

TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

Uncle John helps you navigate life's little nuances.

You might think...The Milky Way is a spiral galaxy.
But technically speaking...It's a "barred spiral galaxy," meaning it doesn't have a round bulge in the middle with several arms spiraling outward. Rather, it's more like a thick bar of stars with the arms spiraling out from either end.

You might think...*Disinterested* and *uninterested* are synonyms.
But technically speaking...A *disinterested* person is interested in the subject but not the outcome; so a baseball coach might take interest in a game on an adjacent field but is disinterested in who wins. An *uninterested* person wouldn't give a rat's tutu about baseball and would rather be somewhere else.

You might think...Shakespeare wrote his works in Old English.
But technically speaking...Old English looks like this: *Fæder ure þu þe eart on heofonum* ("Our Father, who art in Heaven"). Middle English looks like this: *Ye been fadres of tydynges* ("You be fathers of tidings"). Shakespeare wrote in what we now call Early Modern English: "To thine own self be true." The new language began to take hold in the mid-1400s, a century before the Bard was born.

You might think...All fish have scales.
But technically speaking...Many don't—including mackerel, cod, whiting, sharks, eels, loaches, and some catfish.

You might think...*Irregardless* is not a word.
But technically speaking...According to *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, "*Irregardless* originated in dialectal American speech in the early 1900s. Its fairly widespread use called it to the attention of commentators as early as 1927. The most frequently repeated remark is that 'there is no such word.' There is, however. It is still used primarily in speech, although it can be found from time to time in edited prose. Its reputation has not risen over the years, and it is still a long way from general acceptance. Use *regardless* instead."

...is his reproductive organ. (Some species rip the arm off and hand it to the female.)