

LUC WRITING CENTER – “FORMS OF OTHER”

I. The Rules: Forms of the word “other” are used to indicate that **there is an additional number of a specific group of things or people.** Forms of the word “other” can be either an *adjective* or a *pronoun*. “Another” is always singular and indicates *there is one more in addition to the group of things already mentioned.*

Examples:

1. I ate another cookie from the tray. (“another” means the speaker took one cookie in addition to a cookie she had already eaten; the speaker uses another to *say she has eaten at least two cookies.*)
2. The online directions to the museum were conflicting, since one website said to turn right, while another said to turn left. (here, “another” means *a second website in addition to the first one.*)

“Other” can be either singular or plural. “Other/others” (without the article “the”) indicates **there are several more in addition to the group of things already mentioned.** The “other(s)” indicates **the remaining number of a specific group.**

Examples:

1. I ordered a ham sandwich, but the other is yours. (“the other” refers to *a remaining sandwich.*)
2. These shoes are very practical, but others are more ornamental. (here, “others” refers to *additional shoes which the speaker is comparing to the practical ones.*)
3. The other children know how to behave in school. (using the article “the” means that *all of the additional children are being good.*)

II. Several common expressions also use forms of the word “other,” with slightly different meanings.

1. “Each other” and “one another”: used to indicate a reciprocal relationship. *Example.* My pen pal and I would write to each other regularly.
2. “Every other”: means “alternate.” *Example.* To complete the pattern for the tile floor, turn every other tile ninety degrees.
3. “Other than”: used after a negative to mean “except.” *Example.* We won every game other than the last one.
4. “The other” in expressions of time: used to refer to the recent past (e.g., the other day, the other week). *Example.* The other morning, I lost my keys and was late to work.
5. “Another” as an adjective in *expressions of time, money, and distance*: used with a noun to mean “an additional” item. *Example.* We need to swim another five miles to complete the race.

Some reasons why these rules can be confusing:

Both *pronoun* and *adjective* usages of “other” can take the article “the.” “The other(s)” and “other(s)” are used to make different kinds of comparisons to a group of things or people. “The other(s)” refers to *the rest, or all that remains of a group*, while “other(s)” refers to *items in addition to that group.*

Examples:

1. Sue and I hiked to the waterfall while the others stayed by the pool. (“the others” refers to *the remaining members of their group.*)

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2. We couldn't find the waterfall we were looking for, but we found others to enjoy. (“others” refers to *more waterfalls in addition to the one they couldn't find.*)

III. How to Notice and Correct Any Errors:

- a) Based on the context of the sentence, decide whether you mean to *indicate either more things in addition to a group*, or only *the remaining part of a group of things or people*.
- b) Edit your sentence to include the article “the,” if necessary.
- c) Make sure that your sentence uses the appropriate *singular* or *plural* form of “other” (“another,” “other,” or “others”).

Practice:

Complete the following sentences with a correct form of “other.”

1. Our team was very united during the match, but _____ players appeared disorganized and discouraged.
2. Although I already had a caffeine headache, I poured myself _____ cup of coffee.
3. One after _____, the children came down with the stomach flu.
4. This class is fun, but _____ have been more interesting this semester.
5. At the park, I chased one puppy while my friend held _____.

More Practice:

Complete the following sentences with a word or phrase that uses a form of “other.”

1. Japanese snow monkeys like to soak in hot springs while they groom _____'s fur.
2. Since his class is on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, he can work _____ day this week.
3. Even though my test was at 8 am, I stayed up for _____ hour to play video games.
4. _____ week, we went to Michigan to pick apples.
5. She is not allergic to anything _____ peanuts.

Source:

These materials were partially adapted from *Understanding and Using English Grammar*.