

Avoid These Grammar Guffaws

Even the best of writers stumble into grammar guffaws. The following are common mistakes that sneak into your writing.

You can also download [Common Writing Errors](#) to use as another tip sheet.

FARTHER OR FURTHER?

- FARTHER** Refers to a physical distance – *Tip: Farther – Think FAR away*
FURTHER Refers to a figurative distance – *Tip: Further – Contains a “U” like figurative*
Also means additional or to advance

Examples: John lives *farther* from downtown than Mike does.
Nothing could be *further* from the truth.
The course will *further* your education on the subject.

THAN OR THEN?

- THAN** Used to compare – *Tip: Compare has an “A” – use Than*
THEN Denotes time, such as “next” – *Tip: Time or next have an “E” – use Then*

Examples: Smiling is better *than* frowning.
First, I frowned, and *then* I smiled.

THAT OR WHICH?

- THAT** Adds meaningful information – *Tip: Meaning changed if THAT removed*
WHICH Non-vital information – *Tip: Remove phrase and meaning not changed*

Examples: I like movies *that* make me think. (Remove *that* phrase, and the meaning is changed. You don't like all movies.)
I lost my phone, *which* was bad. (Remove the last phrase. Your phone is still lost.)



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Grammar Guffaws

(Continued)

BONUS TIP:

WHO Use *who* instead of *that* when referring to people

Examples: My friends *who* are writers joined the party.

Incorrect: My friends *that* are writers joined the party.

MAY OR MIGHT?

MAY Used with a possibility

MIGHT Used when there is more uncertainty – *Tip: Mighty equals strength – use Might when it takes a lot to make something happen*

Also used as the past tense of *May* – *Tip: If it happened in the past, use Might*

Examples: The weatherman said we *may* get rain today.

He said it *might* cause flooding.

John *might* have gone to last week's party.

FEWER OR LESS?

FEWER Refers to things you can count individually

LESS Use for things that are in mass or volume, not individually counted

Examples: The top performers had *fewer* than five errors.

I need to use *less* salt.

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