

**THE GRAMMAR LADY IS DEAD**  
**By Margaret Menamin**



*Hero Holding the Beacon for Leander* by Evelyn de Morgan

*In Memory of Mary Newton Bruder*

I hear participles weeping  
as they dangle over her grave  
wet as the soggy sentences  
of students who pour over textbooks.

I see the company stationary  
forced to a standstill.  
Who can it turn to,  
from whence will it seek advise?  
Will it be able to continue on?

Neat little subjects and objects  
stand two abreast  
like an honor guard in the cemetery,  
loyal as slaves sent to follow  
their master out of the world.

The affect would amuse her  
but at this point in time  
I can no longer illicit  
her secret smile,  
the baptism of her soft blue pencil.

*The above poem contains 9 spelling and grammar errors, and one phrase that is worthy of death by firing squad. If you are unable to find all of them, scroll down to the end of this link for the answers.*

Following are some really unforgivable errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar I have been seeing recently in newspapers, books, magazines, and on the Internet. Please memorize these. I hope no poet whose work I read will ever be guilty of any of these:

*Who's* instead of *whose*. *Who's* means: Who is. *Who's* that knocking on the door. *Whose* means: Belonging to whom. *Whose* book is that? Mary Ann, *whose* sister lives in the city...

*Burgandy* instead of *burgundy*. There is no such word as *burgandy*.

*Superintendant*, *correspondant*, *dependant*. All of these words should end in *ent*, not *ant*.

*Marshall law* or *marshal law*. The correct word is *martial*. It comes from Mars, the god of war. *Martial* law.

*Formally* instead of *formerly*. *Formally* means “in a formal way” or “with dignity.” *Formerly* means “in the past.”

*Accordian* instead of *accordion*. The correct spelling is *accordion*.

*Seperate* instead of **separate**. There is no such spelling as *seperate*. NEVER *seperate*. ALWAYS *separate*.

*Off of*. NEVER use this phrase. You do not get “off of” the bus or go “off of” work. It is *off*. Just *off*. You get *off* the bus. You go *off* work. You fall *off* the roof. Not *off of*. NEVER *off of*.

*One in the same*. NO. The phrase is *one and the same*. ALWAYS *one and the same*.

*Pacific* instead of *specific*. This is SO bad. *Pacific* means “peaceful,” and the Pacific Ocean was so named. *Specific* means particular, designated, especially pointed out.

*Except* instead of *accept*. These words are almost exact opposites. If you *except* something, you rule it out. If you *accept* something, you admit it. You *accept* a compliment, a gift, or an invitation. You *except* the fine print on the insurance policy, or the bad apples you don't want to put in the basket.

*Then* instead of *than*. *Then* means “that time, the time when...” *Than* is a comparative word. He has more money *than* I. NEVER, NEVER is anything “more *then*” anything.

Also remember that nothing is “*different than*” or, most certainly, “*different then*.” Things are different *from*. My copy is different *from* yours because it *differs from* yours.

*Lie and lay*. *People lie*. *Hens lay*. However, *lay* IS *past tense of lie*. And people do *lay* THINGS down. This is a bit tricky. Memorize these examples:

Today I lie (or will lie) down.  
Yesterday I lay down. NEVER “I laid down.”  
In the past I have lain down.

Today I lay (or will lay) the book on the table.  
Yesterday I laid the book on the table.  
I have laid the book on the table many times.

### Answers to “The Grammar Lady is Dead”:

1. Students do not *pour* over textbooks, unless they spill their drinks on them. If they are studying they *pore* over their books.
2. The company *stationary* would indeed be a standstill. Company business is transacted on the company *stationery*.
3. *Whom* can it turn to, not *who* can it turn to. And it would be better to say, *To whom* can it turn?
4. *Whence*, not *from whence*. NEVER *from whence*.
5. *Advise* is a verb; *advice* is a noun. If someone seeks your *advice*, you might want to *advise* him.
6. *Continue*, not *continue on*.
7. *Cemetery*, not *cemetary*.
8. *Affect* is a verb (except when speaking of the expression on someone’s face). *Effect* is a noun. If you want to get a certain *effect*, you must *affect* something.
9. *Elicit* is a verb meaning to draw out. *Illicit* is an adjective means illegal or unethical.
10. Anyone who says or writes “at this point in time” should be shot.