

# **A Quick Guide to Say It & Write It Right!**

Clear answers to common grammar  
and punctuation dilemmas

R U B Y M O A N E Y

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# Introduction

Do we always know in whose hands our email or written reports will land? No! Do others judge us by our netiquette, word use and sentence structure? Sure they do! Here are quick answers to common grammar and punctuation dilemmas.

Texts, tweets, emails, blogs, pods, and more are a part of our daily on-the-go regime. We may find ourselves on the East coast in the A.M. and the West in the P.M., so quick access to communication answers is paramount.

Careful communication can contribute to our writing success. This quick guide is tailor made for today's student, teacher, speaker, traveler, business professional, or ... simply put, anyone who questions usage.

As a trained and experienced journalist, I like to think I know the who, what, when, where, and why of word use and sentence structure. Because I love words and writing so much, I use my skill as a wordsmith to present, simply and clearly, the rules of grammar and punctuation to my students. I want my students to find writing as rewarding as I do. My first priority is to let them know they can do it and then to show them how.

My hope is that you, the user, will find *Say It & Write It Right!* most helpful to find quick answers to questions on grammar and punctuation.

Use it in class, on the go, at meetings, or in flight. Feel confident when you hit "send." Your control will be obvious, your message unmistakable!

Please use the notes section for questions that may need researching.

PART I

# **Choose Your Words Carefully**



## A/An

Use “a” before words that begin with a consonant. Remember those?  
(All alphabets other than vowels).

Use “an” before words that begin with a vowel (a e i o u, and sometimes y). You should remember those!

### Examples:

a. *Because this book is **a quick** guide, it must be brief.*

b. ***An average** page must not contain too much information.*

### Test Yourself ...

1. The dog gave us ***a/an*** scare when he ran in front of the car.

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_

2. It is important to select ***an/a*** appropriate word when giving public presentations.

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_



## Amount/Number

SHOULD I USE AMOUNT OR NUMBER?  
HMMMMM ... EASY!

Use “amount” for things measured.

Use “number” for things counted.

### Examples:

*a. One difference in an essay and a research or professional paper is the **amount** of support you offer and how it is developed. The basic structure remains the same.*

*b. The length varies with the **number** of paragraphs used for support.*

### Remember:

Amount = Measure

Number = Count

### Test Yourself ...

3. The large *amount/number* of people in the room made me nervous.

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_



## Affect/Effect

HERE ARE TWO THAT ARE EASILY  
CONFUSED AND CONFUSING!

Affect = Influence/Alter

Effect = End Result/Change

### Examples:

- a. The **effect** of using this quick guide can be immeasurable.
- b. Using this quick guide can **affect** your getting the job.

### Remember:

Affect is a verb (action, condition, a state of being)

Effect is a noun (person, place, thing)

### Test Yourself ...

4. The late paper did not **affect/effect** my final grade.

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_

5. The next time I write a paper, I want the final grade to **effect/affect** my grade.

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_



## Among/Between

Use “among” when referring to three or more.

### Example:

*a. We will discuss the edits **among** the group members and then refer to our quick guide.*

Use “between” when referring to two.

### Example:

*b. This discussion is only **between** you and me.*

### Test Yourself ...

6. We will divide the responsibilities **among/between** all members of the group.

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_

7. **Among/between** the two of us, we can easily complete the quiz.

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_