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TiDbits on writing[®] part 7

LETTER FROM TD

We hope you enjoy Part 7 of our series, *TiDbits on Writing*[®].

These practical tips will help you tackle some of the major stumbling blocks in writing on the job – whether preparing reports, proposals, or even e-mails. We'll cover issues such as how to write with clarity, how to make subjects and verbs agree, and even how to use proper punctuation.

Enjoy! And happy writing!

— Laura Winterroth
Managing Director



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TiDbits

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The Objective Truth

Have you ever heard anyone incorrectly say, “Send the e-mail to Tom, Dan, and *I*,” or “Michael is tall like Chris and *I*?”

In Part 5, *When Subjects Rule*, we wrote about subjective pronouns – *I, he, she, we, they* – and the three instances where we use them: 1) When they are the DOERS of action; 2) after *than* or *as* when making comparisons; and, 3) after any form of “to be.”

In this issue, we’re doing the flip side of the pronoun dilemma and giving objective pronouns – *me, him, her, us, them* – their just due. As with subject pronouns, they find their proper place in three key instances.

SUBJECT Pronouns	OBJECT Pronouns
I we	me us
he they	him them
she	her
Doers	Receivers

Receivers of the Action

First off: Object pronouns are the RECEIVERS of the action.

Claire admires him.

S V O

Here, *Claire* is the subject (S); *admires* is the verb (V); and the object of her admiration – the pronoun *him* (O) – receives the action. Few people would make the mistake of saying, “Claire likes *he*,” so this one most people get right.

After Like

Next: Use object pronouns when you make a comparison using *like*.

Andrew excelled just like her.

Like us, Molly enjoyed hockey.

What would you substitute for *Tony* in this sentence?

Joe is blond like Tony. _____

Answer: Joe is blond like him.

Follow the simple rule: Always place an object pronoun after the word *like*.

After any Preposition

The last instance is probably the trickiest, because it requires that you recognize *prepositions*. Prepositions are short little words that usually show direction – *in, about, with, over* – and when you eyeball one, always follow it with an objective pronoun.

Let’s fix our earlier sentence’s goof: “Send the e-mail to Tom, Dan and *I*.”

Can you spot the preposition in this sentence? That’s right – the word *to*. It’s your surefire clue that *I* must be changed to *me*.

Send the e-mail (to) Tom, Dan and me.

Look for prepositions; use objects:

Ellen pointed (at) David and them.

(For) John and her, life changed.

Now you know the Objective Truth! □