

The Invitational Week 114: EGOD!

Coin a word including the letter block DOGE. Plus winning riffs on Dave Barry's Mister Language Person — chosen by Dave himself.

[Pat Myers](#)

and

[Gene Weingarten](#)

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Hello. Welcome to The Invitational, a special unelected-politician edition .

EGODOME: The White House.

BADGEOGRAPHY: The Gulf of America.

DODO EGG: A vain attempt to resurrect something whose time is gone.

DOGEBALL: A game in which you hurt people.

MANGOED: Pelted with rotting fruit until you can't get the stench off. "Ralph was a nice enough guy before getting mangoed for eight years straight by the Fox News toadies."

It's the more or less annual game we call Tour de Fours, this time with the four-letter word of the hour:

For Invitational Week 114: Give us a new word or multi-word phrase that includes the letter block DOGE — in any order but with no other letters between them (spaces between words are okay) and describe it, as in the examples above. Use it in a funny

sentence if you like; please do not use it in an unfunny sentence. For those who haven't seen any of our twenty previous Tours de Fours, here are the [results of our most recent TdeF contest](#), for DUST or STUD or whatever.

Formatting your entries: Begin each entry with your neologism, followed by the description. Don't break a single entry into multiple lines; i.e., don't hit Enter until the end of each one.

Deadline is Saturday, March 15, at 9 p.m. ET. Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, March 20. As usual, you may submit up to 25 entries for this week's contest, preferably all on the same form.

[Click here for this week's entry form](#), or go to tinyurl.com/inv-form-114.

This week's winner gets a pair of otherwise very nice socks that look like off-brand ketchup bottles. De rigueur for your next White House tour.



Runners-up get autographed fake money featuring the Czar or Empress, in one of [eight nifty designs](#). Honorable mentions get bupkis, except for a personal email from the E, plus the [Fir Stink for First Ink](#) for First Offenders.

Verb Your Enthusiasm: Channeling Mister Language Person

In [Invitational Week 112](#), in honor of Dave Barry's return to chronic humor column-writing, [now on Substack](#), we invited Alert Readers to resurrect Dave's Mister Language Person bit with some Q&As of their own. And who better to choose this week's top four winners than Dave — the OG MLP — from our list of finalists? (And he even came up with an improved answer for one of this week's honorable mentions.)

Third runner-up:

Q. One of Connecticut's popular casinos is in a town called Mashantucket. What does that

word mean?

A. It's a Pequot word that means "how to eat a potato that is also a shirt."
(*Leigh Anne Mazure, Forest Hills, N.Y., a First Offender*)

Second runner-up:

Q. Why doesn't the Tim Hortons coffee shop chain have an apostrophe?

A. It was actually co-founded by seven men all named Tim Horton.
(*Jesse Rifkin, Arlington, Va.*)

First runner-up:

Q. What is an oeuvre?

A. It is the most expensive item in a French supermarket, next to the hors.
(*Lee Graham, Reston, Va.*)

And the winner of the earrings in the shape of itty-bitty heads of garlic:

Q. Can you tell me what it means to take things literally?

A. Yes.
(*Judy Freed, Deerfield Beach, Fla.*)

Way Past Imperfect: Honorable mentions

Q. Do you have a means of keeping "affect" and "effect" straight?

A. Yes, "affect" is a verb except when it is a noun, while "effect" is a noun except when it is a verb. (*Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.*)

Q. What is the etymology of "sovereign," as in a leader?

A. It's from the Latin *superanus*, meaning "huge asshole." (*Jesse Frankovich, Laingsburg, Mich.*)

Q. It drives me crazy when people misuse the word "fulsome" — meaning excessive or overdone — as a synonym for "full." How can I gently correct them?

A. The only correct correction is to say, "Excuse me but you are fulsome shit." (*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

Q. People often correct me on my usage of "less" and "fewer." Please help.

A. Incorrect: "Johnny had less beans than Mary."

Correct: "President Trump, mein Fewer!" (*Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.*)

Q. In "Blinded by the Light," Bruce Springsteen sings "wrapped up like a deuce." My pal tells me it's "revved up like a deuce." Which is it and what does it mean?

A. You heard it correctly. It's a reminder for people to pick up the poop after walking their dog. (*Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.*)

Q. When should I use punctuation?

A. Whenever you feel like it like i try to limit it to once a paragraph but that still feels like a lot my mom said i should use more but idk thanks for asking! (*Brian Cohen, Winston-Salem, N.C.*)

Q. Why are "flammable" and "inflammable" used to mean the same thing?

A. Because people started doing it before Mister Language Person was around to tell them it was stupid. (*Michael Stein, Arlington, Va.*)

Q. How can I make my subjects and verbs agree?

A. It's impossible! Nobody agree about anything these days. (*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.*)

Q. What is the etymology of the word "expensive"?

A. It's from "eggs" + "pensive," meaning "thinking," as in "I'm thinking I can't afford these eggs." (*Jesse Frankovich*)

Q. When typographical symbols replace letters in an expletive, for example, "a**hole," how is it pronounced?

A. In your case, "asteriskhole." (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)

Q. When is it correct to write "impact" rather than "affect"?

A. Use this handy example: "My boss told me my bad writing would affect my salary, so I impacted his head." (*Duncan Stevens*)

Q. Which is correct: "I live in DeTROIT" or I live in "DEEtroit?"

A. Both are wrong. You should not be living there at all. (*Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.*)

Q. I hate it when nouns get verbed. Does that bother you, too?

A. Absolutely — that's why I grammar. (*Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore*)

Q. If we have to call the Gulf of Mexico "the Gulf of America," does that mean New Mexico should now be called New America?

A. Of course not. New Mexico should be called East Arizona. (*Art Grinath, Takoma Park, Md.*)

Q. Is it appropriate for a waitperson to address diners as "you guys" or "y'all"?

A. Both are acceptable but only if they are followed by a statement in the precautionary indicative tense like, say, "Y'all oughta skip the fettuccine 'cause the pasta chef has a hawkin' cough tonight." (*Chris Doyle*)

Q. Why doesn't English have gendering like European languages?

A. Actually, it soon will: President Trump is about to issue an executive order declaring that all nouns will have the gender assigned at birth by their parent language. (*Michael Stein*)

Q. Why doesn't American English spell words like "humor," "neighbor," and "favor" the same way as British English?

A. Because in America, u don't matter. (*Sarah Walsh, Rockville, Md.*)

Q. Why is Wednesday referred to as "hump day"?

A. It's a nod to the older form of the word: Weddingsday, the day they all took place. (*Jon Gearhart, Des Moines*)

Q. I have a new boss at my federal agency. Should I address him formally as "Mr. Balls," or is a more casual "Hello, Big!" appropriate?

A. I would go with a pleasant "Hail, cunning slayer of worthless vermin!" (*Duncan Stevens*)

Q. My teenage daughter told me my shoes were "dripping," which confused me. Can you explain what she meant?

A. "Dripping" is Gen Alpha slang for trendy, so either you were wearing new Nike Air DT Max '96s or you wet yourself again. (*Chris Doyle*)

Q. Today a man said he longed to be near me, against me, all over me, and on top of me. What do you suppose he meant?

A. Sounds like you've been prepositioned. (*Jonathan Jensen*)

Q. What is the proper use of “i.e.”?

A. It’s an abbreviation of “aiyee!” Example: “I told a secret to Sharon; i.e., now everybody at the party knows that I’m the one who clogged the toilet.” (*Pam Shermeyer, Lathrup Village, Mich.*)

Q. Do some parts of speech reflect better taste than others?

A. Yes, indeed: Organically raised pronouns are especially tasty, but beware that some people are highly allergic to they/them and can have a nasty reaction. (*Stephen Dudzik, Olney, Md.*)

Q. Why is it that boxers and briefs are plural, whereas a shirt, blouse, top, or vest is singular?

A. Because the former come in multi-packs at Target. (*Duncan Stevens*)

Q. Is “irregardless” a good word to use?

A. No! Don’t ever use it, disirregardless of what anybody else may tell you. (*Roy Ashley, Washington, D.C.*)

Q. When people write in with a long and meandering question—you know the kind—that takes forever to get to the point, causing you to stare at your wristwatch (if you happen to wear one) or perhaps a wall clock (if you’re into the classroom aesthetic), and makes it seem like they’re just sort of dragging their feet instead of simply cutting to the chase already, do you ever want to reply with just SHUT UP?

A. Yes. (*Leif Picoult, Rockville, Md.*)

Q. What is a tilde?

A. The “~” is an abbreviation that may be used in many ways, for instance, “starring ~ Swinton” or “~ cows come home.” (*Frank Osen*)

Q. What is a grawlix?

A. \$!#% if I know. (*Brian Cohen; Leif Picoult*)

Q. I am traveling to the U.K. next month. What are some usage quirks I should be prepared for?

A. Those Brits are different to us! Their government are strange. And their favourite humour has an unusual flavour and colour. Whilst you’re there, expect them to take the piss out of you. (*Duncan Stevens*)

Q. Fans of the serial comma often cite examples like “My parents, SpongeBob and Cher” to highlight the need for a second comma in a list of three items. But what if my parents ARE SpongeBob and Cher?

A. Wait. You are Tucker Carlson???

Q. Do you know an anagram of “Super Elegant Organism”?

A. Yes, this can be answered by “Mister Language Person.” (*Jesse Frankovich*)
The headline “Verb Your Enthusiasm” is by Kevin Dopart; Kevin also wrote the honorable-mentions subhead.

Still running — deadline 9 p.m. ET Saturday, March 8: Our latest photo caption contest. Choose from seven photos, and you can enter a total of 25 captions.