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This Week's Aside

Winning Clichés So Far



Last week we asked for your favorite clichés and content-free buzzwords, and we got a

great response. So far, the winning clichés are:

- absolutely
- clearly
- That being said,
- throw under the bus

Some of our favorite CFBs mentioned so far:

- best in class (by a long shot!)
- pushback (noun, as in "We're getting pushback.")
- monetize
- resonate

A cliché we hadn't heard is "nudge the peanut." We'll undoubtedly see this ten times in the coming week!

Weekly Challenge

Independence! Revolution!



Americans venerate July 4, 1776, and celebrate the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Unfortunately,

many people simply see the Fourth of July as a

time for backyard cookouts instead of a time to reflect on

Weekly Grammar Tip

Words, Words, Words.



Here at Proofread NOW.com, when we proofread most business documents, we use the *Chicago Manual of Style* as our guide. Sometimes we refer to the *Associated Press Stylebook*. Occasionally a customer will request that we use the *New York Times Manual of Style and Usage*. Their style guide is useful and provides good advice when it comes to how some troublesome words are to be used.

Some examples:

- **lay, lie.** (for the umpteenth time) Use *lay* to mean put down, or place. And it requires a direct object, the thing that is put or placed. Hens *lay* eggs. Bricklayers *lay* bricks. Healers *lay* hands upon the infirm. In every case, *lay* has an object--eggs, bricks, hands. In other tenses, *lay* takes these forms: *Hens laid eggs last week; Hens are laying eggs faster than ever; Hens had laid the eggs before the sun rose.*

Lie means recline, or occupy a location. It does not take an object, because the subject can accomplish those things alone. The idle rich *lie* on beaches. The restless *lie* awake. The faithful will *lie* down in green pastures. Governors Island *lies* off Manhattan. Sleeping dogs just *lie*. The rich, the restless, the faithful, the island and the dogs need no help--no object to complete their actions. They simply lie there. And in other tenses, *lie* takes these forms: *The rich are lying on the beach despite the shaky economy; The rich had lain on the beach before moving to the slopes.*

Confusion arises because the past tense of *lie* also happens to be *lay*, playing a different role: *The idle rich lay on the beach yesterday.*

- **leave alone, let alone.** *Leave alone* means leave in solitude. *Let alone* means refrain from disturbing.
- **incredible, incredulous.** *Incredible* means unbelievable. *Incredulous* means unbelieving.

instead of a time to reflect on and appreciate America's rich history, precious freedom, honorable patriotism, and proud heritage. Study up on these *revolutionary* words, think of America's grand struggle for independence (even if you're British!) when you watch fireworks this weekend, and the sacrifice of those who died to keep the country free. And long live the Revolution! Oh, and I *would* like fries with that burger, please.

1. ancien regime : (a) America's first period of self-government, during which *tea* was outlawed; (b) pre-revolutionary government in Cuba; (c) the political and social system of France before the Revolution of 1789; (d) the French system of government controlling the tract of land later known as the Louisiana Purchase.

2. Bolshevik : (a) a member of the extremist wing of the Russian Social Democratic party that seized power in Russia by the Revolution of November 1917; (b) the class of industrial workers who lack their own means of production and hence sell their labor to live; (c) of, relating to, or characteristic of the townsman or of the social middle class; (d) a supporter of the government of Russia under the czars.

3. DAR : (a) Daughters of the American Regime; (b) Daughters of the American Revolution; (c) Daughters of the Armed Resistance; (d) Daughters of the American Renaissance.

4. federalist : (a) an advocate of a federal union between the American colonies after the Revolution and of the adoption of the United States Constitution; (b) an American upholding the cause of the British Crown against the supporters of colonial independence during the American Revolution; (c) one who joins in a secession or maintains

- **of**. Generally, phrases connected by *of* sound most natural when they are intact. *The company completed the conversion to electricity of its heating system* is not nearly so smooth as *The company completed the conversion of its heating system to electricity*. Also: *died of a heart attack yesterday*, not *died yesterday of a heart attack*.

Drop the *of* in constructions like this: *She uses the name of Chris*. The *of* suggests that she is using someone else's actual name. Similarly, replace *of* with a comma in *his hometown of Cocoa*.

- **Wailing Wall** in Jerusalem. It is now the Western Wall.

Source: *The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage*, 1999, by The New York Times Company.

Word of the Week

debacle



Pronunciation: dee-BAH-kel

Function: noun

Etymology: French *débâcle*, from *débâcler* to clear, from Middle French *desbacler*, from *des-* + *bacler* to block, perhaps from Vulgar Latin *bacculare*, from Latin *baculum* staff

Date: 1802

Definitions: 1: a tumultuous breakup of ice in a river

2: a violent disruption (as of an army); rout

3a: a great disaster **b:** a complete failure; fiasco

Example: "Meanwhile, he continues to perpetuate the myth that Florida property owners can have billions of dollars of subsidized insurance at little expense or risk. It's this kind of something-for-nothing economics that gave us the debacle of Fannie Mae. With that philosophy, Mr. Crist would feel right at home in Washington."

- *Wall Street Journal* editorial, June 29, 2009, p. A12.

Definition source: *Merriam-Webster's Eleventh Collegiate Dictionary*.

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that secession is a right; **(d)** a member of the group that opposed the adoption of the United States Constitution.

5. nonjuror : **(a)** an alternate member of a jury; **(b)** a member of a jury whose vote counts only to break a tie vote; **(c)** a person refusing to take an oath especially of allegiance, supremacy, or abjuration; **(d)** a former judge.

6. tyranny : **(a)** governmental indifference, apathy; **(b)** a government in which a small group exercises control especially for corrupt and selfish purposes; **(c)** oppressive power exerted by government; **(d)** armed insurrection.

7. promulgate : **(a)** to make (as a doctrine) known by open declaration; **(b)** to acknowledge publicly; **(c)** to support publicly; **(d)** to act (as in take up arms) in revolt.

8. Icenii : **(a)** ancient capital of Iceland, before the seal uprising of 1421; **(b)** an ancient British people that under their queen Boudicca revolted against the Romans in A.D. 60; **(c)** a native American people that under their queen Sacajawea revolted against the Shawnee in 1745; **(d)** treatment for an injured kneecap.

9. squib : **(a)** a short news item; a filler news article; **(b)** a broken firecracker in which the powder burns with a fizz; **(c)** a small electric or pyrotechnic device used to ignite a charge; **(d)** all the above.

10. petard : **(a)** a firework that explodes with a loud report; **(b)** a case containing an explosive to break down a door or gate or breach a wall; **(c)** both the above; **(d)** none of the above.

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Please rate this *GrammarTip* (10=high, 0=low) using names of firework displays:

10 - Hickory-smoked ribs slow-cooked.

9 - Double-glazed short ribs.

8 - Smoked Cornish hens.

7 - BBQ brisket.

6 - Slathered pork chops.

5 - Burgers.

4 - Kosher brats.

3 - Flank steaks.

2 - Turkey necks.

1 - Grilled corned ham

declaration, constitution, ad, proposal, Web page, brochure, or anything else in print. We shoot down errors even *before* we see the whites of their 's!

Answers: 1:c (yes, it's *ancien* without the "t") 2:a 3:b 4:a 5:c 6:c 7:a 8:b 9:d 10:c

Rate Yourself:

• **1 to 2 correct:**

Well, they won't exactly be naming a capital city after you.

• **3 to 5 correct:**

Soaked while crossing the Delaware.

• **6 to 7 correct:**

The battle's turning in your favor.

• **8 to 9 correct:**

Maybe your face can be on a dollar bill after all.

• **All 10 correct:**

We'll chisel you in on Mount Rushmore!

1 - Gilded Canned Ham.

0 - Nondescript hotdogs with mystery filler.

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