

BOOK IDEAS for advanced readers

Grammar Snobs Are Great Big Meanies: A Guide to Language for Fun and Spite - by [June Casagrande](#)

Editorial Reviews

From Publishers Weekly

Hoping to make grammar both accessible and amusing, Casagrande offers practical and entertaining lessons on common uses and unfortunate abuses of the English language. The author, a southern California newspaper columnist, memorably delineates "who" and "whom"; "can" and "may"; "affect" and "effect"; and provides pithy primers on the perennially problematic dark alleys of language (subjunctives, how to use punctuation marks around quoted material, possessive gerunds). In brief, cleverly titled sections, she addresses a slew of grammar and punctuation questions: "To Boldly Blow" examines the issue of split infinitives, "Snobbery Up With Which You Should Not Put" tackles prepositions and "Is That a Dangler in Your Memo or Are You Just Glad to See Me?" pokes fun at dangling modifiers and the confusion they create. By also touching on e-mail and text messaging, where traditional rules are commonly ignored, Casagrande keeps the discussion current. She maintains her sass and her sense of humor throughout, at one point calling the hyphen "a nasty, tricky, evil little mark that gets its kicks igniting arguments...the Bill Maher of punctuation." Readers intimidated by style manuals and Lynne Truss will enjoy this populist grammar reference.

From [Booklist](#)

The author of a grammar column for L.A. community newspapers, Casagrande brings a lively approach to her overview of basic grammar. Sensing that people are intimidated by grammar, she uses humor to promote her down-to-earth approach to the topic, labeling grammatical purists as snobs and bullies. In short, pithily titled chapters, she addresses common grammar problems, pointing out, for example, the distinction between *who* and *whom* in "For Whom the Snob Trolls," explaining the split infinitive in "To Boldly Blow," and discussing prepositions at the end of sentences in "Snobbery Up with Which You Should Not Put." She is most helpful when addressing the language shortcuts taken in text messaging and e-mail, topics that have not yet been fully addressed in traditional style manuals. Speaking of which, she gets in her fair share of jabs at *The Chicago Manual of Style* in the particularly funny chapter "The Kids Are All Wrong," devoted to rock-music-related language issues. Both sassy and edifying, Casagrande's little tome will be especially useful to those in search of basic grammar instruction.

The Girl's Like Spaghetti: Why, You Can't Manage without Apostrophes! by [Lynne Truss](#) (Author), [Bonnie Timmons](#) (Illustrator)

Editorial Reviews

From [Booklist](#)

Bringing her proper-punctuation campaign to children for the second time, Truss follows up her best-selling 2006 picture book, *Eats, Shoots, and Leaves: Why, Commas Really Do Matter!* (which shares its title with Truss' bestseller for adults) with this companion about apostrophes. Mishaps related to the flying comma (fancifully envisioned as a Good Punctuation Fairy . . . flitting above a page of words) are set forth in paired statements, with Timmons' lighthearted cartoons driving home the shift in meaning precipitated by missing or misplaced apostrophes. The strain of coming up with clever, illustration-friendly examples occasionally shows, but many of the 13 scenarios successfully find the sweet spot between kid-pleasing goofiness and perfect clarity of purpose: with one scenario's play on the two meanings of behind, one referring to a horse's rear end, kids won't soon forget the crucial distinction between its and it's. Endnotes provide brief technical explanations. Hide your red pens: if Truss and Timmons keep this up, the grammar police may have its youngest recruits yet.

Do Penguins Have Knees? An Imponderables Book - by David Feldman (author)

Editorial Reviews

From School Library Journal

YA-- Highly readable questions and answers explaining the unusual and heretofore unanswered questions of life. Researchers can use the index to locate specific information and browsers can just enjoy. Creative illustrations further entice, interest, and tickle the funnybone. Readers are invited to submit new imponderables or to assist in solving ``frustables."

From Library Journal

This is the sixth in a series of "Imponderables" books by Feldman. Most questions in this volume have been posed by readers of the previous volumes, and the author asks his reading public to submit questions for future books. Experts in the various fields are either quoted or paraphrased in the answer along with commentary from the author. The final section of the book is devoted to "Frustables" (unanswerable "imponderables")--new, updated, and those that "will not die." The index is thorough and useful; however, reference librarians would find a cumulative index extremely helpful. Buy if you have the other titles or for browsing and YA collections.

A whole series of books written just for our kids! (by David Feldman) Why???

[Imponderables : The Solution to the Mysteries of Everyday Life](#)

[Do Penguins Have Knees?](#)

[How Do Astronauts Scratch an Itch?](#)

[How Does Aspirin Find a Headache?](#)

[What Are Hyenas Laughing At, Anyway?](#)

[When Do Fish Sleep?: And Other Imponderables of Everyday Life](#)

[Who Put the Butter in Butterfly?...and Other Fearless Investigations into Our Illogical Language by David Feldman](#)

[Why Do Clocks Run Clockwise? and Other Imponderables](#)

[Why Do Dogs Have Wet Noses?](#)

And if you like the books, try the game! [Marlarky](#) (Patch Products)

Players try to bluff answers to Imponderable questions, and opponents try to determine the real answers from the ones that are simply malarky...

Biographies and Memoirs (check/pre-read before using)

[Gandhi](#) by Amy Pastan (a DK Biography - about 120 pages, easier read, with the strong photo support)

[One Giant Leap: Neil Armstrong's Stellar American Journey](#) by Neal Thompson

[Tesla: Man Out of Time](#) by Margaret Cheney

[The Radioactive Boy Scout: The Frightening True Story of a Whiz Kid and His Homemade Nuclear Reactor](#) by Ken Silverstein

[True Compass: A Memoir](#), by Edward Kennedy