A HOMO—WHAT?
By Susan Atkinson, Writing Tutor

We have all seen those posts on Facebook when one person has misused a word and the next eighty posts are the angry retorts of self-appointed English experts. Grammar freaks everywhere cringe when they see a subject-verb that do not match or a misused word. However, their wagging fingers and disappearing looks, though very annoying, come from an understanding that a misused word can entirely change the meaning of a sentence. An easy example would be the commonly misused “their, they’re, there.” Most people understand grammar through sound, so these words sounding the same (also known as a homophone) understandably creates a good deal of confusion. Yet their meanings are completely different and should be understood.

“Their” shows that two or more people possess something, like, “Ben and Jimmy took their grandmother to lunch.” The use of “they’re,” however, shows that two words have been joined together, or contracted, by the apostrophe mark. “They’re really means “they are,” like, “They’re going to take Grandmother to lunch.” The final word of this commonly misused group, “there,” shows that a person is either moving towards a certain place or an object rests in a certain place. Take for example, “Ben and Jimmy took their grandmother there.” In this case, Ben and Jimmy moved to a certain place with Grandmother. Jimmy moved to a certain place with Grandmother.

Each tutor has a section for you to get to know them, and trust me, each one of them is worth getting to know. So, next time you go to an appointment in the Writing Center, avoid asking the awkward, “Umm...Are you my tutor?” questions.

Check out the “Meet the Tutors” album and familiarize yourself with our tutor’s lovely faces. We look forward to meeting you and to working with you!
METAPHORS AS A STRATEGIC WRITING DEVICE
By Jamie Sexton, Writing Tutor

The implications of utilizing rhetorical devices within your writing can mean the perilous balance between over-the-top dramaturgical and an emphatically well-placed flavor. Rhetorical devices serve to emphasize your message, not merely to serve as prose. With this in mind, writers, let’s discuss a strategic device.

Metaphors, although numerous in forms, most commonly bond two objects, when the words not only link a few qualities, but the fullness of both images. Here is a particularly common example in capturing the emotion of love: “My love for you is a fire.” Although the author may intentionally parallel these supposed attributes: passion, heat, or growth; he adds-inately and subtly associates all of the characteristics of fire to his love, for example: the fire’s dangerous and insatiable characteristics. The power of metaphors is the ability command an image - initially unrelated - to bind with an object, bringing a new sense of awareness, otherwise impossible to achieve with a few adjectives.

As far as academic protocol, metaphors become useful when the author needs to subdue his audience with an example for vividness. They can handedly provoke emphasis on a key idea, while bringing the idea into a new light. Again I remind authors to make sure that their metaphors are dependable and suitable. In the same manner that scientists cannot genetically fuse a rabbit and a tortoise together, neither should improper and thoughtless metaphors be randomly morphed. Mutant metaphors will not survive academic writing.

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