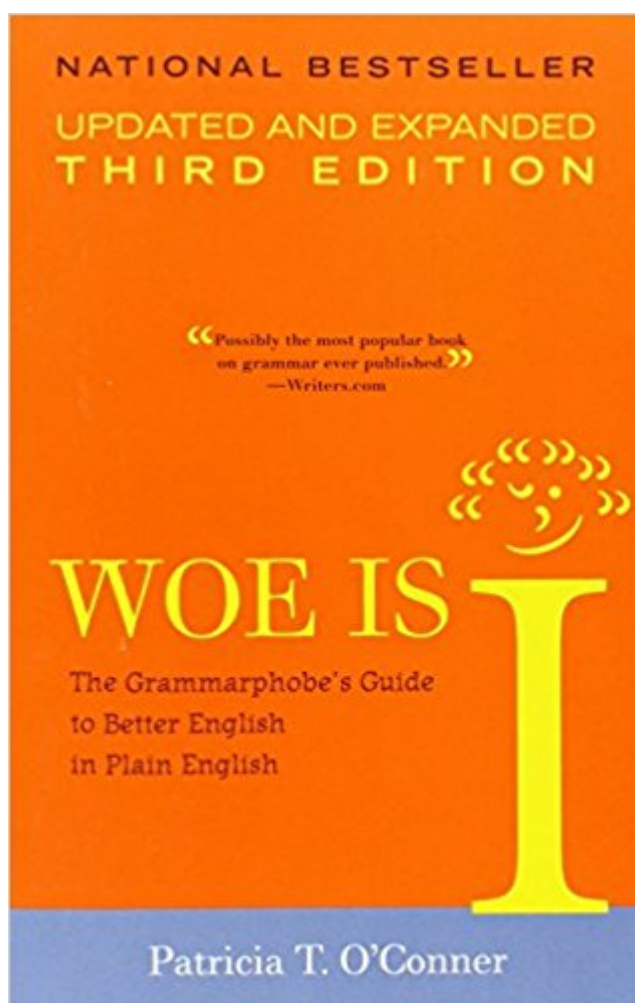


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Woe Is I: The Grammarphobe's Guide To Better English In Plain English, 3rd Edition



Synopsis

"Former New York Times Book Review editor and linguistic expert O'Conner...updates her bestselling guide to grammar, an invigorating and entertaining dissection of our ever-evolving language." - Publishers Weekly
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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Patricia T. O'Conner, a former editor at the New York Times Book Review, has written for many magazines and newspapers. She is the author of two other books on language and writing, *Words Fail Me: What Everyone Who Writes Should Know About Writing* and *You Send Me: Getting It Right When You Write Online*.

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.

I had planned to use this book with my students as a fun reference guide. Upon review, I realized that this book is useless to me, and I cannot recommend it to others. I bought it based on the excellent reviews, but I should have paid more attention to the negative ones. I thought, "There are so few of them. Surely all those pretty stars, and nice words from all those other people couldn't be wrong!" The author is wordy while somehow talking around in circles which makes the text confusing. I found it difficult to keep track of what her point was supposed to be. The text feels disorganized, and has no discernible structure. She applies grammar rules where they do not apply. She applies tense to words that are tense-less, and seems to forget that, there needs to be object-verb agreement. She hints at a rule (that is actually a rule), and then tells you why you can just ignore the rule, and that it doesn't matter. (And yeah, in spoken English a lot of rules get bypassed, but, to a true Grammarphobe, intentionally ignoring rules is not okay. I personally have a hard time seeing stuff like this printed when, I know English language students will happen across it, and take it as truth.) To be fair, I do find parts of it to be funny and engaging. There is also some good material on the rules she got right. It's just that it's a lot to sift through. I'm not sure how this book made it through printing three times. I have barely made it into the second chapter at this point.

I may update if I make it through the rest of the book. I am disappointed that I couldn't give a better review. I was really looking forward to getting, and reading this book. I am a Linguist as well as being an English language instructor.

"Quirkiness, ambiguity and irregularities that make natural language so exasperating also makes it so wonderful" is one of the sentences that Patricia O'Connor uses to start her grammarphobe's guide to better English. This is one hilarious way to re-learn the better part of grammar that we may have mis-placed back in high school. Have no fear, there is no diagramming of sentences. A refreshing new way to look at how our language works and doesn't work. Most of what Patricia O'Connor tells us is not new. It is written in a manner that delights us and with such wit. One chapter is "Plurals Before Swine: Blunders with Numbers". How can you not want to read this and figure out how you have been blundering with the plurals. The chapter that meant the most to me is the one about cliches, "Do cliches deserve to die?" for the most part yes. I love cliches, but if you overuse you flunk. The most helpful chapter was "Saying is Believing" How to write what you mean; great suggestions to help us. Someone can read what we have written and really understand us. She gives us 13 principles to follow for graceful writing. Patricia O'Connor says that if you find a technique that works steal it- someday others may be stealing from you. A book for everyone and so much fun to read.

I know that I should probably refrain from writing a review of a book before I've even gotten beyond the 2nd chapter, but I'm really enjoying her style, her humor, and the examples she's using in this basic English usage book. The problem is I'm probably a stickler, like her, and I cringe every time I'm watching someone being interviewed on national television and they say something like, "Her and I (or worse, She and me) are so compatible." I want to scream at the average person who has been through 12 years of our educational system and never learned the basics of the language which they refer to as their 'native tongue.' Arrrrrrrgh!!!! Excuse my over-punctuation, but I'm just stunned by the lack of proper grammar and punctuation which abounds in our society. Thank you, Patricia, I only hope people who really need to read your book will pick it up and, for a change, speak or write a little more correctly. If you think you don't need a refresher on how to craft a decent novel, formulate an e-mail to your friend, or just to construct an advertisement for a weekend yard sale, please think again and read this book before you raise the hackles on your former English teacher and prompt them to quit teaching in favor of early retirement rather than believe they're wasting their time. Then you will, I hope, be able to join the rest of us 'sticklers' and help us

challenge those who so blatantly and unconsciously abuse our language publicly on a daily basis.

Arrrrrrrrgh!

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