

# The Proof Angel Summary of

## Grammar and Usage: June 2015

### Knowing the difference between passed and past

This is a classic area for confusion, but we can rely on Oxford Dictionaries to keep us straight on the [difference between passed and past](#).

### Declining standards or changing attitudes?

Have people always complained about declining standards? By the look of this post, [the answer is probably yes](#).

### How to translate the phrase it is all Greek to me

Have you ever wondered why when we don't understand we sometimes say "It's all Greek to me"?

This article shows the equivalent of [it's all Greek to me in 30 other languages](#). I think it is surprising that so many refer to Greek in this way. I suppose that is down to the influence of the Romans.

### The history of the English language in an infographic

This is a nice summary of the chequered [history of the English language](#).

### A quiz on common literary devices

Here is a bit of fun, or a challenge, depending on [your point of view](#).

### What is the plural of octopus?

This one is more complicated than you might think. Take a deep breath before you [find out more here](#).



The Proof Angel is the trading name of Sarah Perkins, freelance editor and proofreader.

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## 8 Important phrasal verbs of movement

Here is a nice infographic about using [phrasal verbs](#) of movement.

## Maps that explain English

This series of maps shed quite of lot of light on [the history of the English language](#).

If you can scroll down past the header, that is.

## The names of punctuation marks

We use punctuation marks all the time, but do we ever stop to think about their names?

Find out where the [names of punctuation marks originated here](#).

## Words derived from names

In our colourful language, we have some words derived from the names of real people. This post covers the [background to 10 of them](#).

## How web addresses work

This can be a confusing area for non techy people like me. What do all the parts of a web address do, and how do you write them out?

[Find out the facts](#) from John Espirian, the Society for Editors Proofreader's internet director.

## How to remember numerals better

This is an interesting piece about [how to remember numerals better](#). But be warned, the article is quite academic, and you may find you need to pay attention more than usual. It is fascinating how there are differences between languages.

## Words that look related, but aren't

Just when you thought you were getting the hang of this word origin thing, something comes along to shake your confidence.

This list of words that [look like pairs, but are from different roots](#), is quite interesting.

## When should Earth be capitalised?

The use of capital letters can be tricky. Some words really don't help the situation because they are used both as proper nouns, (needing a capital) and common nouns. A prime example is earth (or Earth).

Read more about [when earth should have a capital letter here](#).

## Why we are sometimes beside ourselves

Here is the background to an everyday odd phrase. Why do we say we are [beside ourselves](#)?

## The history of the word bribe

Bribe is an odd word, with a chequered past. [Read about the background, rather than the current goings on, here.](#)

## Beginning a sentence with "however"

Laying down the law is a risky business. Michael Gove has been instructing his civil servants on grammar, but there is a snag.

There is a conflict. Look at these "rules".

1. It is good to read great writers to see how the job is done, and learn from them. A list of great writers has been provided by Mr Gove for guidance.
2. Mr Gove is a fan of the "rule" that one should never begin a sentence with "however".

This post from David Crystal gives examples of [sentences from these great writers begin with "however"](#).

I suspect it is almost impossible to find a great writer who abides by all the "rules".

## The history of Standard English

This is an interesting post about the history of the English Language. I suspect that the person who wrote [A ridiculously brief outrageously selective and painfully simplified history of Standard English](#) has been heckled at some point by the type who complains that infographics are an oversimplification. But then, I can think of several people who will be complaining at the idea that Standard English is a dialect.