

Don't it just drive you *mad...*

Hello readers and welcome to another column, this month we are re-visiting the subject of poor English. The written and verbal use of the English language seems to be something that is a bugbear for many of you; everyone seems to tolerate certain lapses but pulls their hair out at others. Michael Hyde of Marlow, states 'my complaint comes from the increasing amount of American words, spellings and pronunciations that have corrupted our language. Even before the widespread use of the Internet, many people in UK were saying "Skedule" when they meant "Schedule." Unless you are American can you please use the English word! What word do you use? PS. Any spelling mistakes are the fault of the computer not me.' Well Michael, I am not sure that the computer can be held fully responsible for spelling errors, although it is an excuse I will consider for future use! I agree that American words have been creeping into both written and spoken English for years. Perhaps it's due to the status and popularity of American films and the ensuing actors and actresses, who we seem to follow with great interest via television, magazines, the internet, radio etc. Moving laterally for a moment, I would like to say that I cannot deny having an interest in celebrities myself, I enjoy glancing through the glossies at the fabulous and not so fabulous gowns that grace the red carpet and of course I always like to know whether the Jolie-Pitts have adopted another child or not. However I believe it needs to be taken in context, I was somewhat surprised that the cancellation of the Golden Globes and the worry that the Oscars might not go ahead this month, made the headlines in parity with the disaster in Kenya. I realise that a serious issue of royalties and writers concerns are behind the boycott of the

awards, but the destruction of Kenya, the struggle the aid workers have to reach all the displaced families, destroyed villages and a country in turmoil, seems a tad more...pressing shall we say.

Anyway enough of my moaning, back to Michaels question. I try to use the correct spoken English language, as it does sound awful when people use slang or use the wrong word either in pronunciation or context. When writing I am sure that I use only English language, no American words to be found. However everyone is susceptible to picking up bad habits, from dropping an h or perhaps using an American word by mistake, unless you are a very disciplined person, most of us will be guilty of ruining the language in some way. We are human and consequently genetically programmed with all the usual faults and flaws. It has to be said though, that the English language in its purest form is fantastically complex and brilliant. The understanding of which is only fully grasped when vocalised by the immensely intelligent and funny Stephen Fry, or even the up and coming Russell Brand, who although rather bizarre at times, has a grasp of the English language which most of us can only envy and admire. I will state again, I believe strongly that the English Language should be one of, if not, the most important subject in every school at Primary, and Secondary level. And it should (perhaps) become a compulsory side subject for practical courses such as plumbing, mechanics etc! In these days and times no matter what interests you have or what type of job you want, everyone should have a good standard of English language, in terms of writing, speaking and reading.

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