.

Write In Style uses humor and expertise to show writers how to tighten and strengthen their writing and create a fresh voice.

Write In Style is also available as an e-book or printed through the following source, although you may pay for shipping for the printed book: <https://tinyurl.com/y8fp5nym>.

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Want to buy the book in Kobo through Rakuten? Easy. Go to <https://www.kobo.com/us/en/ebook/write-in-style-3>

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Four: Contests, Agents, and Markets

Leigh Feldman Literary

Leigh Feldman Literary’s list of clients has always been extremely selective, allowing the attention and support services they deserve. Though discriminating, the agency is open to considering talented writers who have been honing their craft for years. Whatever the genre, LFL is drawn to books with complex, believable, sympathetic characters, that transport the reader into a world both new and unexpected, and stories that compel readers to put aside all daily cares and turn the page.

Leigh Feldman Literary is a full-service literary agency.

To submit your work for consideration, please send your query letter and the first ten pages of the manuscript or proposal to query@lfliterary.com.

Due to the high volume of submissions received, we can respond personally only to authors whose work we’d like to see more of. LF Literary is particularly interested in historical fiction, contemporary YA, literary fiction, memoir, and narrative non-fiction. Genres LF Literary is not interested in include adult and YA paranormal, fantasy, science fiction, romance, thrillers, mysteries, or picture books.

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Turner Publishing

Turner Publishing Company is an American independent book publisher based in Nashville, Tennessee. The company is in the top 101 independent publishing companies in the U.S. as compiled by Bookmarket.com, and has been named four times to Publishers Weekly's Fastest Growing Publishers List. Turner Publishing accepts submissions of manuscripts and/or proposals. Submissions can be made by agents or authors directly.

To submit material for consideration, please send the material to: [submissions@turnerpublishing.com](mailto:submissions@turnerpublishing.com)

Please include the following:

Your manuscript as an attached Word Doc or PDF to your email. A completed manuscript is preferred, but partial manuscripts or detailed outlines/pitches are also accepted.

Include author details, including platform, following, qualifications, etc., plus pertinent marketing details, including intended audience and the sales angle of the book. Full submission details here:

<https://turnerbookstore.com/pages/submissions>

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Do YOU have news for The Writers Network News? Send it in the body of an email to Bobbie@zebraeditor.com or bzebra@aol.com. Deadline: 18th of each month.

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Send a copy of this newsletter to all your writing friends. Tell them to join The Writers Network F-R-E-E by visiting <https://www.zebraeditor.com/> and signing up for The Writers Network News.

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The Writers Network News: a newsletter for writers everywhere. No Rules; Just Write!

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