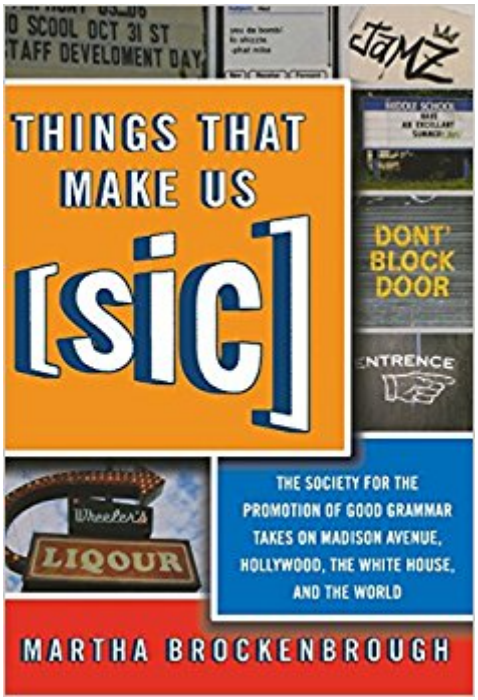
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Things That Make Us (Sic): The Society For The Promotion Of Good Grammar Takes On Madison Avenue, Hollywood, The White House, And The World



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Synopsis

This book is for people who experience heartbreak over love notes with subject-verb disagreements...for anyone who's ever considered hanging up the phone on people who pepper their speech with such gems as "irregardless," "expresso," or "disorientated"...and for the earnest souls who wonder if it's "Woe is Me," or "Woe is I," or even "Woe am I." Martha Brockenbrough's Things That Make Us (Sic) is a laugh-out-loud guide to grammar and language, a snarkier American answer to Lynn Truss's runaway success, Eats, Shoots & Leaves. Brockenbrough is the founder of National Grammar Day and SPOGG -- the Society for the Promotion of Good Grammar -- and as serious as she is about proper usage, her voice is funny, irreverent, and never condescending. Things That Make Us (Sic) addresses common language stumbling stones such as evil twins, clichÃƒÂ©s, jargon, and flab, and offers all the spelling tips, hints, and rules that are fit to print. It's also hugely entertaining, with letters to high-profile language abusers, including David Hasselhoff, George W. Bush, and Canada's Maple Leafs [sic], as well as a letter to --and a reply from -- Her Majesty, the Queen of England. Brockenbrough has written a unique compendium combining letters, pop culture references, handy cheat sheets, rants, and historical references that is as helpful as it is hilarious.

Book Information

Hardcover: 272 pages

Publisher: St. Martin's Press; First Edition edition (October 14, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0312378084

ISBN-13: 978-0312378080

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 1 x 7.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 25 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #862,357 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #84 inÃ Â Books > Humor & Entertainment > Humor > Language #1745 inÃ Â Books > Reference > Words, Language & Grammar > Grammar

Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“Martha Brockenbrough is hilarious.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢June Casagrande, author of Grammar Snobs Are Great Big MeaniesÃ¢â ¬Å“A smart, up-to-the-minute take on the world of words that's funny and sometimes even bawdy.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Bill Walsh, author of Lapsing Into

a Comma and The Elephants of StyleÃ¢â ¬Å“From her founding of the hilariously named SPOGG (Society for the Protection of Good Grammar) to her diligently penned correction letters, Martha Brockenbrough delights grammar mavens while inducing giggles. She's a tidal wave of grammar fun.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Mignon Fogarty, author of Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better WritingÃ¢â ¬Å“Grammar mavens should rejoice at the appearance of this collection of nifty facts about language. I read it straight through in one sitting!Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Grant Barrett, co-host of KPBS Radio's "A Way With Words" and author of The Official Dictionary of Unofficial EnglishÃ¢â ¬Å“Do you ever feel badly or get nauseous? Things That Make Us [Sic] will cure you of those maladies and make you feel properly bad and nauseated about sloppy grammar, usage, and punctuation. It will also give you a generous dose of that best medicine: laughter. With winsome humor and humility, Martha Brockenbrough shows us how to choose language that is clear, precise, and unaffected. She also reminds us, inter alia, that 'irregardless is an irregular word, just as underwear is an irregular hat.'Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Charles Harrington Elster, author of Verbal Advantage and What in the Word?Ã¢â ¬Å“'Grammar' and 'glamour' have the same derivation: an old Scottish word meaning 'sorcery.' So, good grammar is not merely a glamorous antidote to creeping meatballism, it has the power of the black arts behind it. Martha Brockenbrough is hip to these secrets.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â ¢Tom Robbins, author of Even Cowgirls Get the Blues, Villa Incongnito, and Skinny Legs and All

Martha Brockenbrough is the founder of SPOGG, the Society for the Promotion of Good Grammar, as well as a writer for Encarta.com and the former editor-in-chief of MSN.com. She is the author of It Could Happen to You and lives in Seattle with her family.

A student enrolled in an advanced grammar class I was teaching gave me a copy of Things That Make Us [sic]. I thanked her profusely, went home, opened it and wept.Like so many writers about "good grammar," Brockenbrough doesn't seem to have a clue about what grammar really is. There's an entire chapter devoted to Latin words and expressions used in English. There's another on punctuation. Oh, and we mustn't forget spelling, but she doesn't always get it right herself. For example, on p. 244, she gives "lying" as the present participle of "lay." (She must have forgotten that all present participles are regular in pronunciation ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • one just adds "-ing" or "-in'." She did get it right on page 172. (And by the way, there's a silly punctuation error right under "Rise and Raise" on page 172.) Then there's all the same ol' stuff on choosing the right word ("farther" and "further" or "faze" and "phase"). And a rant against clichÃƒÂ©s.The one chapter I can

recommend is the last one, "Rules That Never Were, Are No More, and Should Be Broken." Need I say more about that chapter (except that I loathe the so-called Oxford comma, as in the chapter title and that I found the last sentence in the chapter pathetic: "Spell well"!!!)? If such a notion interests you, you might do well to forego "Things That Make Us" and jump right in by reading "Ambrose Bierce's Write It Right: The Celebrated Cynic's Language Peeves Deciphered, Appraised [and usually junked], and Annotated for 21st-Century Readers" by Jan Freeman.Brockenbrough does give some very clever examples throughout the book, but I cannot recommend it for anyone serious about grammar since only one chapter actually deals with grammar per se: Ch. 6 "No You Can't Has Cheezburger?"

Like a one-woman vigilante, Martha Brockenbrough* exposes assorted crimes against the English language and offers crisp, witty advice on spelling, grammar, and usage to the offenders. Her favored tactic is the open letter, wherein she points out the mistakes in (gently) mocking fashion, then goes on to suggest remedies. All with infinitely greater wit than Lynne Truss, in this reviewer's opinion.Her point of view is stated with admirable clarity on page 3:"It is time for those of us who love and respect our language to take it back. Clear, grammatical communication is society's foundation. It is what helps us understand and be understood. If we let that bedrock crumble from neglect, or if we actively chip away at it in a misguided fit of anti-intellectualism, then we run the risk of watching the world around us collapse."Ms Brockenbrough covers familiar terrain, efficiently and entertainingly, in ten chapters (250 pages):Grammar for spammers and pop stars.Vizzinis, Evil Twins, and Vampires.You Put a Spell on Me.Vulgar Latin and Latin Lovers.$%&*#$ PunctuationNo, You Can't Has Cheezburger? The Parts of Speech and How Sentences Form.Things that Make Us Tense.Cliches - why Shakespeare is a Pox Upon Us.The Enemy Within - Flab, Jargon, and the People in your Office.Rules that Never Were, are no More, and Should be Broken.Whether taking David Hasselhoff to task for describing his life story as 'heart-rendering' or enumerating all 21 errors in Congressman Mark Foley's now-infamous erotic text message to a congressional page ("the word is not spelled 'buldge'; 'one-eyed snake' needs a hyphen; 'hand job' has only one a"), Martha Brockenbrough is never less than entertaining.This book is both a welcome, witty salvo in the war against bad English and a hilariously helpful guide on how to avoid it.*: Ms Brockenbrough is the founder of SPOGG, the Society for Promotion of Good Grammar, whose website is at [...]

Martha Brockenbrough has produced a book that marries grammar with humor in a most delightful way. She addresses common language stumbling stones such as evil twins, cliches, jargon, and

flab and offers all the spelling tips, hints, and rules that are fit to print. It is hugely entertaining, with letters to high-profile language abusers, including David Hasselhoff, George W. Bush, and Canada's Maple Leafs [sic], as well as a letter to -- and a reply from -- Her Majesty, the Queen of England.

This is an awesome way to look at grammar! I wish I had this book in high school or even jr. high. Grammar was tough - because it was so bloody boring. This book is a handy reference that I keep on my desk now. As a professional reviewer, I wish I could send it out to all the authors whose work I have to wade through. I would recommend this book to anyone; though especially the high school or jr. high student in your life that hates (and struggles through) grammar. It's never too early or too late to find a love for good grammar.

I have long been a spelling/punctuation/grammar snob, and I enjoy Martha Brockenbrough's columns on Encarta, so I definitely had to check out her rant on grammar issues. She even slams spammers (not that she'd ever actually hit reply to one) for the spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors that litter their messages. What differentiates her from Lynne Truss, the British author of "Eats, Shoots, and Leaves" is her humorous way of tackling such issues.Brockenbrough also shatters some old grammar myths, probably brought over from people who would use English like Latin. No, it is NOT forbidden to split an infinitive; in some cases it's absolutely necessary. Not it is NOT forbidden to end a sentence with a preposition if reconstructing the sentence would sound awkward (and yes, "Where's he at?" is utterly forbidden, because "Where is he?" makes perfect sense). Yes, you CAN begin a sentence with a conjunctionIf you've ever used "it's" as a possessive; if you've ever written "your" when you mean "you are

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