

For Further Inquiry or Support

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**WORD CRIMES:**

**Vocab & Grammar**

Objective: I can evaluate the purpose of learning grammar and apply it to new learning.

Have you ever wondered if it's REALLY necessary to learn spelling, grammar, and vocabulary, especially in the age of spell-check? Well, one music artist has a strong opinion on the issue...

## Step 1: Watch the Video or Read Lyrics

The official YouTube link is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Gv0H-vPoDc>

### Al Yankovic "Word Crime"

<p>If you can't write in the proper way          If you don't know how to conjugate          Maybe you flunked that class          And maybe now you find          That people mock you online          Okay, now here's the deal          I'll try to educate ya          Gonna familiarize          You with the nomenclature          You'll learn the definitions          Of nouns and prepositions          Literacy's your mission          And that's why I think it's a          Good time          To learn some grammar          Now, did I stammer          Work on that grammar          You should know when          It's "less" or it's "fewer"          Like people who were          Never raised in a sewer          I hate these word crimes          Like I could care less          That means you do care          At least a little          Don't be a moron          You'd better slow down          And use the right pronoun          Show the world you're no clown          Everybody wise up!</p>	<p>Say you got an "I", "T"          Followed by apostrophe, "s"          Now what does that mean?          You would not use "it's" in this          case          As a possessive          It's a contraction          What's a contraction?          Well, it's the shortening of a word,          or a group of words          By the omission of a sound or          letter          Okay, now here's some notes          Syntax you're always mangling          No "x" in "espresso"          Your participle's danglin'          But I don't want your drama          If you really wanna          Leave out that Oxford comma          Just keep in mind          That "be", "see", "are", "you"          Are words, not letters          Get it together          Use your spellchecker          You should never          Write words using numbers          Unless you're seven          Or your name is Prince          I hate these word crimes          You really need a          Full time proofreader          You dumb mouth-breather          Well, you should hire          Some cunning linguist          To help you distinguish          What is proper English</p>	<p>One thing I ask of you          Time to learn your homophones is          past due          Learn to diagram a sentence too          Always say "to whom"          Don't ever say "to who"          And listen up when I tell you this          I hope you never use quotation          marks for emphasis          You finished second grade          I hope you can tell          If you're doing good or doing well          About better figure out the difference          Irony is not coincidence          And I thought that you'd gotten it          through your skull          What's figurative and what's literal          Oh but, just now, you said          You literally couldn't get out of bed          That really makes me want to          literally          Smack a crowbar upside your stupid          head          I read your e-mail          It's quite apparent          Your grammar's errant          You're incoherent          Saw your blog post          It's really fantastic          That was sarcastic (Oh, psych!)          'Cause you write like a spastic          I hate these Word Crimes          Your prose is dopey          Think you should only          Write in emoji          Oh, you're a lost cause          Go back to pre-school          Get out of the gene pool          Try your best to not drool</p>
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Key Vocabulary from the video\* (in order of appearance)

- **Grammar (n):** “the set of rules that explain how words are used in a language”
- **Conjugate (v):** “to list the different forms of a verb that show number, person, tense, etc.”
- **Nomenclature (n):** “the act or process... of naming.”
- **Syntax (n):** “the way in which words are put together to form phrases, clauses, or sentences.”
- **Errant (adj):** “behaving wrongly; going outside the proper area”
- **Incoherent (adj):** “not able to talk or express yourself in a clear way that can be easily understood”
- **Prose (n):** “writing that is not poetry: ordinary writing”

What is your initial reaction to the video? Explain why you feel that way.

Do you feel that grammar and writing are as important as he implies? Explain.

What do YOU think is the biggest “word crime” that people commonly make today? Explain.

## Step 2: Dive into the specifics

Our goal is to spread awareness of these word crimes so we can eradicate them completely! Thus, we will be making POSTERS warning others of common word crimes. Your poster must be a minimum of 8.5x11" in size. You can use a computer or make the poster by hand.

(NOTE: This poster does not need to be visually intense, expensive, or crafty to get a good grade. Content and clarity matter above appearance this time. It can also be black and white.)

**In this assignment, you will choose ONE of the topics mentioned in the video and make a POSTER that includes the following:**

1. The topic and any rules or definitions we should know
2. Why you think Al Yankovic called it a "Word Crime"
3. One tip to never forget the rules or mess it up again. (In other words, invent a memory trick to prevent us from committing this word crime!)

You may either make a PowerPoint slide OR make a poster; either option must have the 3 required elements listed above.

Choose from the following, in order of appearance in the video:

1. Nouns, Prepositions, and Pronouns (Parts of Speech)
2. Less vs. Fewer
3. "I could care less."
4. It's vs. its
5. Possessive
6. Contraction
7. "Espresso" (spelling)
8. Dangling participles
9. Oxford comma
10. Homophones (i.e. lightning/lightening)
11. Diagramming sentences
12. Who vs. Whom (i.e. "to whom")
13. Quotation marks for emphasis
14. Good vs. Well
15. Irony vs. Coincidence
16. Figuratively vs. Literally

Oh, and one more thing...ing.

**Go stop some word crimes!**



# WORD CRIME:

Insert picture here

please CITE YOUR SOURCE  
for the image, or it's plagiarism!

"Insert bad example here, with  
editing marks or some way to  
show that it's BAD."  
If you have enough space, put a  
fixed version also!

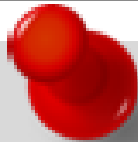
The Crime:

Why it's a Problem:

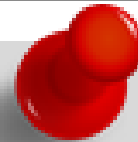
## Crime Watchers - Here's how you can help!

Explain to readers how to avoid committing this crime in the future.  
This can include

**\*Insert something witty here\***



# WORD CRIME:



Blank rectangular box for writing.

Gray rectangular box for writing.

Blank rectangular box for writing.

The Crime:

Why it's a Problem:

**Crime Watchers - Here's how you can help!**

Large blank rectangular box for writing.

## WORD CRIME:

### “Everyday” vs. “Every day”



“I text him **everyday.**”

“It’s part of my **every\_day** routine.”

#### The Crime:

“Every \_ day” is a noun - adjective combo. It specifies which day, and how often. They can be the last two words of a sentence.

“Everyday” is a compound word & an adj. It describes what KIND of item happens daily. The next word in the sentence should be a NOUN.

#### Why it’s a Problem:

They might look similar, but there are totally incorrect parts of speech going on!

Also, “everyday” is a synonym for “common” or “daily”, but “every day” literally means each day.

### Crime Watchers - Here’s how you can help!

There are several ways to remember this!

- If you can insert the word “single”, there should be a space.
  - = “I eat my breakfast every “single” day.” = correct!
- “Everyday” should have a noun after it.
  - = “The colonists struggled to meet their everyday needs.” = correct!
- “Every\_day” can have a comma after it, but “everyday” can’t.
  - = “Every day, the fair princess sat alone in her tower.” = correct!

Practice good grammar **every\_day!**

# Word Crimes: Poster Rubric

	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks...	The grammar concept is clearly presented, fully explained, gives correct examples, and is memorable to viewers.	The grammar concept is explained correctly, and a way to remember the topic is given.	The grammar concept might have errors in it, might be confusing, or may not be easy to remember.	The grammar concept is totally unclear, incorrect, or not able to be learned in the short or long term.
Integrate visual displays into poster	Visuals and other elements are exceptionally well crafted to support the concept being taught.	Visuals or other tools have been used effectively to present the concept.	Visuals and other elements may not always fully support the concept or may be distracting.	Visuals and other elements may be absent or unsuccessful.

Turn-In Guidelines	Effort Considerations	Self-Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ø Rubric</li> <li>ø Visual Aid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ø Visual aid done</li> <li>ø Length/size guidelines met</li> <li>ø Proofreading attempted</li> </ul>	<p>What did you do well?</p> <p>What could you have done better?</p>
Teacher Comments:		



# Word Crimes: Pop Quiz!

4	3	2	1
Students can show a critical understanding of grammar at or above grade level.	Students can show a grade level appropriate understanding of grammar concepts.	Students can partially show a grade level understanding of grammar concepts.	Students do not demonstrate understanding of the specified grammar concepts.

Do YOU know the correct way to revise these word crimes?

Test your word savvy with this quiz. Circle the right answer below:

- List the correct parts of speech used in this sentence, IN ORDER: **“The cat jumped over the moon.”**
  - Article – noun – adverb – verb – article – noun
  - Article – noun – verb – preposition – article – noun
  - Pronoun – noun – verb – adverb – article – noun
  - I have no idea.
- Circle: Is this sentence correct? **“The zombie ate fewer brains than yesterday.”**  
YES / NO
- Circle: Is this sentence correct? **“I couldn’t care less.”** YES / NO
- Circle: Is this sentence correct? **“Its time to go to school!”** YES / NO
- Circle: Is this sentence correct? **“I don’t know what it’s doing!”** YES / NO

6. Circle: Is this sentence correct? "**To whom am I speaking?**" YES / NO

7. Circle: Is this sentence correct? "**I'm doing good.**" YES / NO

8. Circle: Is this sentence correct? "**You're doing a good job.**" YES / NO

9. Circle: Is this sentence correct? "**I bought bacon, chocolate syrup, and donuts.**"  
YES / NO

10. Circle: Is this sentence correct? "**He literally just stormed in here two seconds ago.**"  
YES / NO

Reflect: This is just one small quiz with a fraction of English grammar in it. There are many other rules to follow to be taken seriously as a professional. What have you learned overall about the importance of grammar?

