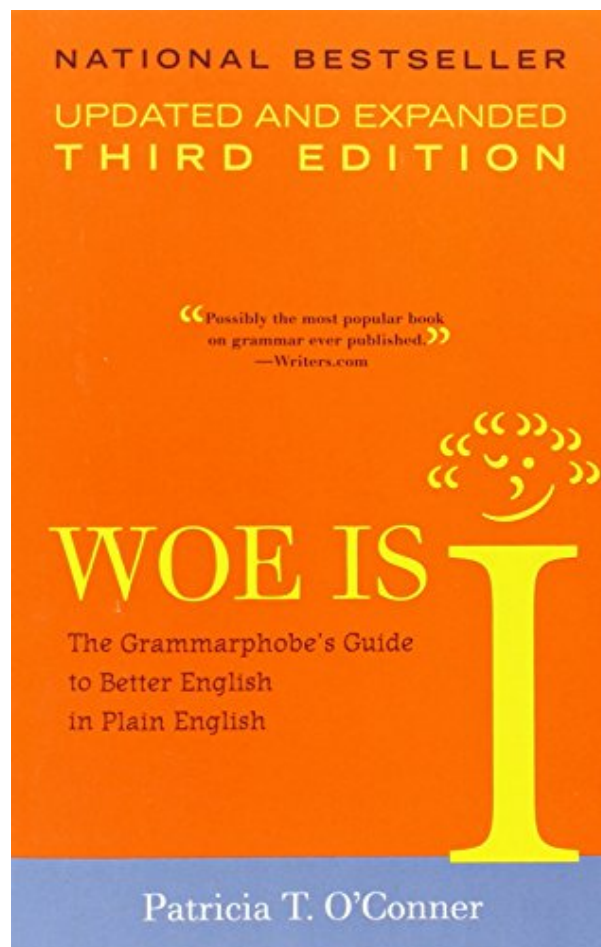


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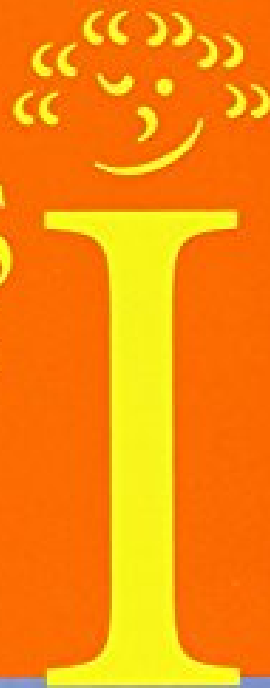
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Starred Review. Former New York Times Book Review editor and linguistic expert O'Conner (*Words Fail Me, You Send Me*) updates her bestselling guide to grammar, an invigorating and entertaining dissection of our ever-evolving language. In this third edition, O'Conner guides readers through conversational conundrums with aplomb, filling in not only the logic behind the appropriate choice for, say, possessives, but also explaining such oddities as the spelling of restaurateur (instead of a "restauranteur"), the proper pronunciation of prix fix ("pree feeks") and a slew of mnemonic devices to help amateur grammarians keep ifs, ands and buts in check. It's these small digressions that make the book so readable, even for those with a deep-seated hatred for grammatical do-goodery. O'Conner gleefully eviscerates poor sentence construction and dangling participles, soothes verb tension and debunks the frequently intimidating semicolon with finesse. Tempered with a heavy dose of wit (reaching its nadir in her chapter on clichés), O'Conner's lively treatise is as vital as a dictionary for those who wish to be taken seriously in speech, in print or on Facebook.

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In this new edition of *Woe Is I*, Patricia T. O'Conner unties the knottiest grammar tangles and displays the same lively humor that has charmed and enlightened grateful readers for years. With new chapters on spelling and punctuation, and fresh insights into the rights, wrongs, and maybes of English grammar and usage, *Woe Is I* offers down-to-earth explanations and plain-English solutions to the language mysteries that bedevil all of us:

- Avoid the persistent (and persistently embarrassing) grammatical errors that bewilder the best and the brightest
 - Pronounce and spell words that even the smartest people mangle
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From Publishers Weekly

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Most helpful customer reviews

58 of 60 people found the following review helpful.

Useful and fun

By Arsen Azizyan

This is an essential handbook for any grammar Nazi. Prepare to have many persistent doubts dispelled and nagging questions settled - not only about grammar and spelling, but also pronunciation (including that of the word "pronunciation"). This book will help you feel even more annoyingly superior to the uneducated unfortunates around you.

What's more, the sample sentences in the book are almost worth the price by themselves. "A gradual crescendo in the percussion section reached a climax that woke the audience." "When he's not fighting crime, Bruce dresses like a normal adult."

These days, as our entire nation has forgotten the use of the apostrophe, everyone could use at least one grammar book on their shelves, and I can't think of a clearer and friendlier one than this.

49 of 51 people found the following review helpful.

Don't be fooled - this is a seriously GOOD book!

By A Customer

I've owned WOE IS I for many months now. It never crossed my mind that someone could be misled by the title; in fact, that's what attracted me to it in the first place. I just skimmed over several of the recent reviews at this site and I'm appalled at the prissy comments about the author's "authority". Well, if this country has any standards left with respect to grammar and usage, I'm betting you can find them at the New York Times. That's where Ms. O'Conner learned her trade, and that's a good enough recommendation for me. This book is useful in my line of work - social science research - week in and week out. I HIGHLY recommend it to all types - students, business people, and anyone else who wants to say what they mean.

79 of 86 people found the following review helpful.

Where Opposites Converge

By Bruce Kendall

Grammar and fun. How odd those two words look in such close proximity to each other. Granted, Fowler can be amusing at times, particularly when he's in full peevish mode and attired in full curmudgeonly armor. Mencken certainly summons up a fairly regular chuckle, when dealing with topics related to English/American usage.

But if you're like me, you tend to gloss over those exceptions and hearken back to 9th and 10th grade English classes, featuring Messrs. Strunk & White, supplemented by the latest book of torture published by McGraw Hill, with an exercise book on top of that. Ugh!

I wish now that Ms. O'Conner's witty, 227 pg. text had been available at that time and that I would have had English teachers enlightened enough to use it, even if only as a supplement.

"Woe is I" is a pleasure to read. She accomplishes that rare deed of sallying forth against the convulsive, recalcitrant, obfuscating, hydra-headed monster that is English Grammar and actually coming out of the battle victorious.

She accomplishes this through sheer force of wit. This is not your typical handbook of style, as you might glean from reading over the sample pages. That will give you an idea of the charm and humor that Ms. O'Conner brings to bear on various grammatical bugaboos. Some of my favorite examples: "Back to the drawing board. 'Back to Roget's Thesaurus.'" "Agree to disagree. 'People never really agree to disagree. They just get tired of arguing.'" "Bite the bullet. 'Save your teeth.'"

This book is helpful, no matter what your level of English proficiency. I recommend it to students, writers, lovers of language, Reference book junkies, word-freaks, ESL teachers, English teachers, teachers in other

disciplines who need help in grading papers or to anyone else who wants to brush up his/her grammar.
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