

Times Roman Font Announces Shortage of Periods



Representatives of the popular Times Roman font, who recently announced a shortage of periods, have offered other substitutes—inverted commas, exclamation marks, and semicolons until the period crisis is able to be overcome by people such as yourself, who, through creative management of surplus punctuation, can perhaps allay the constant demand for periods, whose heavy usage in the last ten years, not only in English but in virtually every language in the world, is creating a burden on writers everywhere, thus generating a litany of comments such as: What the hell am I supposed to do without my periods? How am I going to write? Isn't this a terrible disaster? Are they crazy? Won't this just create misuse of other, less interesting punctuation???

"Most vulnerable are writers who work in short, choppy sentences," said a spokesperson, who added, "we are

trying to remedy the situation and have suggested alternatives like umlauts, as we have plenty of umlauts—in fact, more umlauts than we could possibly use in a lifetime; don't forget, umlauts can really spice up a page with their delicate symmetry, resting often midway in a word, letters spilling on either side, and can not only indicate the pronunciation of a word but also contribute to the writer's greater glory, because they're fancy, not to mention that they even look like periods, indeed are indistinguishable from periods, and will lead casual readers to believe the article actually contains periods!"

Bobby Brainard, a writer living in an isolated cabin in Montana, who is in fact the only writer living in an isolated cabin in Montana who is not insane, is facing a dilemma typical of writers across the nation: "I have a sentence that has just got to be stopped; it's currently sixteen pages long and is edging out the front door and is now so lumbering I'm starting to worry that one period alone won't be enough and I will need at least two to finally kill it off and if that doesn't work, I've ordered an elephant gun from mail order and if I don't get some periods fast, I'm going to have to use it. . ." The magazine *International Hebrew* has issued this emergency statement: "We currently have an oversupply of backward periods and will be happy to send some to Mister Brainard or anyone else facing a crisis." period backward the in slip you while moment a for way other the look to sentence the getting is trick only The

The concern of writers is summed up in this brief telegram:

Remembering the Albertus Extra Bold asterisk embargo of several years back, one hopes the crisis is solved quickly, because a life of exclamation marks, no matter how superficially exciting, is no life at all! There are, of course, many other fonts one can use if the crisis continues, but frankly, what would you rather be faced with, Namby Pamby Extra Narrow or the bosomy sexuality of Times Roman? The shortage itself may be a useful one, provided it's over quickly, for it has made at least this author appreciate and value his one spare period, and it is with great respect that I use it now.

Period shortage mustn't continue stop
 Stop-stoppage must come to full stop stop
 We must resolve it and stop stop-stoppage stop

Yours truly,
 Tom Stoppard

Needless to say, there has been an increasing pressure on the ellipsis . . .

"I assure you," said the spokesperson, "I assure you the ellipsis is not—repeat, is not—just three periods strung together, and although certain writers have plundered the ellipsis for its dots, these are deeply inelegant and ineffective when used to stop a sentence! An ellipsis point is too weak to stop a modern sentence, which would require at least two ellipsis periods, leaving the third dot to stand alone pointlessly, no pun intended, and indeed two periods at the end of a sentence would look like a typo . . . comprehend? And why is Times Roman so important? Why can't writers employ some of our other, lesser-used fonts, like Goofy Deluxe, Namby-Pamby Extra Narrow, or Gone Fishin'?" In fact, there is movement toward alternate punctuation; consider the New Punctuation and Suicide Cult in southern Texas, whose credo is "Why not try some new and different types of punctuation and then kill ourselves?" Notice how these knotty epigrams from Shakespeare are easily unraveled:

Every cloud engenders not a storm ☺
 Horatio, I am dead ☹