



Open Letter

REALITY CHECK /// GROWN MEN SHOULDN'T SPEAK LIKE TEENAGERS. DO WE REALLY NEED TO EXPLAIN WHY? AND DON'T START US ON EMOTICONS O_O.

Dear adult men,

By virtue of the fact that you are holding this particular magazine, it can be assumed that you are most likely a grown man who likes to read, a man who appreciates both a finely turned phrase and a sharply cut suit. So what's with the talking like a 13-year-old girl? Unless the only time you've used the word "totes" is when referring to multiples of a specific type of open-topped bag, I'm looking at you.

Before you shrug your shoulders and mumble "whatevs" (or just "evs"), it's worth considering that you're now That Guy. That Guy you used to roll your eyes at when he used air quotes. That Guy who abused the word "awesome" to such an extent that it has now become void of meaning. That Guy who tacked "uber" on to everything because he couldn't be arsed typing thesaurus.com into his web browser.

What's that you say? Oh, everyone else is a linguistic trend slave but you're doing it ironically? Well here's a news flash: if everything you say, wear and do is suffused in irony, the counterpoint by which the concept exists is nullified.

No, I will not "chillax". Yes, I know it makes things a bit "awk" to point out that you can't embrace a trend then back away under the "I was taking the piss" guise the minute it loses currency. But part of being a better man lies in realising when it's time to move on from the patois of adolescence with its auto-correct hilarities, irresponsible contractions such as "totes ridic" and using "izzle" as a suffix. It's worth stating that grammar, punctuation and spelling have been, are and always will be the hallmark of a gentleman in his business and personal life.

Every generation has its own slang which it uses to differentiate itself from the one

before. It's a statement of identity. Folding this into your everyday language doesn't indicate that you're down with the kids with their Kimbra and their Instagram. On the contrary, signing off with 'c u l8trs' is the linguistic equivalent of slightly desperate Uncle Barry who every Christmas decides to show the family that just because you're 45 doesn't mean you can't crunk.

Then there's the insidious creep of the kiss (x) and hug (o) symbols into everyday communication. Divided along gender lines, these take on an air of cheerful warmth when coming from a woman. From a man... well, let's just say the only time a modern

couples you know into snappy single entities. Brangelina was amusing to start, Beniffer wasn't, so why the practice continues to go strong baffles us.

In an era where exponentially increasing amounts of written communication are limited to 144 characters, and in a country already given to rampant abbreviation (including an overheard conversation in which a now deceased men's publication was referred to as "a bit mysogo") we seem to be dealing with a confluence of erudition's enemies. In fact, as Twitter and text-speak threaten to take over the world, words like erudition itself will soon be relegated to the

likes of fragrance titles: Erudition... for the man who knows exactly what he wants to say.

There's a fine line between using modern technology for enhancing communication and becoming a slave to its jargon. If you find yourself bastardising perfectly functional words with an "e" to form the likes of "e-ivation", "e-witness" or "e-trepreneur", you have crossed that line.

Of course, the lingo of the modern gentleman will evolve with his times. That is one of its joys. But before you embrace this revolution — even ironically — take each phrase on its own merits and decide if you think it's as savvy as the rest of the world believes it to be.

For example, a generation ago, those at the cutting-edge of cool began switching to switchin'.

The fusty "g" was replaced by both an apostrophe and the apparently hipper "n" sound. Today, an entire genre of letters, namely vowels, seems to be under threat. But here's the thing: Ys, ths sntnce cn b ndrstd ths wy, bt ts fckn hrd 2 rd.



gentleman should be using "xo" is when referring to a Chinese sauce.

A similar policy should apply to emoticons. The combination of words you select in any given missive should be enough to suggest whether you are J or L. So entrenched is this scourge that the word processing program used to type this article won't actually let us enter the combination of a colon and closed bracket without auto-correcting it to the smiley face one sentence back. A communication tool for the grown-up gent this is not.

Ditto — a word which is similarly suspect — the penchant for turning the names of

GROW UP, PEEPS.

