

The GRUMPY WRITER'S GRUMPS

...COMPLAINING FOR COMPLAINING'S SAKE...

I'm not a language purist, nor do I propose that language be static, but there are certain terms which are commonly used which irk me. I must admit that I cannot always identify exactly why these terms bother me, but they do, and to get it off my chest, here is just one of them.

Learnings

I started hearing this term used extensively when I started teaching at the Tata-Dhan Academy. Typically, the term was used as a substitute for "lessons" or - less frequently, but still observable - "inferences." So, for example, after visiting the field, we (students and faculty) would return and share our "learnings."

Ugh. Even writing the term makes me cringe.

Unfortunately, my students are not to blame, because I'm sure that if I were to survey my fellow colleagues, based on the statistical frequency of usage, I would guess that I would be the only who really objects to using the word.

What makes matters worse is that, since "learnings" isn't really a word, most spell-check options flag the word as an error, and suggest, instead, the contraction "learning's." My estimate is that half of my students simply click on "replace" when that option is given rather than actually thinking about what "learning's" is compared to what they want to say.

So, what do I suggest? I won't give a full list of ways to fix your writing, but here are some examples of changes that can be made. Instead of asking "What were your learnings?" you could ask, "What did you learn?" Instead of asking "What are the learnings from this activity?" you could ask, "What are the lessons from this activity?" (Or, if it was something that could be inferred, you could ask "What inferences can be made from this activity?") Instead of saying "My learnings were xyz," you could say "I found out xyz," "I learned xyz," "I could understand that xyz," and a whole lot of other similar (more accurate) verbs can be used.

Having read this, I sure hope you've learned something new.

About this scrap of paper...

When I think of someone grumpy, I have this image of someone old and bitter, someone who is quick to find faults with almost everything, and someone who is a little bit mean.

Am I those things?

I hope not. But, sometimes, I do feel grumpy - especially after a long week of editing work (my own, or that of others).

This periodic scrap of paper is my way of "venting," entertaining myself and others, generating some discussion, or at least giving people something to think about.

You can always find the GRUMPY WRITER'S GRUMPS archived online at <http://thegrumpywriter.wordpress.com>

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Come and argue with me!

Mr.
Grumpy



Words I Dislike #1