



Tips and tools
FOR THE WRITING WORLD

Field Guide to Concise Language

In the quest for clear writing, clunky phrases are like a field of poppies—slowing your readers down and putting them to sleep. Some of these phrases are redundant, some are jargony, and some are needlessly formal. To streamline your writing and enhance readability, prune these phrases ruthlessly.

12:00 noon	noon
6-month period	6 months
a large proportion of	many
a number of	some, several
able to	can
absolutely essential	essential
acquainted with	know
acted as	was
actual experience	experience
adequate enough	adequate
adjacent to	next to
advance planning	planning
advance warning	warning
added bonus	bonus
afford an opportunity	allow, let
any and all	all
as a means of	to
at such time as	when
a majority of	most
are in possession of	have
as prescribed by	under
at this point in time	now, today
at your earliest convenience	soon
basic fundamentals	basics, fundamentals
be responsible for	handle
best ever	best

brief summary	summary
by means of	by
classify into groups	classify
close proximity	proximity
consensus of opinion	consensus
consequently	so
current trends	trends
despite the fact that	although
deteriorate in quality	deteriorate
due to the fact that	because
during the course of	during
during the time that	while
each and every	each
eliminate altogether	eliminate
emergency situation	emergency
end result	result
estimated at about	estimated at
exact same	same
failed to	didn't
final outcome	outcome
final conclusion	conclusion
first and foremost	first
first of all	first
follow after	follow
for a period of	for
for all intents and purposes	-

for the purpose of	to
forward initiative	plan
functioned as	was
furthermore	then
future plans	plans
give an affirmative answer to	say yes to, agree to
has the function of being	is
have a need for	need
hold a meeting	meet
if conditions are such that	if
in a timely manner	promptly
in accordance with	by, under
in addition	also
in an effort to	to
in conjunction with	with
in many cases	often
in order to	to
in regard to	about
in spite of the fact that	although
in the case of	if
in the course of	during, in
in the event that	if
in the nature of	like
in the near future	soon
in the neighborhood of	about
in the vicinity of	near
in this day and age	today
in view of	because
in light of the fact that	because
inasmuch as	because
incumbent upon	must
is capable of	can
is deficient in	lacks
is in a position to	can
is of the opinion that	believes
issue a reminder	remind
it is essential	must
it is recommended	we recommend
join together	join
it should be noted that	note

liaise with	talk to
limited number	few
make an announcement	announce
make a statement	say, state
mission-critical	critical
new innovation	innovation
no later than	by
on a [daily, weekly, monthly] basis	daily, weekly, monthly
on a regular basis	regularly
past experience	experience
past history	history
pertaining to	about
please be advised that	note
point in time	point
prior to	before
provides guidance for	guides
provided that	if
reason for	why
reason is because	reason is
regular routine	routine
responsible for managing	manages
serious crisis	crisis
similar to	like
state of the art	latest, current
strategic alliance	alliance
take action to	do
take into consideration	consider
trained professional	professional
until such time as	until
wide range of	many
with reference to	about, regarding
with the exception of	except for

Sources:

Einsohn, Amy. *The Copyeditor's Handbook: A Guide for Book Publishing and Corporate Communications*. University of California Press, 2011.

Garner, Bryan A. *HBR Guide to Better Business Writing*. Harvard Business Review Press, 2012.

Stoughton, Mary. *Substance & Style: Instruction and Practice in Copyediting*. EEI Books, 1996.

Lohfeld, Bob. "100 Words Never to Use in Proposals." Lohfeld Consulting.