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Plague words or phrases for IELTS Examination

Avoid problems created by these words or phrases:

1. **And also** This is often redundant.
2. **And/or** Outside of the legal world, most of the time this construction is used, it is neither necessary nor logical. Try using one word or the other.
3. **As to whether** The single word *whether* will suffice.
4. **Basically, essentially, totally** These words seldom add anything useful to a sentence. Try the sentence without them and, almost always, you will see the sentence improve.
5. **Being that** or **being as** These words are a non-standard substitute for *because*. ~~Being that~~ Because I was the youngest child, I always wore hand-me-downs.
6. **Considered to be** Eliminate the *to be* and, unless it's important who's doing the considering, try to eliminate the entire phrase.
7. **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.
8. **Each and every** One or the other, but not both.
9. **Equally as** Something can be *equally important* or *as important as*, but not *equally as important*.
10. **Etc.** This abbreviation often suggests a kind of laziness. It might be better to provide one more example, thereby suggesting that you could have written more, but chose not to.
11. **He/she** is a convention created to avoid gender bias in writing, but it doesn't work very well and it becomes downright obtrusive if it appears often. Use *he or she* or pluralize (where appropriate) so you can avoid the problem of the gender-specific pronoun altogether.
12. **Firstly, secondly, thirdly,** etc. Number things with *first, second, third*, etc. and not with these adverbial forms.
13. **Got** Many writers regard *got* as an ugly word, and they have a point. If you can avoid it in writing, do so. I ~~have got to~~ *must* begin studying right away. I have ~~got~~ two pairs of sneakers.
14. **Had ought** or **hadn't ought**. Eliminate the auxiliary *had*. You ~~hadn't~~ ought not to pester your sister that way.
15. **Interesting** One of the least interesting words in English, the word you use to describe an ugly baby. If you *show* us why something is interesting, you're doing your job.
16. **In terms of** See if you can eliminate this phrase.
17. **Irregardless** No one word will get you in trouble with the boss faster than this one. (A I P PG . c om)
18. **Kind of** or **sort of**. These are OK in informal situations, but in formal academic prose, substitute *somewhat, rather* or *slightly*. We were ~~kind of~~ rather pleased with the results.
19. **Literally** This word might be confused with *literarily*, a seldom used adverb relating to authors or scholars and their various professions. Usually, though, if you say it's "literally a

jungle out there," you probably mean *figuratively*, but you're probably better off without either word.

20. **Lots** or **lots of** In academic prose, avoid these colloquialisms when you can use *many* or *much*. Remember, when you do use these words, that lots of something countable are plural. Remember, too, that **a lot of** requires three words: "He spent *a lot of* money" (not <u>alot</u> of).

21. **Just** Use only when you need it, as in *just* the right amount.

22. **Nature** See if you can get rid of this word. Movies of a violent nature are probably just violent movies.

23. **Necessitate** It's hard to imagine a situation that would necessitate the use of this word.

24. **Of** Don't write would *of*, should *of*, could *of* when you mean would *have*, should *have*, could *have*.

25. **On account of** Use *because* instead.

26. **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."*

27. **Orientate** The new students become *oriented*, not orientated. The same thing applies to **administrate** -- we *administer* a project.

28. **Per** Use *according to* instead. We did it *per* your instructions? Naah. (This word is used frequently in legal language and in technical specifications, where it seems to be necessary and acceptable.)

29. **Plus** Don't use this word as a conjunction. Use *and* instead.

30. **Point in time** Forget it! *At this time* or *at this point* or *now* will do the job.

31. **Previous** as in "our previous discussion." Use *earlier* or nothing at all.

32. **So as to** Usually, a simple *to* will do.

33. **Suppose to, use to.** The hard "d" sound in *suppose<u>d</u> to* and *use<u>d</u> 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."

34. **The reason why is because.** *Deja vu* all over again!

35. **Thru** This nonstandard spelling of *through* should not be used in academic prose.

36. **'Til** Don't use this word instead of *until* or *till*, even in bad poetry.

37. **Try and** Don't try <u>and</u> do something. Try <u>to</u> do something.

38. **Thusly** Use *thus* or *therefore* instead.

39. **Utilize** Don't use this word where *use* would suffice. (Same goes for *utilization*.)

40.   **Very, really, quite (and other intensifiers)** Like *basically*, these words seldom add anything useful. Try the sentence without them and see if it improves.

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