

## Common Problems with Language

### Lazy words:

typical, standard, usual, quality, of choice, eventually, multiple, a number of, premier (adj),

Writers should be precise, and write with details. These words appear when the writer isn't sure of the numbers or the dates or the merits or the qualities of the thing or person they are describing.

### Adverbs

Some adverbs amount to an editorial intrusion, telling the reader what to think or feel about a situation. They can almost always be cut. Examples: unfortunately, happily, hopefully, understandably, adequately, heartbreakingly.

### Misused words

Over, more than. Use over for physical position: He placed the blanket over the corpse. Use more than and less than for number: More than 300,000 Laotians fled the country.

### Crutch expressions

In fact, due to the fact that, however, nevertheless, therefore, the reason was, which meant that, it is, there is, there are,

“She could not ignore the stench, however.” See why you don't need however? It adds nothing and detracts from the power of the sentence.

It started to make him feel bitter. He was beginning to feel bitter.

Was able to, managed to, ended up,

Due to: use because, unless you're writing about the rent, as the rent is due to the landlord, but more often, the rent is due on the first of the month.

Prior to, use before. People who use prior to (mostly cops, lawyers and bureaucrats, should be required to write subsequent to instead of after.

### Jargon

Marginalized, altercation, vehicle, individual

### Clichés

To say the least, the onslaught, a dream come true, a force to be reckoned with, fairy-tale season, the limelight, on the heels of, the last straw, in lieu of, ace up his sleeve, their hands were clean, par excellence, all the rage

Clichéd locutions: The century saw an increase in automobiles.

## **Hyphens**

Hyphenate adjective phrases: a stay-at-home mom, a part-time worker, a four-year-old child, a two-year checkup, one-parent household, last-minute excuse, an hour-long chore, middle-aged woman, back-to-school campaign, a two-acre plot, field-grown tomatoes, hand-painted signs, a life-sized statue,

Hyphenate noun phrases: a know-it-all, a nine-to-five.

But ceasefire. Why? Style. The beauty of the Internet is that you can look up these words rapidly.

## **Redundancy**

“Originally founded in 1921...”  
Every single person, very own,  
A total of  
In the field of  
In the area of  
A flood event, a rainfall event  
Currently is almost always redundant.  
Particular, as in this particular man

## **Years**

the 1930s, the 1960s, no apostrophe.

But, “The Beatles became popular in the ‘60s.” The apostrophe stands for something dropped from the word: 19. As in don’t, the apostrophe stands for the missing o in do not.

--Michael Berryhill