



Non-Negotiable DEAD WORDS List

Some words in the English language tend to be overused and therefore weaken one's writing. These words are referred to as **DEAD WORDS**. Below is a list of dead words and some interesting alternatives.

This list is not limited to just these words!

DEAD WORDS	ALTERNATIVES
YOU	THERE ARE NO ALTERNATIVES! DO NOT WRITE IN SECOND PERSON!
a lot, lots	Numerous, innumerable, much, many, a great deal, many times, often, substantial, significant. ample, abundant, enough, excessive
awesome, cool	exceptional, excellent, outstanding, impressive
big/huge	sizable, immense, massive, tremendous, enormous
funny	amusing, comical, laughable, jovial, strange, peculiar, unusual
get/got	receive, obtain, attain, acquire, develop, become
good	excellent, exceptional, fine, marvelous, splendid, superb, wonderful
guy	man, person, fellow, boy, individual
kid	child, boy, girl, youth, teen, teenager, adolescent
kind of/sort of	Somewhat, slightly, rather
like	such as, similar to, similarly
mad	angry, frustrated, furious, incensed, enraged, irate, indignant
nice	pleasant, charming, fascinating, captivating, delightful, pleasurable, pleasing
sad	despondent, melancholy, dejected, disappointed
scared	afraid, fearful, terrified, frightened, timid, diffident
things	Be specific about what "things" you are referring to
very	extremely, exceedingly, unusually, incredibly, intensely, truly, fully, especially, shockingly, bitterly, infinitely, severely, surely, chiefly
But (use sparingly—especially in the beginning of a sentence)	however, moreover, yet, still, nevertheless, though, although, on the other hand
So (use sparingly—especially in the beginning of a sentence)	thus, according, therefore
Show (use sparingly)	display, portray, illustrate, exhibit, depict
Also (use sparingly)	Too, moreover, in addition, as well as, besides

Phrases Not to Use

1. **I believe, I feel, I think, I know, in my opinion** —Your name should be at the top of each assignment; thus, I realize everything written is a compilation of *your* thoughts. ***In formal academic writing, you should not use first person at all.
2. **As to whether**—The single word *whether* will suffice.
3. **Due to the fact that**—Using this phrase is a sure sign that your sentence is in trouble. Did you mean *because*? *Due to* is acceptable after a linking verb (The team's failure was due to illness among the stars.); otherwise, avoid it.
4. **Each and every**—One or the other, but not both
5. **Equally as**—Something can be *equally important* or *as important as*, but not *equally as important*
6. **Interesting**—This word is one of the least interesting words in English; therefore, make sure you explicitly describe how and why something is interesting.
7. **In terms of**—See if you can eliminate this phrase.
8. **Irregardless**—Not a word
9. **Nature**—See if you can get rid of this word. Movies of a violent nature are probably just violent movies.
10. **Of**—Don't write would **of**, should **of**, could **of** when you mean would **have**, should **have**, could **have**.
11. **On account of**—Use *because* instead
12. **Only**—Look out for placement. Don't write "*He only kicked that ball ten yards*" when you mean "*He kicked that ball only ten yards.*"
13. **Suppose to, use to**—The hard "d" sound in *supposed to* and *used to* disappears in pronunciation, but it shouldn't disappear in spelling. "We *used* to do that" or "We were *supposed* to do it this way."
14. **Try and**—Don't try and do something. Try to do something.
15. **This quote shows or In this quote or This quote means or This quote says**—Never write any of these phrases or anything like that, for it's very unsophisticated.