

Vague Words Tables

In the English language, writers commonly overuse certain words. In an academic setting, writers have the opportunity to broaden their vocabulary, discouraging repetition and the use of informal words. In the matrices below are often-misused or overused words and optional replacement words to potentially “spice up” an essay.

Modifier	Mild	Moderate	Strong
Very	Clearly, Considerably, Decidedly, Distinctly, Indubitably, Largely, Markedly, Notably, Recognizably	Awfully, Chiefly, Considerably, Especially, Incredibly, Obviously, Particularly, Quite, Substantially, Surprisingly, Uncommonly, Unmistakably, Wonderfully	Astonishingly, Absolutely, Astonishingly, Exceedingly, Exceptionally, Extremely, Incontestably, Profusely, Strikingly, Unequivocally, Unquestionably, Vastly
A Lot	<i>Time:</i> Often, Oftentimes, Sometimes <i>Size:</i> Many, Much, Several	<i>Time:</i> Frequently, Generally, Usually, Various <i>Size:</i> Bountiful, Considerable, Numerous	<i>Time:</i> Persistent, Recurrent, Regularly <i>Size:</i> Multitude, Profuse, Vast
Big	Above average, Ample, Considerable, Great, Important, Large, Sizable	Copious, Crucial, Magnificent, Ponderous, Significant, Substantial, Vast	Boundless, Colossal, Endless, Enormous, Essential, Extensive, Gigantic, Immense, Imposing, Limitless, Paramount, Prodigious, Voluminous
Small	Dinky, Faint, Light, Limited, Minor, Negligible, Puny, Slight, Superficial, Trivial, Undersized	Dwarf, Inconsiderable, Inferior, Miniature, Minimum, Microscopic, Petite, Scant, Tiny, Unsubstantial	Inconsequential, Ineffectual, Infinitesimal, Insignificant, Meager, Minute, Undetectable
Good/ Great	Able, Acceptable, Accomplished, Adequate, Adept, Agreeable, Ample, Efficient, Favorable, Pleasing, Profitable, Relevant, Reliable, Satisfactory, Satisfying, Super, Useful	Admirable, Apt, Clever, Commendable, Honorable, Proficient, Qualified, Skillful, Sound, Splendid, Superb, Thorough, Valuable, Wholesome, Wonderful, Worthy,	Advantageous, Excellent, Exceptional, Exemplary, Expert, Extensive, Flawless, Gratifying, Marvelous, Perfect, Reputable, Solid, Stupendous, Superior, Virtuous
Bad	Cheap, Dissatisfactory, Faulty, Grim, Low, Mean, Off, Poor, Regretful, Sour, Unpleasant, Unwell, Wrong	Careless, Defective, Deficient, Delinquent, Downcast, Grave, Harsh, Ill-suited, Imperfect, Inadequate, Inferior, Rancid, Rough, Sinful, Terrible, Unruly, Unsatisfactory, Wicked	Adverse, Awful, Corrupt, Detrimental, Dreadful, Diseased, Erroneous, Evil, Putrid, Ruinous, Vile, Villainous, Unacceptable

Emotional Word	High Intensity	Moderate Intensity	Low Intensity
Confused	Amazed, Astonished, Baffled, Bewildered, Disoriented, Flabbergasted, Perplexed, Stunned	Befuddled, Disorganized, Distracted, Doubtful, Perplexed, Puzzled, Surprised	Dazed, Indecisive, Lost, Misled, Uncertain, Undecided, Unsure

Emotional Word	High Intensity	Moderate Intensity	Low Intensity
Scared	Alarmed, Fearful, Overwhelmed, Panicked, Petrified, Terrified	Afraid, Anxious, Dread, Panicked, Panicky, Shaken, Tense, Worried	Apprehensive, Edgy, Hesitant, Startled, Surprised, Uncomfortable, Uneasy
Angry	Exasperated, Furious, Hateful, Hostile, Incensed, Indignant, Irate, Outraged, Raging	Aggravated, Annoyed, Fuming, Irked, Irritated, Mad, Offended, Provoked, Sullen, Sulky, Ticked	Bothered, Displeased, Fret, Fuss, Hassled, Peeved, Perturbed
Sad	Crushed, Despairing, Hopeless Devastated, Distraught, Gloomy, Grieved, Miserable, Heartbroken, Heavyhearted,	Cheerless, Dejected, Disillusioned, Dismayed, Downcast, Forlorn, Glum, Hurt, Hurting, Melancholy	Blue, Discouraged, Disappointed, Down, Low, Somber, Sorry, Unhappy
Weak	Anemic, Ashamed, Depleted, Decrepit, Exhausted, Frail, Powerless, Useless	Fragile, Helpless, Inadequate, Inept, Run down, Sluggish, Spent, Vulnerable, Worn out	Feeble, Ineffective, Limp, Soft, Tired, Unable, Weary, Wimpy
Happy	Captivated, Ecstatic, Elated, Excited, Euphoric, Intoxicated, Joyous, Jubilant, Overjoyed, Thrilled	Cheerful, Delighted, Enthusiastic, Gleeful, Hopeful, Lively, Joyful, Optimistic, Peppy, Ticked, Upbeat	Blissful, Chipper, Content, Glad, Jolly, Light, Merry, Perky, Playful, Pleased, Up
Strong	Active, Emphatically, Potent Fearless, Forceful, Vigorous Mighty, Powerful, Unyielding	Brave, Confident, Daring, Hardy, Hefty, Robust, Sound, Tough	Able, Adequate, Assured, Capable, Firm, Stable, Steady, Solid

Vague Verb or Noun	Alternatives / Replacements
Do	accomplish, complete, conclude, end, finalize, finish, finish up, prepare, ready, terminate
Fix	Repair: attach, clinch, connect, fasten, install, mend, repair, secure Decide/Make Right: conclude, correct, decide, define, determine, direct, establish, find a solution, organize, plan for, settle, solve, stabilize All Words Together: attach, clinch, conclude, connect, correct, decide, define, determine, direct, establish, fasten, find a solution, install, mend, organize, plan for, repair, settle, solve, stabilize, secure
Get	Communicate: call, communicate with, contact, talk, telephone, write Evolve/Change: change into, come to be, grow, transport, turn into Hurt: aggravate, agitate, anger, annoy, apprehend, damage, disquiet, exasperate, harm, hit, hurt, injure, irritate, perturb, punch, shoot, slap, strike, unsettle, wound Purchase: acquire, attain, buy, collect, earn, excite, inherit, obtain, pick up, pocket, purchase, receive, retrieve, seize, take Understand: comprehend, fathom, follow, hear, learn, perceive, phone, realize, understand, Win over Touch/Inspire: affect, arouse, capture, catch, grab, grasp, grip, have an impact on, hold, influence, make an impression on, melt, move, persuade, reach, see, sense, soften, stimulate, stir, sway, touch, With a goal in mind: achieve, attain, become, benefit, gain, profit, secure
Things/ Stuff	accomplishments, achievements, acts, actions, adventures, affairs, articles, belongings, circumstances, components, concern, condition, contraption, deed, design, detail, device, effort, element, endeavor, enterprise, entity, episode, event, experience, facet, fact, factor, feat, gadget, gimmick, goal, idea, incident, ingredient, instance, item, intent, job, matter, meaning, measure, move, object, objective, occasion, occurrence, operation, organism, particle, performance, point, proceeding, purpose, reference, relation, scheme, situation, substance, task, unit, work