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Break Points

Another take on Twitter grammar

Jack Ganssle

8/30/2010 2:27 AM EDT

In an article I wrote a few years ago I complained about the practice of tearing English apart for expediency when composing Twitters, email and texting. But Hamish McNab, a young person in Australia, believes I'm wrong. If his email to me about the article is any indication, he's right: it's well-reasoned and beautifully written. Here are his comments:

I am a high school student in Australia, studying linguistics in year 11. I believe that technology is not the main reason for the decline in English, but rather things such as what education provides in schools nowadays, and the contact that people have with literature, especially students. I am not a particularly bright student, and do not jump at the chance to read books, but I have been lead to believe that it is more what our education provides and not the technology that surrounds us.

First off, English in schools is loosing its touch on the basics. Grammar is barely mentioned as a major part of learning, and the teaching of proper use grammar and punctuation is deteriorating. As I am still in high school, it is easy to say that I have been taught little, if not none at all, about the uses of English grammar.

Instruction in grammar is left down to self-correction after a neatly constructed essay has been viscusly attacked by a red pen. I believe that grammar, punctuation and spelling should be taught in English in schools, no matter the groans that follow it's mention. It is for the good of our ever evolving, ever changing beautiful language, and should be considered important, as it is the basis of English.

Secondly, this is a reflection on me as well as my peers, I have noticed that the connection between people and proper literature - such as books, and literary masterpieces - has lessened somewhat. People are reading less and less these days, mainly due to the busy life styles they lead. In my case, I do not have time to sit down and read a book, even before I go to sleep as I tend to go to bed too late, and wake up too early.

Although we are surrounded by language, through texting, the internet, advertising and general usage throughout our environment, we are not privy to outstanding examples of English on a daily basis. The language we read affects the language we use to write, so by reading text messages, chat

Comment



Dan at ECS

9/3/2010 9:33 AM EDT

(For the record, my reply above was formatted nicely, including newlines, etc. ...



Dan at ECS

9/3/2010 9:32 AM EDT

Young Hamish's letter might be well-reasoned, but it's riddled with grammatical ...

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