



100+ Words to Avoid in Academic Writing

Category	Word/Phrase	Example In A Sentence	Alternative
Informal Words	kids	Kids often skip breakfast before school.	children, students
Informal Words	guys	Many guys in the study agreed.	men, participants
Informal Words	cool	The method is cool but basic.	useful, effective
Informal Words	tons of	Tons of data were collected.	large amounts, numerous
Informal Words	gonna	The paper is gonna explain this.	going to, will
Informal Words	wanna	Researchers wanna test this idea.	want to, aim to
Informal Words	gotta	We gotta understand this first.	must, need to
Informal Words	a bunch of	A bunch of factors matter here.	several, group, collection
Informal Words	pretty	The results are pretty clear.	quite, fairly, rather
Informal Words	loads of	Loads of people joined the survey.	many, a large number
Informal Words	thingy	The writer mentioned some thingy in class.	object, element
Informal Words	dude	The dude in history class said so.	person, individual
Informal Words	lame	The study had a lame explanation.	weak, inadequate



Category	Word/Phrase	Example In A Sentence	Alternative
Informal Words	stuff like that	The book covers wars, leaders, stuff like that.	specific examples, details
Informal Words	kinda	This kinda supports the claim.	somewhat, partially
Vague Words	certain	Certain studies show improvement.	specific, identified
Vague Words	lots	Lots of evidence supports the claim.	much, considerable, numerous
Vague Words	thing	The main thing is progress.	element, aspect, factor
Vague Words	huge	There was a huge effect in the study.	significant, substantial
Vague Words	small	A small difference was noted.	minor, limited, minimal
Vague Words	various	Various ideas were suggested.	several, multiple, diverse
Vague Words	kind	This kind of data matters.	type, category, form
Vague Words	big	This is a big challenge.	major, considerable
Vague Words	tiny	A tiny number responded.	few, minimal, slight
Vague Words	great	This theory had a great impact.	notable, important
Vague Words	bad	The results show a bad trend.	negative, poor, harmful



Category	Word/Phrase	Example In A Sentence	Alternative
Vague Words	nice	The study makes a nice point.	valuable, relevant
Vague Words	okay	This method is okay to use.	acceptable, appropriate
Vague Words	somewhat	The sample is somewhat reliable.	partially, moderately
Vague Words	several kinds	The project used several kinds of data.	multiple types, categories
Exaggerations	everyone	Everyone believes this theory.	many scholars, researchers
Exaggerations	no one	No one questions the data.	few, hardly any, limited
Exaggerations	never ever	This never ever occurs in studies.	rarely, seldom
Exaggerations	the best	This is the best model.	leading, widely used
Exaggerations	the worst	It's the worst method to apply.	least effective, flawed
Exaggerations	100%	The method works 100% of the time.	consistently, reliably
Exaggerations	ultimate	This is the ultimate answer.	final, most complete
Exaggerations	all the time	Students fail all the time.	frequently, often
Exaggerations	forever	This has been the case forever.	historically, continually



Category	Word/Phrase	Example In A Sentence	Alternative
Exaggerations	totally	The results are totally accurate.	entirely, completely
Emotional Language	awesome	The findings were awesome.	remarkable, notable
Emotional Language	awful	The outcomes were awful.	severe, problematic
Emotional Language	lovely	A lovely example was given.	relevant, appropriate
Emotional Language	horrible	The report showed horrible results.	alarming, concerning
Emotional Language	fantastic	The paper made a fantastic argument.	strong, convincing
Emotional Language	dreadful	The research faced dreadful issues.	serious, difficult
Emotional Language	stunning	The results were stunning.	striking, notable
Emotional Language	ridiculous	The idea is ridiculous.	unreasonable, implausible
Emotional Language	silly	That’s a silly conclusion.	weak, unconvincing
Emotional Language	terrific	The author made a terrific point.	insightful, significant
Subjectivity	I think	I think the method is useful.	The evidence suggests the method is useful.
Subjectivity	I feel	I feel the data is right.	The data indicates accuracy.



Category	Word/Phrase	Example In A Sentence	Alternative
Subjectivity	in my view	In my view, this theory is strong.	This theory is supported by research.
Subjectivity	to me	To me, the outcome is clear.	The outcome appears clear.
Subjectivity	I guess	I guess this is important.	It seems important, evidence suggests.
Subjectivity	I believe	I believe the point is true.	The point is supported by data.
Subjectivity	I would argue	I would argue the claim is weak.	The claim appears weak.
Subjectivity	personally	Personally, I find this persuasive.	The study demonstrates persuasiveness.
Subjectivity	my opinion	In my opinion, this is flawed.	Research shows it is flawed.
Subjectivity	from my view	From my view, it looks valid.	It appears valid according to evidence.
Clichés	in the nick of time	The solution came in the nick of time.	just in time, timely
Clichés	only time will tell	Only time will tell the results.	future research will reveal
Clichés	easier said than done	This is easier said than done.	difficult to achieve
Clichés	last but not least	Last but not least, consider this.	finally, lastly
Clichés	the bottom line	The bottom line is results matter.	ultimately, conclusion



Category	Word/Phrase	Example In A Sentence	Alternative
Clichés	think big	Students must think big.	be ambitious, expand goals
Clichés	on the same page	Researchers were on the same page.	agreed, shared understanding
Clichés	at all costs	It must succeed at all costs.	regardless of difficulty
Clichés	in a nutshell	In a nutshell, data is clear.	briefly, in summary
Clichés	time flies	Time flies during research.	research progresses quickly
Fillers	literally	The results literally changed science.	actually, truly
Fillers	really	It really matters in research.	significantly, greatly
Fillers	basically	Basically, the study proves this.	The study proves this.
Fillers	in order to	This was done in order to measure.	to measure
Fillers	kind of	It kind of shows the effect.	partially, somewhat
Fillers	just	It just means the data is weak.	It means the data is weak.
Fillers	truly	This is truly surprising.	notably, remarkably
Fillers	simply	The answer is simply wrong.	clearly, plainly



Category	Word/Phrase	Example In A Sentence	Alternative
Fillers	pretty much	The claim is pretty much false.	largely, mostly
Fillers	actually	Actually, the research supports it.	The research supports it.
Redundancy	advance planning	The project required advance planning.	planning
Redundancy	added bonus	The course offered an added bonus.	bonus, advantage
Redundancy	end result	The end result was positive.	result, outcome
Redundancy	final outcome	The final outcome was recorded.	outcome
Redundancy	free gift	Students received a free gift.	gift
Redundancy	past history	Past history shows patterns.	history
Redundancy	future prospects	Future prospects look good.	prospects
Redundancy	new innovation	The company introduced a new innovation.	innovation
Redundancy	unexpected surprise	The test gave an unexpected surprise.	surprise
Redundancy	personal opinion	This is my personal opinion.	opinion
Jargon	facilitate	The tool facilitates discussion.	supports, helps



Category	Word/Phrase	Example In A Sentence	Alternative
Jargon	utilize	Students utilize data in reports.	use, apply
Jargon	incentivize	Programs incentivize research.	encourage, promote
Jargon	ideation	The project began with ideation.	brainstorming, idea creation
Jargon	scalability	The model shows scalability.	capacity to expand, growth
Jargon	prioritize	Researchers prioritize accuracy.	focus on, emphasize
Jargon	alignment	The study requires alignment.	agreement, consistency
Jargon	roadmap	The essay provides a roadmap.	plan, outline
Jargon	bandwidth	The team lacked bandwidth.	resources, capacity
Jargon	stakeholders	Stakeholders reviewed the findings.	participants, parties involved
Misused Transitions	anyways	Anyways, the essay shows this.	regardless, nevertheless
Misused Transitions	plus	Plus, the study added facts.	also, in addition
Misused Transitions	so	So, the results are clear.	therefore, thus
Misused Transitions	like I said	Like I said, data is strong.	as noted earlier



Category	Word/Phrase	Example In A Sentence	Alternative
Misused Transitions	kind of like	This is kind of like the old theory.	similar to, comparable
Misused Transitions	and stuff	The author wrote about wars and stuff.	specific details, examples
Misused Transitions	anyways you know	Anyways you know this works.	clearly, as evidence shows
Misused Transitions	plus also	Plus also, this was noted.	additionally
Misused Transitions	so yeah	So yeah, that’s the idea.	in conclusion
Misused Transitions	anyways so	Anyways so, research proves it.	therefore, consequently
Unclear Verbs	do	The study did many tests.	conducted, performed
Unclear Verbs	make	The author made a point.	argued, stated, presented
Unclear Verbs	get	Students get better scores.	achieve, obtain, receive
Unclear Verbs	put	The data was put into charts.	placed, organized
Unclear Verbs	go	The results go with this theory.	align with, support
Unclear Verbs	show up	Errors showed up in the test.	appeared, emerged
Unclear Verbs	come up	The theory came up again.	arose, was introduced



Category	Word/Phrase	Example In A Sentence	Alternative
Unclear Verbs	take	The study took samples.	collected, gathered
Unclear Verbs	deal with	The essay dealt with conflict.	addressed, examined
Unclear Verbs	bring up	The author brought up new ideas.	introduced, raised