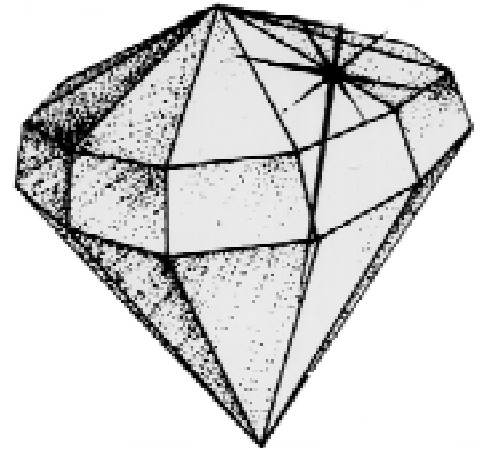


**Plain
English
Campaign**



The A to Z of alternative words

Calling all writers

This guide gives hundreds of plain English alternatives to the pompous words and phrases that litter official writing. On its own the guide won't teach you how to write in plain English. There's more to it than just replacing 'hard' words with 'easy' words, and many of these alternatives won't work in every situation. But it will help if you want to get rid of words like 'notwithstanding', 'expeditiously' and phrases like 'in the majority of instances' and 'at this moment in time'. And using everyday words is an important first step towards clearer writing.

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Using the A to Z

If you find yourself about to write, type or dictate a word you wouldn't use in every day conversation, look it up in the A to Z. You should find a simpler alternative. Often there will be a choice of several words. You need to pick the one that best fits what you are trying to say.

A

(an) absence of	no, none
abundance	enough, plenty, a lot (or say how many)
accede to	allow, agree to
accelerate	speed up
accentuate	stress
accommodation	where you live, home
accompanying	with
accomplish	do, finish
according to our records	our records show
accordingly	in line with this, so
acknowledge	thank you for
acquaint yourself with	find out about, read
acquiesce	agree
acquire	buy, get
additional	extra, more
adjacent	next to
adjustment	change, alteration
admissible	allowed, acceptable
advantageous	useful, helpful
advise	tell, say (unless you are giving advice)
affix	add, write, fasten, stick on, fix to
afford an opportunity	let, allow
afforded	given
aforesaid	this, earlier in this document
aggregate	total
aligned	lined up, in line
alleviate	ease, reduce

allocate	divide, share, add, give
along the lines of	like, as in
alternative	choice, other
alternatively	or, on the other hand
ameliorate	improve, help
amendment	change
anticipate	expect
apparent	clear, plain, obvious, seeming
applicant (the)	you
application	use
appreciable	large, great
apprise	inform, tell
appropriate	proper, right, suitable
appropriate to	suitable for
approximately	about, roughly
as a consequence of	because
as of the date of	from
as regards	about, on the subject of
ascertain	find out
assemble	build, gather, put together
assistance	help
at an early date	soon (or say when)
at its discretion	can, may (or edit out)
at the moment	now (or edit out)
at the present time	now (or edit out)
attempt	try
attend	come to, go to, be at
attributable to	due to, because of

authorise

allow, let

**authority
to')**

right, power, may (as in 'have the authority

axiomatic

obvious, goes without saying

B

belated

late

beneficial

helpful, useful

bestow

give, award

breach

break

by means of

by

C

calculate	work out, decide
cease	finish, stop, end
circumvent	get round, avoid, skirt, circle
clarification	explanation, help
combine	mix
combined	together
commence	start, begin
communicate	talk, write, telephone (be specific)
competent	able, can
compile	make, collect
complete	fill in, finish
completion	end
comply with	keep to, meet
component	part
comprise	make up, include
(it is) compulsory	(you) must
conceal	hide
concerning	about, on
conclusion	end
concur	agree
condition	rule
consequently	so
considerable	great, important
constitute	make up, form
construe	interpret
consult	talk to, meet, ask

consumption	amount used
contemplate	think about
contrary to	against, despite
correct	put right
correspond	write
costs the sum of	costs
counter	against
courteous	polite
cumulative	added up, added together
currently	now (or edit out)
customary	usual, normal

D

deduct	take off, take away
deem to be	treat as
defer	put off, delay
deficiency	lack of
delete	cross out
demonstrate	show, prove
denote	show
depict	show
designate	point out, show, name
desire	wish, want
despatch or dispatch	send, post
despite the fact that	though, although
determine	decide, work out, set, end
detrimental	harmful, damaging
difficulties	problems
diminish	lessen, reduce
disburse	pay, pay out
discharge	carry out
disclose	tell, show
disconnect	cut off, unplug
discontinue	stop, end
discrete	separate
discuss	talk about
disseminate	spread
documentation	papers, documents
domiciled in	living in

dominant

main

due to the fact of

because, as

duration

time, life

during which time

while

dwelling

home

E

economical	cheap, good value
eligible	allowed, qualified
elucidate	explain, make clear
emphasise	stress
empower	allow, let
enable	allow
enclosed	inside, with
(please find) enclosed	I enclose
encounter	meet
endeavour	try
enquire	ask
enquiry	question
ensure	make sure
entitlement	right
envisage	expect, imagine
equivalent	equal, the same
erroneous	wrong
establish	show, find out, set up
evaluate	test, check
evince	show, prove
ex officio	because of his or her position
exceptionally	only when, in this case
excessive	too many, too much
exclude	leave out
excluding	apart from, except
exclusively	only

exempt from

free from

expedite

hurry, speed up

expeditiously

as soon as possible, quickly

expenditure

spending

expire

run out

extant

current, in force

extremity

limit

F

fabricate	make, make up
facilitate	help, make possible
factor	reason
failure to	if you do not
finalise	end, finish
following	after
for the duration of	during, while
for the purpose of	to, for
for the reason that	because
formulate	plan, devise
forthwith	now, at once
forward	send
frequently	often
furnish	give
further to	after, following
furthermore	then, also, and

G

generate

produce, give, make

give consideration to

consider, think about

grant

give

H

henceforth	from now on, from today
hereby	now, by this (or edit out)
herein	here (or edit out)
hereinafter	after this (or edit out)
hereof	of this
hereto	to this
heretofore	until now, previously
hereunder	below
herewith	with this (or edit out)
hitherto	until now
hold in abeyance	wait, postpone
hope and trust	hope, trust (but not both)

I

if and when	if, when (but not both)
illustrate	show, explain
immediately	at once, now
implement	carry out, do
imply	suggest, hint at
in a number of cases	some (or say how many)
in accordance with	as under, in line with, because of
in addition (to)	and, as well as, also
in advance	before
in case of	if
in conjunction with	and, with
in connection with	for, about
in consequence	because, as a result
in excess of	more than
in lieu of	instead of
in order that	so that
in receipt of	get, have, receive
in relation to	about
in respect of	about, for
in the absence of	without
in the course of	while, during
in the event of/that	if
in the majority of instances	most, mostly
in the near future	soon
in the neighbourhood of	about, around
in view of the fact that	as, because

inappropriate	wrong, unsuitable
inception	start, beginning
incorporating	which includes
incurred	have to pay, owe
indicate	show, suggest
inform	tell
initially	at first
initiate	begin, start
insert	put in
instances	cases
intend to	will
intimate	say, hint
irrespective of	despite, even if
is in accordance with	agrees with, follows
is of the opinion	thinks
issue	give, send
it is known that	I/we know that

J

jeopardise

risk, threaten

L

(a) large number of

many, most (or say how many)

(to) liaise with

**to meet with, to discuss with, to work with
(whichever is more descriptive)**

locality

place, area

locate

find, put

M

magnitude

size

(it is) mandatory

(you) must

manner

way

manufacture

make

marginal

small, slight

material

relevant

materialise

happen, occur

may in the future

may, might, could

merchandise

goods

mislay

lose

modification

change

moreover

and, also, as well

N

negligible

very small

nevertheless

but, however, even so

notify

tell, let us/you know

notwithstanding

even if, despite, still, yet

numerous

many (or say how many)

O

objective	aim, goal
(it is) obligatory	(you) must
obtain	get, receive
occasioned by	caused by, because of
on behalf of	for
on numerous occasions	often
on receipt of	when we/you get
on request	if you ask
on the grounds that	because
on the occasion that	when, if
operate	work, run
optimum	best, ideal
option	choice
ordinarily	normally, usually
otherwise	or
outstanding	unpaid
owing to	because of

p

(a) percentage of	some (or say what percentage)
partially	partly
participate	join in, take part
particulars	details, facts
per annum	a year
perform	do
permissible	allowed
permit	let, allow
personnel	people, staff
persons	people, anyone
peruse	read, read carefully, look at
place	put
possess	have, own
possessions	belongings
practically	almost, nearly
predominant	main
prescribe	set, fix
preserve	keep, protect
previous	earlier, before, last
principal	main
prior to	before
proceed	go ahead
procure	get, obtain, arrange
profusion of	plenty, too many (or say how many)
(to) progress something	(replace with a more precise phrase saying what you are doing)

prohibit	ban, stop
projected	estimated
prolonged	long
promptly	quickly, at once
promulgate	advertise, announce
proportion	part
provide	give
provided that	if, as long as
provisions	rules, terms
proximity	closeness, nearness
purchase	buy
pursuant to	under, because of, in line with

Q

qualify for

can get, be able to get

R

reconsider	think again about, look again at
reduce	cut
reduction	cut
referred to as	called
refer to	talk about, mention
(have) regard to	take into account
regarding	about, on
regulation	rule
reimburse	repay, pay back
reiterate	repeat, restate
relating to	about
remain	stay
remainder	the rest, what is left
remittance	payment
remuneration	pay, wages, salary
render	make, give, send
represent	show, stand for, be
request	ask, question
require	need, want, force
requirements	needs, rules
reside	live
residence	home, where you live
restriction	limit
retain	keep
review	look at (again)
revised	new, changed

S

said/such/same	the, this, that
scrutinise	read (look at) carefully
select	choose
settle	pay
similarly	also, in the same way
solely	only
specified	given, written, set
state	say, tell us, write down
statutory	legal, by law
subject to	depending on, under, keeping to
submit	send, give
subsequent to/upon	after
subsequently	later
substantial	large, great, a lot of
substantially	more or less
sufficient	enough
supplement	go with, add to
supplementary	extra, more
supply	give, sell, delivery

T

(the) tenant	you
terminate	stop, end
that being the case	if so
the question as to whether	whether
thereafter	then, afterwards
thereby	by that, because of that
therein	in that, there
thereof	of that
thereto	to that
thus	so, therefore
to date	so far, up to now
to the extent that	if, when
transfer	change, move
transmit	send

U

ultimately	in the end, finally
unavailability	lack of
underrated	the following
undersigned	I, we
undertake	agree, promise, do
uniform	same, similar
unilateral	one-sided, one-way
unoccupied	empty
until such time	until
utilisation	use
utilise	use

V

variation

change

virtually

almost (or edit out)

visualise

see, predict

W

ways and means

ways

we have pleasure in

we are glad to

whatsoever

whatever, what, any

whenever

when

whereas

but

whether or not

whether

with a view to

to, so that

with effect from

from

with reference to

about

with regard to

about, for

with respect to

about, for

with the minimum of delay

quickly (or say when)

Y

you are requested

please

your attention is drawn

please see, please note

Z

zone

area, region

Words and phrases to avoid

The words and phrases below often crop up in letters and reports. Often you can remove them from a sentence without changing the meaning or the tone. In other words, they add nothing to the message. Try leaving them out of your writing. You'll find your sentences survive and succeed without them.

- a total of
- absolutely
- abundantly
- actually
- all things being equal
- as a matter of fact
- as far as I am concerned
- at the end of the day
- at this moment in time
- basically
- current
- currently
- during the period from
- each and every one
- existing
- extremely
- I am of the opinion that
- I would like to say
- I would like to take this opportunity to
- in due course
- in the end
- in the final analysis
- in this connection
- in total
- in view of the fact that
- it should be understood
- last but not least
- obviously
- of course
- other things being equal
- quite
- really
- really quite
- regarding the (noun), it was
- the fact of the matter is
- the month(s) of
- to all intents and purposes
- to one's own mind
- very

Training from Plain English Campaign

We offer training courses to teach you how to design and write your documents in plain English. We run two types of course:

- open courses, held at various hotels throughout the country, where anyone can attend; and
- in-house courses, where we come to an organisation and train your staff. This means we can tailor our training to your organisation's work.

You can also follow our Plain English Diploma Course. This is a 12-month course, leading to a qualification in plain English.

We now offer two courses teaching English grammar. Our Grammarcheck Course is designed to teach delegates the fundamentals of grammar, punctuation, sentence construction and spelling which are so essential for clear communication. We also occasionally hold an Advanced Grammar Course, which goes into more detail on the grammar of standard English.

You may also be interested in 'The Plain English Course' - our pack of materials to help you train your own staff.

For more details on any of the courses, please click on the links throughout this page or use the menu at the top. If you have any specific questions about training courses, please call us on **01663 744409** or e-mail us at **info@plainenglish.co.uk**