

Overused Words and Phrases

addictive—Overused and misused when referring to something that is occupying, but does not cause physiological or psychological dependence. Instead use “engrossing” or “captivating.”

and—Typically overused by being placed multiple times in the same sentence. Simply break up the sentence into multiple sentences or replace the conjunction with the words “also” or “in addition to.”

“basically” or “essentially”—Overused words meaning “fundamentally” or “at the heart of.” Use those words instead.

“had”, “even,” “that”—Overused as filler words that convey little or no extra meaning to the sentences they are included in. Remove these words whenever possible.

irregardless—This is not a real word. Instead use “regardless.”

“like”—Typically overused in speech, this word should never be used as a replacement of “said” in written text.

“I could care less”/“suppose to”/“use to”—Overused and misused when what is meant is “I couldn’t care less,” “supposed to” or “used to.”

“on the ground”—Particularly overused in news reporting, this phrase conveys no additional information.

OK—Overused and misused by unnecessary abbreviation. Instead use “okay.”

proactive—An overused word meaning “active” or “reactive.” Use those words instead.

proverbial—Overused and misused when referring to something that has been commented on, but not widely referred to or expressed as the subject of a proverb. Instead use “conventional” or “recognizable.”

rhetoric—Overused word meaning “verbal communication” or “discourse.” Use those words instead.

“seems”—This word weakens the sentence it is used in. If something happens it shouldn’t “seem to” happen it should simply happen.

“at some point in time”—There is never a “point in time.” Instead use “some time.”

“by the same token”—Cliché. Avoid.

“capable of”—Weak phrase. Instead use “can” or “able.”

“equally as”—Poor grammar. Simply use “equally” or ignore the unnecessary comment regarding the relative importance of the subject.

“in terms of”—This phrase lacks clear meaning.

“remains to be seen”—Cliché. Avoid.

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