

What's your word for 2023?

Written by 'Grammar Guy' By Curtis Honeycutt Guest Columnist
Friday, 06 January 2023 03:24



Many people focus on one word to guide them through the next year. Is this something you do? If so, you might want to make sure it's the correct word. While I don't recommend choosing any of the following words to usher you through 2023, you certainly don't want to get these confused!

When something "topples," it means that an item falls over. Similarly, if a government gets "toppled," that means the people in power get overthrown by another group. On the other hand, if a government gets "topless," that means they had too much to drink at the New Year's party and took their shirts off.

If you take your shirt off, are you likely to see "muscles" or "mussels?" If you've been doing crunches and bicep curls at the gym, you're likely to see some burly muscles. If you happen to be smuggling clams in your shirt, you'll accidentally reveal a bevy of mussels.

Speaking of "smuggling," you don't want to confuse the word with "snuggling." Snuggling involves curling up with a special person and affectionately cuddling with them. Smuggling, on the other hand, involves sneaking an item illegally from one place to another, usually across international borders.

Don't get "border" mixed up with "boarder." A border, as you know, is the edge that separates a country or state from the one adjacent to it. A border can more broadly be known as the edge of any surface or area. A boarder is someone who is paying to stay at a hotel, hostel or bed and breakfast.

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I have an entire category of terms that can be easily confused with vegetables and other produce. A “morel” is a type of mushroom, while a “moral” is a guiding principle. A “currant” is similar to a raisin, while a “current” is either a flow of a body of water or describes something that is happening in the present.

Similarly, be careful to parse out the differences between “leak” and “leek,” “beet” and “beat,” and “pea” and “pee.” I don't think I need to go into those in further detail.

Finally — and still along the lines of common grocery store vegetables — you should know the difference between “cabotage” and “sabotage.” Cabotage has nothing to do with cabbage; in fact, it has to do with navigating or trading along a coastal area. Cabotage also has to do with trade and transport via air transport between two countries' borders.

“Sabotage,” conversely, means to ruin something on purpose.

Do you have a word for 2023? For me — I need to give myself grace and accept it from others. So, my word is “grace.” Grace allows you to start over and turn the page from dark or difficult times in the past.

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