

Frames of reference

Sometimes, when you are writing or speaking to a group you try to frame things by using examples or metaphors. Nothing wrong with that. Except when your audience doesn't get it. The other day I was listening to a professor speak and he referred to the Iran-Contra affair. Nothing wrong with the example but it did not work as a frame of reference for the students, many of them born well after the time. Or perhaps you use cliched expressions like "you sound like a broken record." Guess what—kids probably have never ever seen a record. In fact, I am starting to think they will rarely see a CD. Lots of our jokes and references are generational—and we need to consider this as we try to communicate with the younger set.

Do you have good examples of generational frames of reference? Please post in the comments.