

All the gnus that are fit to print

Written by 'Grammar Guy' By Curtis Honeycutt Guest Columnist
Friday, 05 January 2024 00:00



Ah, it's a new year — a clean slate, full of hope. Think of the countless ways we'll all mess things up.

Sorry to paint a pessimistic picture on that blank canvas, but let's be real about it. We will fall short — we're human, after all. But that doesn't keep us from looking at a few words today, does it?

To kick off a new year, we're going to examine “new,” “knew” and “gnu,” a tantalizing trio of words that can't wait to leap into your lexicon in 2024.

Let's start with “new,” that shape-shifting chameleon of language. It paints a kaleidoscope of colorful possibilities. From the crisp canvas of a fresh year to the squalling novelty of a baby, “new” whispers reinvention, upgrade and discovery. Whether adorning new shoes or unearthing new friends, “new” throws open the door to the uncharted, a blank page begging to be filled with experiences, possibilities and fresh ideas. “New” is good news!

“Knew,” unlike “new's” bright, untrodden paths, paints a sepia landscape of hindsight. It's the knowing glint in our eyes, embers still glowing with past exams flunked and cake devoured. It hums familiarity, like our lover's favorite song or shortcuts home.

But “knew” also whispers regrets, missed calls and shrunken sweaters – lessons learned (or

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ignored) with a knowing wink. In everyday yarns, it binds us with shared moments, reminding us that even on the precipice of “new,” wisdom whispers from the echoes of “knew.” “Knew” is old news!

And then there’s “gnu,” that majestic one-syllable stampede of a word! While it might not grace your everyday vocab like “new” or “knew,” its playful potential is undeniable. A “gnu” is a long-haired African antelope known for its wildebeest beard and dramatic migrations across the savanna.

But you probably already knew that. A gnu herder would be news I’ve never heard.

Gnu is pronounced the same way as “new” and “knew.” That makes all three of the words we’re investigating homophones — words that sound the same but have different meanings and origins. Homonyms are words that have the same sound or spelling but different meanings. But you already knew that.

Make 2024 the year of the “gnu” and stampede your way to new success. At the end of the year, you’ll look back and say, “I knew I could do it!”

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