

Miscellanea

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Blond, blonde; brunet, brunette

Her parents are blond Nordics. Though her mother is a blonde, her father likes brunettes. (Blonde, a noun, can refer only to females. Brunettes are dark-haired women. Brunet as a noun, as well as blond and brunette as adjectives, apply to males or females.) He admired brunet Italians (those with dark skin, hair, or eyes).

A while, awhile; alright, already

- *He took a while to do it. (While is a noun.)*
- *He stayed awhile. (Awhile is an adverb meaning for a while.)*
- *Alright is nonstandard for all right and should be avoided. Already is all right.*

Due to

Use *due to* after a noun but not after a verb.

- *His hesitancy was due to fear. (Good.)*
- *He hesitated due to fear. (Unacceptable. Use because of or on account of.)*

Omission of that

It was one of those things (that) her husband refused to discuss. (That may be omitted if the meaning is clear. Don't replace it with a comma.)

Capitalization of family members, other appellatives

- *I was there when my dad arrived. (Lower case dad, mom, etc., after a pronoun.)*
- *I was there when Dad and Sis arrived. (Here Dad and Sis are proper names.)*
- *All right, dear. Okay, chief. (Don't capitalize terms of endearment or familiarity.)*

Titles of works in running text

- For books, periodicals, plays, long poems, operas, paintings, statues, movies, use italics. (She liked H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man*. He reads the *New York Times*.)
- For short poems, songs, and radio and television programs, use roman type and quote marks: (He learned Joyce Kilmer's "Trees." We watched "The Sopranos.")
- For signs and mottoes, capitalize but don't use italics or quotes. (There was a Do Not Disturb sign on the door. The flag bore the motto Dont Tread on Me.)

Possessives with and without s

- With few exceptions, add 's to singular nouns: *Marx's theories, Burns's poems*. To plurals, add an apostrophe only: *the Joneses' store, Fiction Writers' Forum*.
- But: *appearance's sake, Jesus's name* (traditional); *Euripides's plays* (polysyllabic name). And drop the s where euphony insists: *Dickens's stories, Gibbons's studies*.

Plural nouns with single attributes

- *They wore it on their arm. (Arms to mean both arms.)*

- *Some of the ladies brought cookies. Others brought a cake. (Probably not cakes.)*