

# Acknowledgments

Thanks to the following experts: Stewart Alsop ([alsop-louie.com](http://alsop-louie.com)) and Susan Barnes, Chandler Davis, Andy Hunt ([pragprog.com](http://pragprog.com)), Ibrahima Diagne, Jacquie Dutcher, Sue Fraser, Patrick Forsyth, Keith Harding, Susan Herring, Tarun Huria, Alex Lamb ([www.alexlambtraining.com/index.html](http://www.alexlambtraining.com/index.html)), Luciano Lenzi, Brian Martin, David Morand, Janice Nadler, Anna Southern, Richard Wiseman (<http://richardwiseman.wordpress.com/tag/quirkology/>), Mark Worden, Zheng Ting.

Massive thanks to Rogier A. Kievit and his 'Shit My Reviewers Say' website - keep up the good work!

I would like to thank the following researchers who provided me with emails and referees' reports for this book. Also big thanks to all my PhD students who over the last 10 years have given me a constant supply of typical academic emails.

Nicola Aloia, Michele Barbera, Bernadette Batteaux, Stefania Biagioni, Silvia Brambilla, Emilia Bramanti, Francesca Bretzel, Davide Castagnetti, Elena Castanas, Shourov Keith Chatterji, Patrizia Cioni, MariaPerla Colombini, Francesca Di Donato, Marco Endrizzi, Fabrizio Falchi, Roger Fuoco, Edi Gabellieri, Valeria Galanti, Silvia Gonzali, Tarun Huria, Kamatchi Ramasamy Chandra, Stefano Lenzi, Luciano Lenzi, Francesca Nicolini, Enzo Mingozzi, Elisabetta Morelli, Beatrice Pezzarossa, Marco Pardini, Roberto Pini, Emanuele Salerno, Daniel Sentenac, Paola Sgadò, Igor Spinella, Enzo Sparvoli, Pandey Sushil, Eliana Tassi, Elisabetta Tognoni, Eriko Tsuchida and Ting Zheng.

Special thanks to these people for providing materials for this new edition: Cian Blaix, Sofia Luzgina, Leonardo Magneschi, Maral Mahad, Bartolome Alles Salom, Shanshan Zhou.

# Sources of the Factoids

Much of the information contained in the factoids is publicly available on the Internet. Below is more information about the sources for some of the factoids, quotations, and other statistics. The numbers in brackets indicate the number of the factoid, e.g. (2) = the second factoid or quotation.

## Chapter 1

(2) based on a statistic that claims that more than 250 billion emails are sent every day (source: Wiki Answers): the total pile would be 25,000 kilometers high, it would weigh 1,250,000 metric tonnes, and all the printed emails would have a surface area of 15,592 square kilometers. The cost in euros would be around one billion. (3) TNS “Digital Life” 10 Oct 2010.

## Chapter 2

(1) personal communication; (2) Dr Tarun Huria, Indian Railways; (3) Dr Zheng Ting [aka Sophia Zheng], University of Shandong, Jinan, China. (4) [www.theguardian.com/media/mind-your-language/2015/aug/24/hi-hey-hello-dear-reader-how-do-you-start-an-email](http://www.theguardian.com/media/mind-your-language/2015/aug/24/hi-hey-hello-dear-reader-how-do-you-start-an-email)

## Chapter 3

(1,3,4) can be found in any book of quotations; (2) Fortune Magazine; (5) *Winning Sales Letters*, John Fraser-Robinson, David Grant Publishing, 2000

**3.1** The statistic on people spending 40% of their time emailing comes from *I Hate People*, J Littman & M Hershon, published by Little, Brown and Company. I have been unable to locate the original source of the spell cheque poem in **13.4** (for the full version see [http://www.greatherthings.com/Humor/Spelling\\_Chequer.htm](http://www.greatherthings.com/Humor/Spelling_Chequer.htm)), nor can I find the researchers involved in the Cambridge University inquiry into the phenomenal power of the human mind, which of course may be a total invention.

## Chapter 4

The Observer 20 May 2001 based on research carried out by David Silver at the University of Washington; and Susan Herring at Indiana University.

## Chapter 5

Info in the factoids all in the public domain.

5.11 *The Christopher Robin Birthday Book* by A.A. Milne, E.P. Dutton & Co. (1936).

## Chapter 6

<http://www.duboislc.org/ED-Watch/wordlist.html> Note there are many sites and books listing the most common words. This one was intended to help teachers teach US schoolchildren to read and was taken from the book *The Reading Teacher's Book of Lists*, by Fry and Kress, John Wiley, 2006. It is thus considerably biased by the kinds of books found in the US curriculum (this explains the position of *Indian* at 283rd, where I imagine that *Indian* refers to native Americans, and probably indicates that the list may have been compiled several decades ago). I chose this list because it contained the most surprising items, and therefore I thought it would be good for discussion purposes. A more up to date list can be found at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Most\\_common\\_words\\_in\\_English](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Most_common_words_in_English).

## Chapter 7

(1,2) *Business Life*, April 2008; (3) *Fortune*, March 2, 1998, (5) <http://www.personneltoday.com/articles/2008/07/25/46874/lying-on-cvs-for-job-applications-rises-to-17.html>; (6) <http://money.guardian.co.uk/work/story/0,1456,1589620,00.html>

## Chapter 8

*I hate people!* J Littman and M Hershon, Little, Brown and Company, 2009.

## Chapter 9

The original book of laws, called *Murphy's Law - And Other Reasons Why Things Go Wrong* was written by Arthur Bloch and published by Price/Stern/Sloan Publishers in 1977. But all these laws are now available on many websites.

## Chapter 10

(2) Andrew Hunt, *Pragmatic Thinking and Learning: Refactor Your Wetware*, The Pragmatic Bookshelf, 2008 (3) Personal communication.

**10.4** The structure was based on ideas from *Understanding Misunderstanding* by Nancy Slessenger, publ. Vine House Essential Ltd, 2003.

**10.9** Quoted in *Business Communications*, Claudia Rawlins, HarperCollins Publishers, Inc, 1993.

## Chapter 11

<http://shitmyreviewerssay.tumblr.com/>, many thanks to Rogier A. Kievit.

**11.1** Magda Kouřilová, *Communicative characteristics of reviews of scientific papers written by non-native users of English* (published in *Endocrine Regulations* Vol. 32, 107 No. 114, 1998)—[www.aepress.sk/endo/full/er0298g.pdf](http://www.aepress.sk/endo/full/er0298g.pdf); Sweitzer BJ, Cullen DJ, *How well does a journal's peer review process function? A survey of authors' opinions* (*JAMA*1994;272:152–3; Juan Miguel Campanario, *Have referees rejected some of the most-cited articles of all times?* *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, Volume 47 Issue 4, April 1996.

## Chapter 12

(1) <https://www.uow.edu.au/~bmartin/pubs/08jspsrr.html>; (2,3) Personal communications. Some subsections of this chapter drew ideas from the NOFOMA 2007 review guidelines.

## Chapter 13

(1–3 ) Personal communications.

# Index

This book is indexed by chapters and subsections.

Numbers in **bold** refer to complete chapters (e.g. **5** = Chapter 5), numbers not in bold refer to subsections (e.g. 5.7 = Section 7 in Chapter 5).

## A

Ambiguity, 5.7  
Attachments, 3.18, 6.6

## B

Blocks of text, 6.9

## C

Carbon copying (cc'ing), 3.17  
Clarifications, 6.14  
Collaborations, 4.11  
Conciseness, 5.4  
Constructive, being, 10.6–10.13  
Cover letters, 7  
Criticizing constructively, **10**

## D

Deadlines, 6.13  
Diplomatic, being, 10.7–10.13

## E

Editor, communicating with, **13**  
Erasmus programme, 7.9

## F

First sentence/paragraph, 3.4  
Formality, **4**

## G

Google Translate, 5.11  
Grammar, **15**  
Greetings, 3.3

## I

Internships, 7.14

## L

Link words, 3.13

## M

Mistakes in your English, minimizing, 5.2  
Multiple recipients, 3.8  
Multiple requests, 6.11, 6.12

## N

Names: 'ambiguous', 2.4, in greetings, 3.3

**P**

Peer reviews, **11, 12**  
 PhD applications, 7.12, 9.3, 9.4  
 Phrases: typical phrases, **14**  
 Placements, 7.13  
 Planning an email, 3.2  
 Preview pane, 1.3  
 Pronouns, 5.8, 5.12  
 PSs, 2.9

**R**

Referees' reports, **11, 12**  
 Reference letters, **8**  
 Relationships, **4**  
 Reminders, 10.13  
 Replies, **6**  
 Replies to reviewers' reports, **12, 13**  
 Requests, **6**  
 Requests: tone, 4.5  
 Research positions, 7.14, 9.3, 9.4  
 Research proposals, **9**  
 Research statements, **9**  
 Reviewers' reports, **11, 12**

**S**

Salutations in emails, **2**  
 Salutations in letters, 7.3, 7.7

Sandwich technique, 3.12, 11.9  
 Short sentences, 5.5  
 Signature: email, 2.8  
 Spelling, 2.2, 5.13, 5.14, 11.17  
 Standard phrases: 2.7, 5.9, **14**  
 Statement of purpose, 9.5  
 Structuring the content of an email, **3**  
 Subject lines, **1**  
 Summer schools, 7.11

**T**

Templates: avoiding, 3.10  
 Tenses, **15**  
 Thanking, 10.14  
 Time zones, 3.14  
 Titles of people, 2.3  
 Translating, 5.9, Google Translate, 5.11  
 Two-part subject line, 1.5

**U**

Useful phrases, **14**

**W**

Word order, 5.6  
 Workshops, 7.10