

Style Reminders for Public Relations Writers - III

Based on *Associated Press Stylebook*

6. Misspelled Words

Be alert for these commonly misspelled words:

accede, adherence, advertise, adviser, accommodate, afterward (no s), anyone, benefiting, berserk, blond (male), blonde (female), buses, cigarette, consensus, controversy, descendant, disastrous, dissension, divisive, embarrass, fulfill, goodbye, grammar, hemorrhage, indispensable, innocuous, irresistible, judgment, liaison, likeable, liquefy;

marshal, miniature, minuscule, occasion, occurred, parallel, pastime, permissible, personnel, picnicking, politicking, pompons, privilege, questionnaire, queue, recommend, reconnaissance, restaurateur, sacrilegious, seize, separate, siege, sizable, specter, strict, supersede, toward (no s), tumultuous, vacuum, vice versa, weird, wield.

7. Misused Words

Use said or says for attributing information to a source. Other verbs (added, explained, etc.) can be used occasionally for variation in phrasing, but often call attention to themselves.

Beware of these commonly misused words. Consult a dictionary:

accept, except; adverse, averse; affect, effect; already, all ready; allusion, illusion; alter, altar; amid (not amidst); awhile, a while; biannual, biennial; canvas, canvass; composed of, comprised; ensure, insure; between, among; can, may, might; connote, denote; complement, compliment; council, counsel, consul; eminent, imminent; everyday, every day; faze, phase; fewer, less; flier, flyer; former, latter; farther, further; imply, infer; it's, its; lie, lay; like, as; majority, plurality; oral, verbal; people, persons; pretext, pretense; principal, principle; precede, proceed; reluctant, reticent; their, there, they're; underway, under way; who, whom; who's, whose; which, that.

Choose words carefully; be precise. Avoid jargon or a needlessly technical term or complicated phrasing if simpler wording would do.

8. Hyphens and Compound Words

The trend in modern usage is away from the use of hyphens.

Words beginning with short prefixes, such as co-, de-, pre-, pro-, post- and re- are generally spelled as part of the word they modify, without hyphens. With other prefixes, use a hyphen to avoid doubling a vowel or tripling a consonant: Example: hall-like, anti-inflationary.

Use hyphens where two or more hyphenated compounds have a common basic element that is omitted in one or more of the terms. Example: three- or four-member committee. Prefixes that generally require hyphens include: ex-, self-, non-, and quasi-.