

Reaching Across the Aisle

What if we could vote on the really important issues, such as how to resolve intractable grammatical problems? This issue of *KB CommEntary* quantum-leaps to another world where such things are possible.

What's Up at KB COMM?

At KB COMM, we provide mission-critical communication and learning services to clients in a variety of industries. Thanks to our established and new clients for keeping us busy. Recent and ongoing projects include:

- Writing and editing numerous information products for a healthcare diagnostics manufacturer, including employee communications, customer presentations and letters, product marketing brochures and data sheets, and training materials
- Writing and editing marketing and employee communications for an academic research organization
- Formatting and revising technical reports and manufacturing standard operating procedures, work instructions, forms, logbooks, and batch records for a pharmaceutical company
- Coordinating document preparation and approval for manufacturing of a new pharmaceutical product
- Drafting, reviewing, and editing for consistency and accuracy response documents and associated modules for electronic submission to health authorities on behalf of pharmaceutical companies

KB COMM LLC is a certified Women's Business Enterprise. We are officially qualified to participate in corporations' woman- and minority-owned vendor programs.

Please keep us in mind for your communication or training projects.

Tips and Tales

Unicorns and Rainbows

In the wake of our recently completed U.S. midterm elections, let's imagine we live in a parallel universe where the two major political parties favor a kinder, gentler approach to public discourse—indeed, to politics and governance in general. We'll call them the Unicorns and the Rainbows.

This is not to say that these two parties agree on everything. Quite the contrary! They have strongly, but civilly and politely, held feelings about certain grammatical controversies. To wit:

Who vs. Whom

As far as the Unicorns are concerned, this is settled law. *Who* is the subject, and *whom* is the object of a verb or preposition:

Who is coming? Whom shall we invite?

Not so fast, say the Rainbows. We'll invite whoever we please!

The Rainbows are winning on this issue, much to the chagrin of the Unicorns. Normal practice in modern English is to use *who*, with *whom* relegated mostly to more formal contexts.

The Oxford (Serial) Comma

Hoo boy! This is the big one for single-issue voters. Do you or do you not place a comma before the and in a simple series of three or more elements:

Lions, tigers, and bears

Lions, tigers and bears

The Unicorns, with their classicist leanings, are true believers in the serial comma, viewing it as imparting more precision and clarity to the meaning of the sentence. Rainbows, perhaps more in tune with the zeitgeist, don't see how one little comma can do all that and rue the extra space it occupies.

It's tough to call a winner on this issue. Both sides are dug in and show no sign of budging. But, in the universe next door, at least they're being graciously intransigent.

And please remember, *when it has to be right*, KB COMM is here to help.

Sincerely,

Kathy

Kathy Breuninger

KB COMM

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