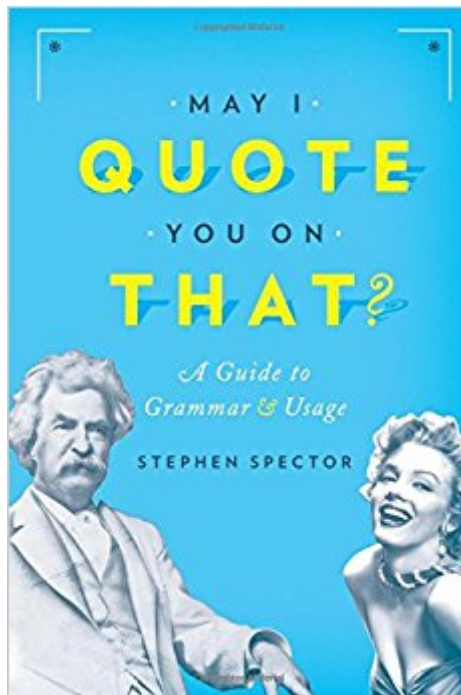




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May I Quote You On That?: A Guide To Grammar And Usage



Synopsis

We all use language in different ways, depending on the situations we find ourselves in. In formal contexts we are usually expected to use a formal level of Standard English-the English codified in grammars, usage guides, and dictionaries. In *May I Quote You on That?* Stephen Spector offers a new approach to learning Standard English grammar and usage. The product of Spector's forty years of teaching courses on the English language, this book makes the conventions of formal writing and speech easier and more enjoyable to learn than traditional approaches usually do. Each lesson begins with humorous, interesting, or instructive illustrative quotations from writers, celebrities, and historical figures. Mark Twain appears alongside Winston Churchill, Yogi Berra, Woody Allen, Jerry Seinfeld, Stephen Colbert, Oprah, Lady Gaga, and many others. These quotations allow readers to infer the rules and word meanings from context. And if they stick in readers' memory, they can serve as models for the rules they exemplify. The lessons then offer short essays, written in a conversational style, on the history of the rules or the words being discussed. But because English is constantly changing, the essays offer not only the traditional rules of Standard English, but also the current opinions of usage panelists, stylists, and language specialists. When rules are controversial, Spector offers advice about stylistic choices. A companion website features a workbook with practice drills. This book will appeal to anyone who wants to write well. It's aimed at those who are applying to college, taking the SAT, or writing a job application, an essay, or anything else that requires clear and effective communication.

Book Information

Paperback: 416 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (August 5, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0190215283

ISBN-13: 978-0190215286

Product Dimensions: 8.2 x 1.2 x 5.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #64,127 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #98 in [Books > Reference >](#)

[Words, Language & Grammar > Etymology](#) #180 in [Books > Reference > Words, Language &](#)

[Grammar > Grammar](#) #20304 in [Books > Textbooks](#)

Customer Reviews

"Nearly all wordsmiths feel the flu coming on when they anticipate opening any book with the word grammar in the title, but this book is a keeper-no dense explications, no inexplicable diagrams, no guilt-inducing tone. Instead, it's an alphabetically organized breakdown of troublesome words and phrases, making it a fast, smart, even browsable friend." -- Eloise Kinney Booklist

"Stephen Spector has created a quietly revolutionary book that not only presents the most effective ways to write clearly and persuasively, but also enlarges the entire notion of what constitutes the imaginative uses of language. In what other work would one find Winston Churchill and Lady Gaga as companions in the same noble cause? It hardly hurts that as a piece of writing itself, the book is a perfect example of its own indispensable teachings." --Roger Rosenblatt, author of *Making Toast* and *Unless It Moves the Human Heart: The Craft and Art of Writing*

"Anyone who's ever aspired to be a better writer would do well to have *May I Quote You on That?* as a handy reference. In so doing, there's no doubt in my mind that such an audience will come away with a better appreciation of just how rich the English language is, too." --Brain Drain Blog

"English teachers looking for a text that may appeal to grammar-phobic students are encouraged to take a look at this one." Daily Writing Tips

"I loved the whole concept of the book -- using quotes to make points about grammar and usage. The quotes are very appropriate and the manner in which language rules are explained is very well done. Also, to give readers a better understanding of the rules, Spector has given the history behind them... *May I Quote You On That?* makes a good addition to a writer's collection of reference books." --Write Tribe

"Mr. Spector has sound advice on the writing of clear prose. He understands the usefulness of rules, while recognizing that the pursuit of style requires the liberty to break them." --Times Literary Supplement

Stephen Spector is Professor of English, State University of New York at Stonybrook.

I started to read this book expecting it to be a boring grammar book, but it's not at all. In fact, I have trouble putting it down when it's time for bed. The quotes from famous people make it extremely interesting and I'm learning from them at the same time. I highly recommend the book for everyone, but particularly for those who want to sound professional in their writing. It would also be especially helpful for those doing job interviews or for people who speak English as a second language.

What makes this book so valuable is that it is fun and engaging as well as being instructive and authoritative. Grammar books can be boring and intimidating to many English students, especially those whose native tongue is not English. "*May I Quote You on That?*" does not suffer from these

two shortcomings. I highly recommend it for your children, your students, or even yourself.

Here's a different approach to learning grammar, one that's less rules guided and much more a demonstration of grammar in actual sentences. Considering that few students enter college with more than a rudimentary understanding of how clear sentences work, and their knowledge of the subject is often confused, this would be a first-rate introduction. Let's face it, ungrammatical sentences make anyone's work look pathetic.

It's a clever grammar book that's fun to use.

What fun! For anyone looking for an innovative way to learn and retain the rules of grammar and improve communication, I can't praise this book enough. Stephen Spector's conversational writing style made this seem more like a game than a lecture. Using quotations to kick off lessons, while also giving the background of the grammar rules, drew me into the details and made it easier to put things into perspective. I think that this book would be beneficial on so many levels, but especially valuable for people interested in writing and speaking correctly.*I received my copy through NetGalley.com in exchange for an honest review.

"You may find that some of these quotations are memorable. That's good, because if you remember them, you can model your own sentences on them." And it's true. This book is based on quotations to help you understand the grammar rules through examples and famous words. But it's also a lot more. Sure it helps you to know how to use "Further" or "Farther", "Pendant" or "Didactic" and give you tools to remember when to use "May" or "Can": "Here is a rule that I'll bet you've heard: if you can do something, you have the ability to do it; if you may do it, you have the permission." But it also helps you with punctuation if you are into editing and using the correct abbreviations. You learn about the common nowadays mistakes. Like with "Kudos" that is a singular Latin noun, everybody thinks is plural. :-). Honestly, it's not a book you read before bed. But it's one, I was enjoying opening in the middle to improve, review my vocabulary or just to enjoy the quotes. I've also appreciated all the side informations given by the author to make the grammar fun. It's like someone is telling you an historical or a practical story that you are able to understand easily. It's a really cool read if you are into words and learning how to use them correctly. A great Christmas present too.

May I Quote You on That, by Stephen Spector, Oxford University Press, 2015. This is a

delightful, remarkable book, chock full of interesting quotes from interesting people, all making one grammar point or another. As with drinking gin, a little bit at a time is good, but a lot at once is not so good. This is a wonderful companion but spread your visits out. There's a lot in it. One wonders how he managed to get it all together; it's doubtless a very long-term labor of love. By all means, you may quote me on that..brad.06october.2015. (P.S. I read the whole thing, so this really is a "review", unlike many of mine or even most of my others.)

This is a great book for those who are interested in the subtleties of language. Spector illustrates the answers to tricky questions using modern, funny quotes (think J.J. Abrams, Woody Allen, Mila Kunis, etc.). The explanations are clear and simple, so everyone should be able to learn a lot: from newbies through experts. The author doesn't play everything as "by-the-book" as you might expect; for example, take a look at page 68 for a surprising discussion of ending sentences with prepositions. He does a good job at keeping what could be a dry topic interesting and fun, by pointing out things like the fact that movie villains often have impeccable grammar ("It was I who did it!" "It was I who did it!"). Great for grammarholics and those who love quotes. I think it would work well as a companion text for a high school or college English class too.

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