

Feel like you've just used the word "great" for the hundredth time this paper? Want to add more precision and color to your writing? Check out these alphabetized lists of alternative words and phrases commonly utilized in academic writing. But, writers take note: sometimes the alternative words are not interchangeable with the heading words. This handout only functions to help you think of words that more accurately connote what you are trying to say.

Also, note that experienced writers avoid forms of "to be" whenever possible. Its forms are: is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been. When combined with a passive verb, a state of being verb creates the passive voice (See the Write Right on active and passive voice). Improve your prose by using active voice and varying verb choice.

"Jones says that...": Alternative words for introducing quotations

say: acknowledge, admit, affirm, allege, argue, assert, attest, averment, avow, bring up, call up, cite, claim, command, confess, confirm, contend, declare, demand, denote, designate, distinguish, exact, excerpt, exemplify, extract, grant, imply, indicate, insist, instance, maintain, mark, mention, note, pronounce, posit, put forth, quote, recite, recognize, refer to, reference, require, reply, reproduce, retell, seek, set forth, signify, specify, state, teach, understand, write

ask: appeal, beg, beseech, demand, entreat, examine, expect, grill, implore, inquire, interrogate, petition, plead, pray, query, quest, question, quiz, require, request, seek, solicit

dispute: argue, challenge, confute, contest, contradict, controvert, debate, deny, differ, disagree with, discuss, dispute, dissent, doubt, fight, gainsay, impugn, object, oppose, negate, quarrel with, question, quibble, take exception to, raise doubts about, refute, reject, retort, wrangle over

agree: acknowledge, acquiesce, allow, assent, concede, confirm, endorse, follow, praise, recognize, sanction, submit, support, yield

denounce: accuse, belittle, blame, brand, castigate, charge, complain about, implicate, incriminate, rebuke, reprove, stigmatize

praise: acclaim, applaud, celebrate, commend, compliment, congratulate, eulogize, exalt, extol, glorify, honor, laud, pay tribute

belittle: decry, denigrate, deprecate, depreciate, derogate, detract, discount, disparage, downgrade, minimize, slight

"Her use of red tones shows...": Alternative words for showing

display: betray, bring out, characterize, delineate, depict, disclose, draw out, demonstrate, elicit, exhibit, expose, express, hold up to view, illustrate, indicate, inform, lay open, make manifest, paint, picture, portray, present, produce, register, render, reveal, show, unfurl, unroll

symbolize: assert, betoken, delineate, connote, embody, epitomize, exemplify, illustrate, mirror, outline, reflect, report, represent, reproduce, sketch, stand for, state, suggest, typify

"This scene adds great significance...": Alternative words of magnitude

great: 1) colossal, capacious, enormous, excessive, extensive, gargantuan, gigantic, immense, mammoth, massive, monstrous, prodigious, spacious, titanic, tremendous, vast 2) consequential, critical, crucial, important, momentous, serious, significant, weighty 3) accomplished, brilliant, exceptional, skillful, superior, remarkable 4) adroit, clever, 5) active, ardent, devoted, eager, enthusiastic, keen, passionate, zealous 6) fantastic, marvelous, smashing, spectacular, stupendous

little: barely, dwarfish, diminutive, inadequate, insufficient, meager, miniature, minuscule, minute, not enough, petty, scant, slight, skimpy, sparse, tiny, undersized

“Driver takes a similar stance, arguing...”: Alternative comparison words

similar: analogous, comparable, consistent, corresponding, echo, equivalent, identic, identical, integrated, like, mimic, parallel, representative, same, symmetrical, uniform

different: contrast, disparate, dissimilar, distinguished, divergent, diverse, fresh, innovative, inventive, new, newfangled, original, tantamount, unfamiliar, unlike, unprecedented, variant, various

emphasize: accent, accentuate, amplify, develop, dilate, elaborate, enlarge, expand, feature, highlight, insist, italicize, play up, point up, stabilize, stress, reinforce, underline, underscore

downplay: abate, allay, assuage, diminish, drain, dwindle, ebb, lessen, mitigate, palliate, reduce

“Thus, Jeff wrote Lilly...”: Alternative words of logical transition

and: added to, adding, additionally, also, further, in addition to, including, increased by, plus, supplementary, together with, with the addition of

thus: accordingly, although, as a consequence, as a result, as follows, so, consequently, disregarding, ergo, for this (or that) reason, hence, in this manner (way / fashion / wise), in which case (or event), nevertheless, on the contrary, save, that being the case, that being so, then, therefore, though, yet

but: alternative to, as a substitute for, as contrasted with, as opposed to, aside from, barely, forgetting, from, however, instead, just, merely, omitting, on the other hand, only, out of consideration, rather, simply, solely, purely, than

because: as a result of, as things go, by cause of (or reason of), by virtue of, for the reason that, in consequence, in order that, in that, in the interest of, on account of, owing to, since

time words: 1) **before** – already, aforesaid, beforehand, beforetime, heretofore, earlier, formerly, once, previously, yet. 2) **after** – afterwards, later, latterly, next, soon after, subsequently, ulteriorly 3)

presently – currently, now, contemporaneously, contemporary, during, meanwhile, while 4) **increments of time** – for a time, in the meantime, bit, space, occasion, duration, span, stretch, term, age, day, epoch, era, periods, period, season, timeless

[The following list comes from http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_transition.html, *Purdue's Online Writing Lab*. Also see http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_sentvar.html for information on how to use many of these words and phrases.]

to add: and, again, and then, besides, equally important, finally, further, furthermore, nor, too, next, lastly, what's more, moreover, in addition, first (second, etc.)

to compare: whereas, but, yet, on the other hand, however, nevertheless, on the other hand, on the contrary, by comparison, where, compared to, up against, balanced against, vis a vis, but, although, conversely, meanwhile, after all, in contrast, although this may be true

to prove: because, for, since, for the same reason, obviously, evidently, furthermore, moreover, besides, indeed, in fact, in addition, in any case, that is

to show exception: yet, still, however, nevertheless, in spite of, despite, of course, once in a while, sometimes

to show time: immediately, thereafter, soon, after a few hours, finally, then, later, previously, formerly, first (second, etc.), next, and then

to repeat: in brief, as I have said, as I have noted, as has been noted

to emphasize: definitely, extremely, obviously, in fact, indeed, in any case, absolutely, positively, naturally, surprisingly, always, forever, perennially, eternally, never, emphatically, unquestionably, without a doubt, certainly, undeniably, without reservation

to show sequence: first, second, third, and so forth. A, B, C, and so forth. next, then, following this, at this time, now, at this point, after, afterward, subsequently, finally, consequently, previously, before this, simultaneously, concurrently, thus, therefore, hence, next, and then, soon

to give an example: for example, for instance, in this case, in another case, on this occasion, in this situation, take the case of, to demonstrate, to illustrate, as an illustration, to illustrate

to summarize or conclude: in brief, on the whole, summing up, to conclude, in conclusion, as I have shown, as I have said, hence, therefore, accordingly, thus, as a result, consequently, on the whole