



Grammar Girl: Politically Correct



Dear Grammar Girl,

My question today is; How many adjectives are politically correct in front of a proper noun ie. a person's name? I have to write a 2 sentence blurb about myself- so can one sup the adjectives, or is it improper to have two consesentences with x amount of adjectives?

Please reply in way that addresses my learning style- 2 parts auditory, 3 parts visual, on Monday's tactile, and on the last Wednesday of the month . . . which isn't today, olfactory.

Thanks,
Ellen

Dear Ellen,

Take two adverbs and call me in the...

Oops. Wrong email. Ehem.Um.

Adjectives are tricky little cusses. If you want to say, for instance, The amazing, stupendous, talented and unsurpassably correct Deb Courtney, then I suggest you stand up and say it loudly, making sure your entire office hears...

Really, Ellen, I'd have to see the adjectives in question. Though there is an obscure and highly secret equation you can use to test the efficacy of your adjective usage.

1. Count the number of words in the sentence.
2. Divide by pi.
3. Add to that the square root of the actual number of adjectives (a) minus 1 (e.g., the square root of (a - 1).)
4. Multiply the answer by 2, 43.5, 104, and 3,245,361/2 respectively.
5. Place each answer at the corner of an Aristotelian logic square, beginning at the top left corner and progressing around clockwise.
6. Figure the inverse implication for each corner, then add the top left and bottom right corners, and the top right and bottom left corners.
7. Divide the second sum by the first sum

8. Take the square root of your answer

9. If the answer has more than a single digit, add the digits together starting from the left, continuing this process until you are left with a single digit.

This single digit is the number of adjectives your sentence can appropriately hold without causing all life as we know it to abruptly and permanently cease. Or something like that.

By the way, having been inducted into the select cadre of People who Know, you must now swear never to reveal this secret. If you do, you are destined to spend the rest of eternity performing sentence diagramming on the complete works of Faulkner.

I hope this finds you on your visual day, as I am at a loss as to how I ought to communicate grammar as scent (though it is certainly a fact that much grammar usage carries with it the distinctive odor of -- ahem -- solid waste).

Yours in good grammar,
Grammar Girl



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