

Top Ten Typos

It's important to have someone read your newsletters before you send them. Whether we do it, whether it's your spouse, or whether it's someone else entirely, a fresh set of eyes will often catch typos that you've missed.

Most of the time, you'll just be keeping your readers from being distracted by the mistakes, but occasionally we see a real zinger.

Here are our most common and favorite typos:

1. Please pray for our freshman.

This is by far the most common typo we come across, to the point that we can do a search whenever we open a letter to see whether "freshman" and "freshmen" have been used properly.

It's bad enough that they sound the same, and is made doubly difficult in that "freshman" can also be an adjective.

So, the following are all correct:

- Please pray for our freshmen.
- John is leading our freshman Bible study.
- John is leading our Bible study for freshmen.
- John is leading our freshmen's Bible study.
- John is meeting with a freshman.

And the following are all incorrect:

- Please pray for our freshman. (Unless there's just one.)
- John is leading our freshmen Bible study.
- John is leading our Bible study for freshman.
- John is meeting with a freshmen.

2. It means so much to me that you've been apart of my ministry this year.

Sounds great when spoken, but "apart" means "separate" or "not part of", rather than "a part", which you almost surely mean.

Combine this one with #4 for an especially powerful message.

3. We want to be involved in our friend's lives.

While not quite as common as the freshman/freshmen typo, the duplicitous friend with many lives frequently shows up in newsletters as well.

The apostrophe always goes after the "s" when you're dealing with more than one of something. Otherwise, the sentence is still perfectly grammatical, but doesn't mean what you intend.

4. Your prayers are detrimental to my ministry.

Believe it or not, I saw this one twice over the course of one week, from completely unrelated people. If prayers are detrimental to your ministry, rather than instrumental, you're in the wrong line of work.

5. *Headline:* The Smith's Newsletter

Similar to #3, this is perfectly grammatical if you're "The Smith", and this is your newsletter.

If it's the "Smith Family Newsletter", or the "Family Newsletter of the Smiths", though, the apostrophe once again needs to come after the "s", rather than before it, resulting in "The Smiths' Newsletter".to come after the "s", rather than before it, resulting in "The Smiths' Newsletter".

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6. I live ten minuets from the metro.

Get your iPod out, load up Mozart, then dance and twirl your way to the metro. It'll surely be a conversation-starter.

Unfortunately, since this is a perfectly valid sentence, your spell-check won't catch it for you.

7. We have several student-lead Bible studies this semester.

Much like the freshman/freshmen issue, this typo is very easy to make, since "lead" (pronounced "leed") is the right verb, but wrong tense, and "lead" (pronounced "led") has the right pronunciation, but is a heavy, poisonous metal.

8. *Just after a wedding:* I am not pleased to introduce myself as Jennifer Smith.

One letter makes all the difference. She meant to write "now".

9. *Speaking of a discipler:* John has been a real bother to me.

Sometimes you don't hit the keys hard enough. He meant to write "brother".

10. ... but my all-time favorite has to be this garden path sentence:

Together we welcomed a Boy Scout group who brought in rabbits and made cages for them out of bamboo, a new missionary family from Texas, and a team of eight from Korea.

The most obvious reading of the above is that the Boy Scout group made cages out of bamboo, an unsuspecting southern family, and a bunch of Asians. Never underestimate the be-preparedness of Boy Scouts!