

6 Overused Words & What to Use Instead

The 6 overused words that make your eyes burn every time you read them are as follows...

LITERALLY

Reason:

When something is literally occurring, that means it's happening exactly as described. If you say that a guitar solo literally blew your head off, your head should not be attached to your body.

Option: Remove / Replace

Usually, if you say it's "*literally a jungle out there*," you probably mean **figuratively**, but you're probably better off without either word. Figuratively means metaphorically.

✗ I **literally** exploded after finally seeing U2 live.

✓ I **figuratively** exploded after finally seeing U2 live.

Oops!



BASICALLY

Reason:

This word seldom add anything useful to a sentence.

Option: Remove

Try the sentence without it, and almost always, you will see the sentence improve.

✗ **Basically**, it started with a screw up.

✓ It started with a screw up.

LIKE

Reason:

Like has become so commonplace no one even knows when they actually say it. Its slow and painful conversion to an interjection is now dominating conversations for any Gen X- or Y-er that grew up with two-star-rated (or less) dumb blonde movies.

Option: Remove / Replace

When using this word, make sure to do so according to its use. Otherwise, omit it. There are only 2 correct, proper usages for this word. These are:

(1) **Similarity** - "This tastes **like** chicken."

(2) **Enjoyment** - "I **like** this movie."

✗ and then I was **like**, "Where are you going?"

✓ and then I asked, "Where are you going?"

ACTUALLY

Reason:

The use of actually has become so common, in fact, that it has become the source of humor and satire. Usage varies, but tweets bearing the hashtag **#actually** often aren't factual challenges but rather jokes about the petty overuse of the word itself.

Option: Remove

'Discourse markers' are words or phrases that help organize speech and writing, but which aren't essential to a sentence's meaning. Actually, when used as discourse marker (and often as a proposition) has come to signal a difference of opinion, not facts. So just remove it.

✗ I **actually** think we should order pizza instead.

✓ I think we should order pizza instead.

AWESOME

Reason:

Probably one of the most overused words in the English language. So let's stop using it as our default every time we are too lazy, busy, insecure, stupid or whatever to think of a more original or relevant word. It doesn't make you look cool either, not anymore.

Option: Replace

You may replace it with the following words:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| • Unimaginable | • Tremendous | • Stunning |
| • Unanticipated | • Unexpected | • Startling |
| • Phenomenal | • Spectacular | • Splendid |
| • Remarkable | • Unthinkable | • Wonderful |
| • Unbelievable | • Unforeseen | • Overwhelming |
| • Breathtaking | • Significant | • Stupefying |

✗ The fireworks were **awesome**!

✓ The fireworks were **breathtaking**!

NICE

Reason:

The word nice is vague. It is a notoriously non-descriptive word.

Option: Replace

For writers, it's nearly unacceptable choice of word to use when you could pick one of the multitudes of better synonyms, like:

To say "pleasant"

- Delightful
- Divine
- Commendable
- Fantastic
- Copacetic
- Marvelous

To mean "refined"

- Well-mannered
- Decorous
- Polite
- Courteous

To describe a cool person

- Cordial
- Amiable
- Charming
- Winsome
- Attractive
- Genial

✗ She looks **nice**.

✓ She looks **attractive**.



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