The Best Word

that or which
who or whom
myself
badly

But first ...

- A word about spelling ...

Prefer American spellings

- acknowledgment
- judgment
- canceled
- traveled
- labeled

- acknowledgement
- judgement
- cancelled
- travelled
- labelled

Prefer American spellings

- ... unless you are editing a document designed primarily for a Commonwealth reader
- Don't rely on a spellchecker; they accept both spellings!

Prefer American spellings

- When adding a suffix, double the final consonant of the root word when it:
  - is multisyllabic
  - ends in a final consonant preceded by a single vowel
  - stresses the syllable before the suffix

Prefer American spellings

- benefit + ed
- prefer + ed
- control + ing
- infer + ing
- concur + ent
- cancel + ing
- label + ed
- travel + er

- benefited
- preferred
- controlling
- inferring
- concurrent
- canceling
- labeled
- traveler
Prefer American spellings

- benefit + ed → benefited

*By the way ...*

*Benefited* is one of the most misspelled words in English. *Never* accept *benefitted*.

But exceptions abound ... 

- programming
- cancellation
- overstepping
- formatting
- handicapping

Of course!

The Best Word

- Use the best word the right way.
  - *that* or *which*
  - *who* or *whom*
  - *myself*
  - *badly*

That or which

- *That* introduces a part of the sentence that is essential to its meaning.
  - I make sure to attend only the staff meetings *that* include lunch.

*That* or *which*

- *Which* introduces a part of the sentence that is not essential to its meaning.
  - Today’s staff meeting, *which* includes lunch, begins at 11 a.m.
  - Today’s staff meeting begins at 11 a.m.

That or which

- The nonessential element that begins with *which* is set off by commas, dashes, or parentheses.
  - The meeting, which starts at 10:30, should not last more than an hour.
  - The meeting — which starts at 10:30 — should not last more than an hour.
  - The meeting (which starts at 10:30) should not last more than an hour.
**Who or Whom?**

- **Who** is nominative; it *does* the action in a sentence.
  - Who did it?
  - She did it.
- **Who** was that knocking at the door?
  - He was knocking.
- This order form is for **whoever** wants to run to Office Depot before noon!
  - She wants to go.

- **Whom** is objective; it *takes* the action.
  - To whom was it done?
  - It was done to him.
  - Whom are these flowers for?
  - They are for her.
  - Give this form to whomever you like!
  - Give this form to him!

**Tip:** If you can substitute him or them, use whom.

- To whom was it done?
  - It was done to him.
- Whom are these flowers for?
  - They are for her (him).
  - Give this form to whomever you like!
  - Give this form to them!

**Selfish Considerations**

- The *self* words may be used in only two ways . . .

- Many writers misuse myself because they are uncertain whether to use I or me.
  - Not:
    - If you have any questions, please call Thomas or myself.
  - But:
    - If you have any questions, please call Thomas or me.
  - Please call me.

- A *self* word directs the action back to the subject (the subject acts upon itself).
  - The subject **must** precede the -self word in the sentence.
  - I will exclude myself from voting since I am nominated.
  - The team members asked themselves what plan to follow.
**Selfish Considerations**

- A *-self* word
  - emphasizes a noun or pronoun already expressed.
  - That noun or pronoun (the subject) *must* precede the *-self* word in the sentence.
- I will put the story to bed *myself!*
- *Cynthia* signed the letter *herself.*

**Feel Bad or Feel Badly?**

- If you *feel badly,* your hand is numb.
- If you *feel bad,* you are ill.
  
  **Tip:**
  - Substitute *smell* for *feel.*
  - I *smell* badly.
  - I *smell* bad.

**One final tip ...**

- For more tips on word use, visit [ww2.nscc.edu/adkerson_m](http://ww2.nscc.edu/adkerson_m).
- Click “Word Usage.”