

## Grammar Worksheets: Demonstratives – This, That, These, Those

<http://www.grammar-worksheets.com>

The demonstratives **this**, **that**, **these**, and **those** can make your writing easy to read or difficult. They can also provide the emphasis that you as a writer want to make. The word this, especially, can be confusing if it is used carelessly at the beginning of a sentence. Take a look.

**Potentially Unclear:** The little league baseball team refused to shake hands with the opposing team after a lopsided loss. **This** set a bad example for the players on both the losing team and the winning team.

In this sentence, the demonstrative word **this** is used as a pronoun.

**Clearer:** The little league baseball team refused to shake hands with the opposing team after a lopsided loss. **This poor sportsmanship** set a bad example for the players on both the losing team and the winning team.

In this revision, the demonstrative word **this** is used as an adjective, modifying **poor sportsmanship**.

Some writers may look at the first sentence and think, "There's nothing wrong with the sentence," and they would be correct. There is nothing grammatically wrong. The word this is a demonstrative pronoun and serves as the subject of the sentence.

But in using only the pronoun this, the writer forces the reader to "fill in" the concept that is being referred to. Make things easy for your reader and communicate your intention or emphasis as a writer clearly. Notice that there are many terms that a reader can use to "fill in" the concept after this: bad behavior, refusal, petulance, immaturity... Which one do you, as a writer, want to emphasize?

**General Rule:** When you start a sentence with a demonstrative pronoun (this, that, these, and those, especially this), make sure that the next word (or words) is a noun that defines the idea in the previous sentence. In other words, turn the demonstrative pronoun into an adjective.

Here's another example.

**Potentially Unclear:** The football coach did not collect signed permission forms from the parents, forgot to request the playing field, and failed to schedule the school bus for use as transportation. **This** prompted the principal to reprimand the coach.

The reader knows that the pronoun this in the second sentence refers to "all those things that the coach did not do." The concept is fairly obvious. However, a careful writer identifies the concept and creates an emphasis or connotation that the reader may not "fill in." Does the writer mean these lapses, this neglect, this irresponsibility, these minor oversights (note the emphasis), these intolerable mistakes?

**Clearer:** The football coach did not collect signed permission forms from the parents, forgot to request the playing, and failed to schedule the school bus for use as transportation. **These minor oversights** prompted the principal to reprimand the coach.

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In the following sentences, clarify the idea that the demonstrative pronoun this refers to. You may use this, that, these, or those as an adjective (followed by a noun or noun phrase). Rewrite only the second sentence.

1. The chef forgot to include basil in making the spaghetti sauce. This caused the meal to be bland and led to a bad review in Food magazine.

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2. Mary Ellen made the honor roll, won an essay contest, and was admitted to Mu Alpha Theta. This improved her chances of being admitted to a top university.

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3. Maria waits until the last minute to do everything. This causes her to lose out on financial aid and lose the classes she needs to take.

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4. Xavier always completed his assignments on time, never complained about coworkers, and seldom took any sick time. This led to his promotion.

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5. Marble Slab Creamery offers waffle cones, wafer cones, several ice cream flavors, and many different toppings. This is what makes their ice cream so delicious.

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6. Alicia forgot she had to take care of her little sister and went out with her friends instead. This got her in trouble with her mom.

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7. Our server did not bring drink refills, communicated our order wrongly to the chef, and sat down to speak with other guests while we waited for our check. This kept her from getting a generous tip.

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