Miscellaneous Usage Problems

(97) **Want In and Want Out.** These are nonstandard expressions for "want to come in" or "want to enter," and "want to leave" or "want to get out."

**NONSTANDARD:** The dog is scratching at the door because he wants in.

**CORRECT:** The dog is scratching at the door because he wants to come in.

Moreover, do not use want before such prepositions as down, off, or up.

**NONSTANDARD:** I want down from this horse.

**CORRECT:** I want to get down from this horse.

(98) **Ways.** Ways is plural. Do not use it after the article a. Use instead the singular form way.

**NONSTANDARD:** I have a considerable ways to go before I reach Connecticut.

**CORRECT:** I have a considerable way to go before I reach Connecticut.

(99) **When and Where.** Do not use when or where directly after a linking verb.

**NONSTANDARD:** My best childhood memory was when my parents gave me a pony.

An automat is where food is dispensed by machines.

**CORRECT:** My best childhood memory is of being given a pony by my parents.

An automat is a cafeteria where food is dispensed by machines.

In addition, do not use where as a substitute for that.

**NONSTANDARD:** I read in a magazine where ancient coins are a good investment.

**CORRECT:** I read in a magazine that ancient coins are a good investment.

(100) **-wise.** Avoid using this suffix to create new words for a particular situation.

**PREFERRED:** This freezer is very energy-efficient.

**LESS ACCEPTABLE:** Energywise, this freezer is very efficient.

**EXERCISE A: Avoiding Usage Problems (1–10).** Choose the correct expression from the choices in parentheses in each of the following sentences. Try to complete the exercise without looking back in the book.

1. They should have (all ready, already) left by now.
2. Did your broken ankle (affect, effect) your vacation plans?
3. Jim (ain't, isn't) capable of performing before an audience.
4. Everyone (accept, except) me was dressed in black.
5. You look (all right, alright) without any mascara.
6. A speck of dust can (aggravate, annoy) an inflamed eye.
7. His (advice, advise) should be ignored.
8. "But Brutus says he was ambitious; And Brutus is (a, an) honorable man."
9. He tried to (adapt, adopt) a philosophy of nonviolence.
10. The teacher was (aggravated, annoyed) by my total disinterest.
11. One (affect, effect) of the radiation was a change in chromosomes.
12. The ice cream is (all ready, already) to be served.
13. I (accept, except) your proposal.
14. The report (accuses, alleges) negligence by the manufacturer.
15. It is not (all right, alright) for you to barge in uninvited.
16. She (accused, alleged) him of trying to evade the issue.
17. An injection of insulin (affected, effected) an immediate improvement in his condition.
18. This pamphlet (advices, advises) pregnant women not to take aspirin or to smoke.
19. The pioneers (adapted, adopted) to a hostile environment.
20. We heard (a, an) hysterical, ghostly laugh.

**EXERCISE B: Avoiding Usage Problems (11–20).** Follow the directions for Exercise A.

1. My car keys must be (somewhere, somewheres) in my pocketbook.
2. We should shout the cheer (all together, altogether).
3. You can do (alot, much) to improve yourself.
4. One black orchid grew (among, between) the many white ones.
5. The trainer feels very (anxious, eager) about the colt's injured leg.
6. Despite economic predictions, I remain an optimist (anyway, anyways).
7. School is dismissed at three (P.M., P.M. in the afternoon).
8. (Any one, Anyone) of these television sets works equally well.
9. I haven’t seen Jenny (anywhere, anywhere).
10. An enormous (amount, number) of garbage was piled in a heap.
11. Becky and Jim were (all together, altogether) exhausted after the marathon dance.
12. He gave no explanation (as to, for) his strange behavior.
13. She tripped on the rug (as, because) she walked toward us.
14. Ask (anyone, any one) for assistance.
15. Willy was (anxious, eager) to help his neighbors.
16. How should the committee (a lot, alot, allot) the money?
17. Be at the door by 10:00 (A.M., A.M. in the morning).
18. We left all the windows open (as, since) no rain was forecast.
19. There should be no strife (among, between) you and me.
20. A large (amount, number) of complaints were registered.

EXERCISE C: Avoiding Usage Problems (21–30). Follow the directions for Exercise A.

1. She becomes (awfully, very) afraid in crowded elevators.
2. When he was a young man, my grandfather was a (blond, blonde).
3. Listen to this record for (a while, awhile) and tell me if you like it.
4. After dark they should know where their children (are, are at).
5. The reason the flowers died is (because, that) no one watered them.
6. I (beat, won) her at a game of handball.
7. (Being that, Since) they expected death at the hands of the Romans, the people of Masada killed themselves.
8. Please (bring, take) that hammer here.
9. Be at the house (at about, at) five o’clock.
10. (The reason my grandmother lives with us now is, My grandmother lives with us now because) she was lonely.
11. (Beside, Besides) Japan and Germany, what other countries made up the Axis Powers?
12. I look (bad, awful) in shades of purple.
13. (Bring, Take) these overdue books back to the library.
14. The telegram arrived (at about, about) noon.
15. Marlene always keeps a kerosene lamp (beside, besides) the door.
17. He drove down the wrong street and now doesn’t know where he is (is, is at).
18. Try to (beat, win) the other team if you can.
19. Stay (a while, awhile) and tell us about your new job.
20. Let’s go to the movies (being as, since) there is little else to do.

EXERCISE D: Avoiding Usage Problems (31–40). Follow the directions for Exercise A.

1. Her new car (can, may) hold more people than mine.
2. We (can’t help but admire, can’t help admiring) Faye’s courage.
3. The soap bubbles will (burst, bust) upon contact.
4. Gentlemen, I take umbrage at your offensive (ad, advertisement) in yesterday’s newspaper.
5. The (continual, continuous) noise of trains rumbling past his house every half hour kept him awake.
6. Join our (bunch, group) if you enjoy friendship and good conversation.
7. The courts cannot (condemn, condone) his brutality.
8. She has little doubt (but what, that) her son is most qualified.
9. In my previous letter to your firm, I requested that the (phones, telephones) be repaired promptly.
10. The American Standard System is (different from, different than) the Metric System.
11. Calypso music (doesn’t, don’t) receive much attention in this country.
12. I don’t know (but what, that) Barbara is correct in her assumption.
13. Without plasma this accident victim (doesn’t, don’t) have a chance for survival.
14. Paris was (different from, different than) what she expected.
15. I (can’t help but regret, can’t help regretting) my insensitivity to your misery.
16. The flower girl carried a (bunch, group) of daisies.
17. After seeing how much I wanted to ride the tractor, he said that I (can, may) learn how to drive it.
18. The dictator was universally (condemned, condoned) for his ruthless treatment of dissidents.
19. Olivia (burst, busted) the balloon with a tack.
20. (Continual, Continuous) walking from dawn until dusk raised blisters on their feet.

EXERCISE E: Avoiding Usage Problems (41–50). Follow the directions for Exercise A.

1. Lance fractured his skull when he (dived, dove) into a shallow pond.
2. Thousands of Cubans have (emigrated, immigrated) to the United States.
3. She became more and more (enthused, enthusiastic) as the day of her departure approached.
4. (Due to, Because of) an unavoidable delay, the results of the poll can't be given until next week.
5. The man had swallowed coins, nuts, bolts, (and etc., etc.).
6. He sometimes (done, has done) work for us in the past.
7. (Farther, Further) suggestions will be appreciated.
8. (Because of, Due to) a heavy rainfall, this expressway has been temporarily closed.
9. I (did, done) better in this class because I cared.
10. Put (fewer, less) water in the soup for a thicker consistency.
11. Drive a little (farther, further) and you will see the castle high on a hill.
12. (Due to the fact that, Since) the air conditioner isn't working properly, everyone should wear light clothing.
13. I propose to you, the committee, a thorough plan for revitalizing subways, buses, (and other means of mass transportation, etc.).
14. (Fewer, Less) nails are needed for this type of paneling.
15. Squealing gleefully, the children (dived, dove) into the pile of leaves.
16. Without any help from her family, Abigail (done, has done) well to finish college.
17. The starving victims of political revolution (emigrated, immigrated) from Cambodia.
18. I will be forced to buy a new car (because, due to the fact that) my old car's transmission is beyond repair.
19. We (dived, dove) head-first into the inviting water.
20. An (enthused, enthused) concern for the environment will benefit all of us.

EXERCISE F: Avoiding Usage Problems (51–60). Follow the directions for Exercise A.

1. Eugene is a (nice, friendly) person.
2. Colorful lanterns were (hanged, hung) from the beams.
3. Sandra (got, earned) the respect of the class.
4. (Irregardless, Regardless) of the choppy water, Matt guided the boat beyond the buoys.
5. Put these figurines back (in, into) that curio cabinet.
6. Toward the end of our vacation we visited New York and Washington. What impressed me most in the (former, latter) city was the Lincoln Memorial.
7. Sunshine is (healthy, healthful) because it is a source of vitamin D.
8. Neither parent will (get, obtain) custody of the children.
9. Let's go (in, into) this famous international restaurant.
10. We were confident that the administrator would make a (judicial, judicious) decision.
11. They have a (lovely, close) relationship after thirty years of marriage.
12. Near Charlottesville, Virginia, are two presidential homes: Jefferson's Monticello and Monroe's Ash Lawn. The (former, latter) is pictured on the back of a nickel, along with Jefferson's portrait on the front.
13. (Its, It's) the house with the gabled roof that attracts notice.
14. Mary's shiny hair and clear skin indicated that she was (healthy, healthful).
15. The boy had (gotten, climbed) to the topmost branches of the tree.
16. He gave a (good, detailed) account of his expenditures.
17. The husky held (its, it's) head high as Jim placed the dog at the head of the team.
18. He (hanged, hung) his coat on the peg in the hall.
19. What are the responsibilities of the (judicial, judicious) branch of the government?
20. Tell them the truth (irregardless, regardless) of their reaction.

EXERCISE G: Avoiding Usage Problems (61–70). Follow the directions for Exercise A.

1. (Lie, Lay) the baby on the scales.
2. He (learned, taught) us how to check the oil in the crankcase.
3. There (may be, maybe) a hidden clause in the contract.
4. The sun looks (kind of, somewhat) reddish as it sets.
5. A (lose, loose) knot was tied around his wrists.
6. She preened herself (as, like) a peacock would.
7. What (kind of, kinds of) insects are these?
8. A remnant of the tribe must (of, have) settled in this valley.
9. (Leave, Let) us alone!
10. Let me (lose, loose) from these shackles.
11. (Lie, Lay) down on the couch until your dizziness passes.
12. If I could (of, have) removed this splinter sooner, it would have been less painful.
13. I hope I don't (lose, loose) my job in the warehouse.
14. What (sort of, sort of a) jacket do you want to buy?
15. I'm (sort of, rather) reluctant to criticize Paul's work.
16. (May be, Maybe) you will listen to me now.
17. Please (leave, let) me stay as your apprentice.
18. The teacher (learned, taught) the class phonics.
19. His lunatic ravings convinced everyone that he was (angry, mad).
20. You look (as if, like) someone who has just had a harrowing experience.

EXERCISE H: Avoiding Usage Problems (71–80). Follow the directions for Exercise A.
1. There (had ought, ought) to be a law against this.
2. Carl is (plenty, very) lame after hiking all day.
3. Many strange phenomena (has, have) been reported at the house.
4. The developers discussed the (parameters, details) of the new housing project.
5. Tell the reporters that the mayor has resigned because he has been feeling (ill, poorly).
6. Mr. President, will the hostages at the embassy be (okay, safe)?
7. Everyone (outside of, except) Geoffrey wore a heavy coat.
8. She (hadn’t ought, ought not) to talk loudly.
9. It is against my (principals, principles) to destroy these documents.
10. The Puritans had been (persecuted, prosecuted) for their supposedly heretical beliefs.
11. (Besides, Outside of) the excellent service, there is nothing to recommend this hotel.
12. The landscaper’s plan showed the (parameters, boundaries) of the garden.
13. It is time to announce that the queen is feeling (ill, poorly).
14. (Plenty, Very) exasperated, Connie righteously insisted upon an explanation.
15. Scrutinize the (preceding, proceeding) paragraph for errors.
16. The (principal, principle) actor in this film is Humphrey Bogart.
17. Book publishing in many ways is the least modernized (media, medium).
18. Excuse me, Sir Robert, is everything (satisfactory, okay)?
19. Shall we (precede, proceed) to examine the evidence?
20. He will be (persecuted, prosecuted) for forgery.

EXERCISE I: Avoiding Usage Problems (81–90). Follow the directions for Exercise A.
1. (Set, Sit) here where we can talk undisturbed.
2. He is in poor (shape, condition) after weeks of lying in bed.
3. A frog is larger (than, then) a toad.
4. Prolonged contact with sugar is (real, very) bad for the enamel on your teeth.
5. I jumped when she (says, said) to me, “There’s a spider on your shoulder.”
6. We walked (slow, slowly) along the avenue.
7. Rodney promised to apologize but then he (says, said) he wouldn’t.
8. (Take and leave, Leave) these folders on John’s desk.
9. With many hands to help, the pioneers (raised, rised) the log cabin in less than a week.
10. (So, Then) the boomerang began to return.
11. There was a flash of lightning and (than, then) a clap of thunder.
12. (Set, Sit) this heavy trunk somewhere in the hall.
13. Stand in the light (because, so) I can take your picture.
14. The plastic flowers surprisingly looked (real, very) pretty.
15. (Raise, Rise) yourself to your feet.
16. Virgil laughed and (said, says), “Impossible!”
17. (Slow, Slowly) the wind and rain eroded the soil.
18. The (condition, shape) of the box is rectangular.
19. The bread will continue to (raise, rise) as the yeast ferments.
20. She (took and handed, handed) the money to the cashier.

EXERCISE J: Avoiding Usage Problems (91–100). Follow the directions for Exercise A.
1. (Their, They’re) version of handball is jai alai.
2. I still have a long (way, ways) to walk before I reach home.
3. The beggar (which, who) always stood at the gate was not there today.
4. A trash can is (the place where, where) your refuse belongs.
5. I just (want out, want to get out) of this difficult situation.
6. (Moneywise, In financial matters), she is very shrewd.
7. These roses (won’t grow well, till) they’ve been pruned.
8. Sarah’s approach to a potential customer is (more unique, unique).
9. (There, They’re) the best acrobatic team in the world.
10. Use (too, two) cloths—one for waxing, and one for polishing.
11. Ronda drove a great (way, ways) just to see you.
12. He (wants in, wants to come in) to escape the furious mob.
13. (Them there, Those) hairless dogs won’t live for a week in this subzero climate.
14. We want (to, two) perfect our system of gathering information.
15. This apartment will not be available (till, until) next month.
16. Some people think that the third time a person goes under the water is (the time, when) he will sink.
17. A clown's (absolutely unique, unique) face helps to establish her qualities as a performer.
18. There were (to, too) many bystanders for the police to apprehend the robbers.
19. Jocelyn is very active (sportswise, in sports).
20. (Their, There) are no two fingerprints alike.

EXERCISE K: Correcting Usage Problems. Forty-two of the following fifty sentences contain one error or problem in usage. Rewrite each incorrect sentence, correcting the mistake. If the sentence is correct, write correct.

1. Everything is alright now that your father is home.
2. Outside of Ginny, everyone was interested in the poetry reading.
3. The skeleton of a reptile is different from the skeleton of a mammal.
4. Merv should be finished painting at about the same time I am.
5. Ted says, "I don't have any time to waste."
6. Let us all be considerate of one another.
7. Will looks like he just saw a ghost.
8. When I give the signal, sing all together.
9. The pond should of been stocked with fish.
10. Being that everyone had finished eating, we went out on the veranda.
11. Shall I open a joint account in our name?
12. Relax for a while and your headache will disappear.
13. Take and deliver these newspapers to your customers.
14. Anyone of these tablecloths will look equally good.
15. His flight was delayed due to thick fog.
16. There just ain't any way he can earn that much money.
17. As your physician, I must tell you that you need to get the diagnosis of a specialist.
18. In the small shop they could see numerous clocks everywhere they looked.
19. Throw your quarter in the basket of the toll booth.
20. The children were anxious to open their presents.
21. Try to bust the balloon with a pin.
22. A startled bullfrog dove off the lily pad.
23. Stir the soup with that there wooden spoon.
24. It was okay for the reporters to go along with the President.
25. Our team has several ideas as to how we can improve our playing.

26. At a pharmacy one can buy cosmetics, drugs, and etc.
27. Her singing was effected by a sinus condition.
28. People that need assistance will be waiting in line.
29. Please take your own ice skates when you come.
30. Clarence can't help but speak slowly and carefully.
31. Foodwise, this meat is one of the best buys.
32. Your statement don't answer my question.
33. Who beside Maurice will volunteer for this unpleasant job?
34. Amnesty International condemned the maltreatment of the hostages.
35. Even if it does look cloudy, let's go to the zoo anyways.
36. Melanie slipped and fell off the step.
37. I don't wonder but what Kim is always arguing with her sister.
38. The kitten wants under the fence.
39. The boys worked slow building their fort.
40. Some of us need farther explanation.
41. Due to the fact that the ceiling is so low, the canopy bed will have to go elsewhere.
42. The insurance company alleged someone of being an arsonist.
43. She is trying to sew a kind of a flounce on the hem.
44. Where are the tools I left on the counter?
45. In this damp weather Dad's arthritis makes him feel poorly.
46. Baked potatoes contain less calories than french fries.
47. We saw a bunch of pelicans diving for their food.
48. Irregardless of his bad disposition, he is still a competent teacher.
49. Bill seems sort of tired and listless.
50. The fall is when all the tourists come to see the leaves change color.

APPLICATION: Using Expressions Correctly. Write a sentence of your own for each of the following expressions. Proofread your sentences carefully after you finish writing.

1. condone
2. principle
3. let
4. raise
5. bunch
6. former ... latter
7. further
8. its
9. ought
10. accept
11. prosecute
12. mad
13. done
14. set
15. immigrate
16. lie
17. all ready
18. adapt
19. lay
20. except