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Journalist :	Denyse Tessensohn
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SAY IT RIGHT

with Denyse Tessensohn

Positioning the "only"

Where you choose to position the "only" makes a big difference to the meaning of the sentence. When you say, "She only took it for a minute", it means that she did not intend to steal it. "Only you can bake this" means that the speaker thinks that no one else can do it in the same way or at all.

"The boss leaves such matters only to me" would mean that no one else would be entrusted with those matters.

Poor English: You don't expect customer to follow us, right?

Standard English: Do you really expect the customer to do as we say?

A book prize will be awarded occasionally for a question, or suggestion most useful to our readers. Email us at sayitright@newstoday.com.sg