

The background features a series of concentric, light-colored circles that create a ripple effect, centered behind the main title.

The *Grammatical* *Trap*

How to avoid a charge
from the grammar police

Zen^o
COMMUNICATIONS

GRAMMAR



GEEKS.

1

Its or it's

You only use an apostrophe to show possession (that the object belongs to the person you've stated) or if you're removing something. So:

I would have liked to becomes **I would've liked to**
It is my birthday becomes **it's my birthday**
She will love it becomes **she'll love it**

But it has to work the other way too. If you put an apostrophe in a word, look to see if it's short for anything. So:

He's having fun becomes **he is having fun**
I'd ask her but she's gone becomes
I would ask her but she has gone

The only other time you use apostrophes are when something belongs to someone, so:

Simon's new haircut is gorgeous refers to the hair which, obviously, belongs to Simon. **Louis's team is doing well** can also be written without the extra 's', for example **Louis'** and refers to the team belonging to Louis.

2

Loose or Lose?

The former means the opposite of tight and the latter the opposite of win. So:

I went on a diet and now my jeans are loose
I always lose my keys when I am in a rush

3

Corporate Entity

When you are talking about a huge company it actually becomes singular rather than plural as you might expect. So:

The BBC is a popular company rather than **the BBC are a popular company**
Virgin has a great brand rather than **Virgin have a great brand**

4

They're, there, and their

Why there are three words which all sound exactly the same, we don't know, but they do have very different uses. **They're** is a contraction of they are, whilst **their** means literally belonging to them, and **there** relates to a position and is the opposite of here. So:

They're having a great time
Their new book is on the bestseller list
There are the keys you lost earlier

5

Your and You're

Just like in our first point, the apostrophe means that something has been removed, in this case **you're** means you are, whilst **your** refers to something belonging to you. So:

You're having a great time
Your book

6

Effect versus Affect

Affect is a verb and means to influence whilst **effect** is a noun and is the result. So:

The power cut could affect us
The power cut's effect could be dramatic

7

Plurals

When there's more than one of something you add an s, but you don't need to add an apostrophe. So:

Cats, dogs and cows means more than one cat, dog and cow
Cat's, dog's and cow's means it belongs to the cat, dog and cow.

ARE YOU...

THEIR

There

— or —

THEY'RE?

8

Whose and Who's

Again, remember that an apostrophe is used when you remove something so in this case **who's** means who is, whereas **whose** refers instead to whom something belongs. So:

Whose go is it anyway?

Who's going to tell her you broke it

If in doubt read it back to yourself without the apostrophe...

9

To and Too

Too is an adjective and means in addition or to excess whereas **to** is a preposition and often indicates direction. So:

I would go to the moon and back

I would too! Although it's a bit too far



Trevithick House
Stafford Park 4
Telford
TF3 3BA