

Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing

Mignon Fogarty

In her book, *Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing*, Mignon Fogarty transforms the witty and fun grammar lessons from her popular podcast to this simple and handy usage and grammar guide that provides a unique, ~~and~~ painless approach to mastering proper English grammar. This book addresses some of the dubious grammar rules that often perplex even the savviest of writers. You know those things we *know* we should know, but still find ourselves Googling them in embarrassment? These kinds of conundrums such as whether to say *bad* or *badly*, *while* or *although*, and everyone's grammar nemesis: *who* or *whom*, are the questions Fogarty tackles in a simple, realistic way that is suitable for the dynamic world of English speakers, writers and professionals.

This book contains simple explanations and lessons on grammar, usage, word choice, and style, as well as tools for remembering and mastering these rules. ~~These Fogarty's~~ lessons are valuable for anyone who wants to improve their grammar knowledge and writing skills, but it also features concepts that are more geared towards language professionals. For instance, ~~one lesson it is~~ important for professionals ~~is onto know~~ the differences ~~inbetween~~ American and British English. This section guides you through ~~these~~ important differences one would need to know ~~when if they were~~ targeting a ~~different~~ ~~diverse~~ audience of English speakers who might expect different pronunciation or word choice. For example, the word *herb* is pronounced "erb" in American English compared to "her-b" in British English. The words *assure*, *ensure*, and *insure* have different definitions and uses in American and British English: (Fogarty 2008, 7).

~~The Fogarty's~~ purpose ~~of this book~~ is to ~~provide clarity answer the questions of on~~ the most commonly misunderstood rules of grammar and usage and explain them in clear, memorable ways. ~~Fogarty~~ ~~She~~ achieves this by effectively un-complicating grammar with explanations and simple tricks for remembering these important rules. In chapter 1, Fogarty discusses the dirty words *affect* and *effect*, which are often used incorrectly and can confuse even the most proficient writers. The difference between the two, Fogarty explains, "is actually pretty straightforward: the majority of the

Comment [AGB1]: According to Kate's style guide for this assignment, the font should be 12 pt. Garamond for all content. Also, you may want to consider changing the spacing from 2.0 to 1.5 and adding an additional space between paragraphs to be consistent with the style guide.

Comment [AGB2]: This section would fit perfectly in the introduction! (definitely more of my preference than a suggestion ☺)

time you use affect as a *verb* and effect as a *noun*.” One trick to remember this is to know that because *effect* is a noun, you can usually put an article in front of it and it will make sense like in the sentence, “the effect is eye-popping,” (Fogarty 2008, 8-9). Simple explanations like this are often ~~made overly complicated~~ in formal grammar lessons, ~~and books~~, and many aspects of grammar and word usage are simply ignored because we are expected to know them.

With her simplistic attitude towards grammar, Fogarty manages to break down rules of grammar and usage in a way that anyone can understand. She uses basic, everyday language rather than the academic jargon found in most grammar guides that leaves readers confused. This book reads like a conversation, as if Fogarty is casually talking to you ~~personally~~ about grammar. She speaks in her own authentic way and explains grammar with a general audience in mind. Every rule is simplified and explained in a logical sense rather than a technical one. For example, she explains the difference between definite and indefinite articles; indefinite articles don’t say anything special about the word that follows. “Think about the sentence, ‘I need a horse.’ You’ll take any horse—just a horse will do. But if you say, ‘I need the horse,’ then you want a specific horse.” *The* is a definite article because you need *the* horse; something definite (Fogarty 2008, 7).

~~Compared to other usage and grammar guides~~, Fogarty creates a unique category ~~compared to other usage and grammar guides~~. She distinguishes herself from competitors by writing with a distinct and personal voice. This book is riddled with her opinions and personal way of looking at grammar. She uses informal language like, “people most commonly seem to get tripped up,” which provides humor and a personal connection to the reader. Grammar guides also tend to very academic and professional, with lengthy explanations of rules that are difficult to understand and impossible to remember. Fogarty effectively simplifies grammar and usage with her word choice and shows her readers why the rules make sense, and how they function in everyday communication. This technique of allowing the reader to understand grammar and usage rules in a way that makes sense to them and gives you the ability to apply them to this own work is what makes this book an invaluable asset to any writer or communicator.

Comment [AGB3]: I inserted a comma here because Fogarty uses one before a quotation in the next sentence. If she doesn’t use one here in the book, feel free to ignore this change.

Comment [AGB4]: Consider using “competitors”

Comment [AGB5]: “Riddled” can be interpreted as negative. Consider using words like “filled” or “abundant”.

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Citations

Fogarty, Mignon. *Grammar Girl's ~~q~~Quick and ~~d~~Dirty ~~f~~Tips for ~~b~~Better ~~w~~Writing*. New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2008.