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Apostrophe Protection Society says goodbye – 5th December, 2019

Level 4

A man who campaigned for better use of the apostrophe has quit his decades-long battle. John Richards, 96, started the Apostrophe Protection Society in 2001. He wrote: "Fewer organisations and individuals are now caring about the correct use of the apostrophe in English. We have done our best, but the ignorance and laziness present in modern times have won." He said many people supported him, "but the barbarians have won".

Mr Richards started the society after seeing the "same mistakes over and over again". He hoped some people would join him, but he received support and letters from all over the world. His biggest beef was people not using the apostrophe at all. He criticised big companies for this. In the UK, Lloyds Bank stopped using the apostrophe in its name. Mr Richards may be happy with the burger chain McDonald's but not with Starbucks.

Level 5

A man who promoted the use of the apostrophe has quit his decades-long battle. John Richards, 96, was chairman of the Apostrophe Protection Society. This started in 2001 to encourage better writing and understanding of the apostrophe. Mr Richards wrote: "Fewer organisations and individuals are now caring about the correct use of the apostrophe in English. We...have done our best but the ignorance and laziness present in modern times have won." He added: "Over the years we have heard from thousands of supporters...but the barbarians have won."

Mr Richards started the society after seeing the "same mistakes over and over again". He wanted to highlight people's mistakes. He hoped half a dozen people would join him, but he received support and 500 letters from all over the world within a month. Mr Richards' biggest beef was people not using the apostrophe at all. He criticised big companies for this. In the UK, companies like Lloyds Bank stopped using the apostrophe in their names. Maybe Mr Richards was happy with the burger chain McDonald's but not with Starbucks.

Level 6

A defender of the use of the apostrophe has quit his decades-long battle for the correct use of the punctuation mark. John Richards, 96, was chairman of the Apostrophe Protection Society, which was established in 2001 to campaign to encourage better writing and understanding of the purpose of the apostrophe. Mr Richards wrote on the society's website: "Fewer organisations and individuals are now caring about the correct use of the apostrophe in the English language. We, and our many supporters worldwide, have done our best but the ignorance and laziness present in modern times have won." He added: "Over the years we have heard from thousands of supporters all over the world...but the barbarians have won."

Mr Richards started the society after seeing the "same mistakes over and over again". He wanted to highlight people's mistakes and get people to end the misuse of the apostrophe. He said he hoped half a dozen people would join him in his quest, but was heartened by the support he received worldwide. He received 500 letters from all over the world within a month of starting the website. Mr Richards' biggest beef was not people misusing the apostrophe, but people not using it at all. He called out big companies for this. In the UK, companies like Lloyds Bank and the bookstore Waterstones dispensed with the apostrophe in their names. Maybe Mr Richards was happy with the burger chain McDonald's.