

Thank You Kindly

It's the most thankful time of the year, so we're using this issue of *KB CommEntary* to answer a few puzzlers about all things "thanks."

Is it "much thanks" or "many thanks?" How about "thanks much?" When do you hyphenate "thank-you," and when don't you? Read all about it below, and thanks!

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
- Revising and maintaining GMP facility drawings
- 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

Think, Thank, Thunk

"Thanks" is a more interesting word than you might think. As a noun (giving thanks, feeling thanks, waiting for thanks), it's always presented in plural form, with an *s*. (400-odd years ago the singular noun "thank" was sometimes used, but this is no longer common.)

There is a singular version of the noun "thanks," but it's not "thank." Rather, it's presented as a compound word with a hyphen: "thank-you."

Here are similar sentences that use "thank-you"/"thanks" as singular and plural nouns, respectively:

I'd like to offer a special thank-you to our friends from the New York office.

I'd like to offer special thanks to our friends from the New York office.

Normally, the plural version of a countable noun is just the singular version with an *s* at the end, but "thanks" doesn't play by those rules—at least not technically. Over time, the more casual, nonstandard use of our language has turned "thanks" into a noun that can be singular or plural, but with the *s* (the telltale marker of a plural) at the end either way. Consider the sentence below, a version of the previous examples that uses the nonstandard singular "thanks":

I'd like to offer a special thanks to our friends from the New York office.

If you're big into grammar, you'd rightfully declare that the above is incorrect. But if you've got better things to worry about, it probably sounds fine.

Then, of course, there's the verb "thank," which becomes "thanks" in its third-person singular form, as in "he thanks her." There's also the preposition "thanks," as in "we'll meet the deadline thanks to your hard work." And remember the compound word with a hyphen "thank-you," which is a singular noun? "Thank you," which of course sounds the same, is a transitive verb phrase that doesn't use a hyphen. Sheesh!

If you're feeling the opposite of thankful for this over-thorough explanation, here's a quick cheat sheet for some common "thanks"-related foibles. Think of it as our way of saying thanks for reading this far.

Is it *much thanks* or *many thanks*?

"Thanks" is the plural version of the singular "thank-you," so *many thanks* is correct. We use *many* with plural count nouns ("many spies have many eyes") and *much* with mass nouns ("much ado about nothing").

In colloquial use, "thanks" can be treated as singular, but this is nonstandard—or what we eggheads like to call "technically incorrect."

What about *thanks much*?

This is a colloquial shortening of "thanks very much" or "thanks so much," which are themselves shortened versions of the transitive verb phrase "thank you" (also shortened, to just "thanks") followed by an adverb phrase ("so much"). Whew! Our take: it's fine to use casually as you would any other shorthand, but it's far from grammatically sound.

So wait, do I use a hyphen in *thank you* or not?

It depends! If you're using "thank you" as a verb phrase—as in, if you're actually thanking someone—then no. "Thank you" is essentially a shortened version of the subject-verb-object sentence "I thank you," so all three words should be distinct and unhyphenated. You wouldn't write "I eat-food" or "I love-you."

But if you're using "thank-you" as a singular noun, as in "please accept this thank-you from our team," then yes, use a hyphen. The same goes for any use of "thank-you" as a modifier, such as "thank-you card" or "thank-you gift."

And now, swapping our Team Grammar Nerd uniforms for cozy, sentimental cardigans, all of us at KB COMM would like to say thank you for your business, your support, and your friendship.

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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