

Wordsworth's Newsletter

Words of Wisdom from The Words Workshop



Wordsworth asks ... Why is Bloody a swear word?

The origins of the word bloody as a swear word are not clear and nobody really knows the answer. However, it is believed to be related to the 'Bloods', a bunch of rowdy aristocrats who lived in the 18th century. The expression 'bloody drunk', meaning to be very drunk indeed, is thought to have been the first use of the word in this form. It has since migrated to be a shock intensifier or swear word, in other contexts.

Wordsworth says ... Verbs like privatise and standardise are often spelt using 'ize' rather than 'ise' and there is some confusion as to which one is correct.

It is often thought that the 'ize' spelling is an Americanism, but although it is true that 'ize' is used in American English, it has always been accepted as an alternative to the 'ise' form in standard English. It's really up to you which one you use, but be careful not to mix the two in a single piece of text.

Wordsworth's words of the month

Hopefully

The word *hopefully* is often misused in modern English to mean 'it is hoped' rather than 'full of hope'. "We looked at the ceiling hopefully and prayed that it wouldn't collapse." Not, "We looked at the ceiling and prayed that hopefully it wouldn't collapse." However, as with many other words in English *hopefully* has been misused for so long it has now become acceptable in all but the strictest literary circles.

Hanged/Hung

The word *hung* is used when writing in the past tense, meaning to hang. While *hanged* is only used to mean 'hanged by the neck until dead'. An artist's pictures might be hung in an art gallery, but if he were hanged there it would be a case for Hercule Poirot.



Wordsworth's quote of the month

"I was working on the proof of one of my poems all the morning and took out a comma. In the afternoon, I put it back in."

Oscar Wilde



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