

MY TWO BITS

Let's face it: The English language is going to Hell in a hand basket. Have you heard what the kids say? Or, as they would phrase it, "Like, have you heard how the kids go?" the verb "to go" being an action word capable of meaning "say" or "do" or both, and then some. Will the language survive? I imagine so, given what it already has had to endure thanks to *your* generation – the kids' parents or grandparents – whose communications challenge is best described as bombast; i.e., impressive-sounding language that puts useless bells and whistles on something that should be simple and unadorned. Examples: Do you write "in regard to" something? Probably you do. Why is that? Is there something wrong with writing "about" something? And when you give somebody something, like a set of plans, do you actually give it, or do you "provide Soandso with a set of plans"? After all, providing people with something seems so much more civilized than merely giving them something. Likewise "however," which seems so much more elegant than "but," even though "but" is usually the more accurate word in many of the cases where I've seen "however" inserted. (Nonetheless, given what I sometimes call those folks, under my breath, I suspect "howeverhead" would be the better term.)

I write to encourage your return to some basics. And with good reason. Just imagine what the world would be like if, in first or second grade, you had read, "It is imperative that we observe Richard as he engages the physical activity of using personal means to traverse the terrain at an accelerated rate of speed," instead of "See Dick run." Yes: Today's youngsters have much to learn, but before you teach them, realize that you may have much to unlearn. Toward that end I've prepared a list you may find of value. If you use what's in the list's left column, consider the simpler word or expression that's opposed, because simpler language is easier to control, helping you say what you mean to say, so people are more likely to understand what you mean. Reducing the potential for misunderstanding is a good thing, because it reduces the likelihood of disputes. Besides, when all is said and done, it's a good thing to blow up a bombast or two. Or more.

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a high likelihood that	probably
a number of	some
a total of five	five
albeit	although
along with	and
amongst	among
approximately	about
approximately 50 percent	about half
are in agreement with	agree with
as a means to	to
as well as	and
at this point	now
at this point in time	now
both Dick and Jane	Dick and Jane
bring to a conclusion	conclude
cause damage to	damage
come to the conclusion	conclude
come to the realization	realize
commit an error	err
concerning	about
conducts surveys of	surveys
does not have	lacks
draw to a close	close
draw to a close	end
Enclosed please find	I have enclosed
Enclosed please find	I've enclosed
facilitate the analysis	analyze
facilitate the production of	produce
file a lawsuit	sue
for the reasons listed below:	because:

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give a performance	perform
give authorization	authorize
have a tendency	tend
have an understanding of	understand
helps in the production of	helps produce
however	but
I would like to thank you	thank you
if movement of the drill rig occurs	if the drill rig moves
in addition to	and
in lieu of	instead of
in order to	to
in re	about
in regards to	about
in the process of	while
is a summary of	summarizes
is comprised of	comprises
is used in preference to	is preferable to
is used to control	controls
it appears that X is	X seems
it is our intention that	we intend
it should be noted that	note:
it should be noted that	note that
it should be remembered that	remember:
it should be remembered that	remember that
it is apparent from X	X shows
it is important to have the X Yed in	the X needs to be Yed in
it is important to note that	<i>Note:</i>
it is my opinion that	I believe
just five	five
make a calibration	calibrate

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make a decision	decide
make an evaluation	evaluate
make application	apply
make distribution	distribute
make for better distribution of	distribute better
make modification to	modify
make provision	provide
make recommendations for	recommend
make reference	refer
make the adjustment	adjust
not only Dick, but also Jane	Dick and Jane
not unexpected	expected
on account of	because
only five	five
operates to correct	corrects
original founder	founder
past experience	experience
perform the lubrication operation	lubricate
perform the measurement	measure
place an emphasis on	emphasize
please do not hesitate to call	please call
prior to	before
provide an indication of	indicate
provide with	give
reach an agreement	agree
realized a profit	profited
regarding	about
results in a reduction of	reduces
seek out	seek
so as to	to

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table of contents	contents
take action	act
the majority of	most
think to myself	think
to produce deliberate cycling of	to cycle deliberately
towards	toward
use your imagination	imagine
utilize	use
utilization	use
with regard to	about
with respect to	about
would like to	wants to

If you have some favorites you'd like to add to this list, please let me know. ASFE is working on an extraordinary new macro that will function as a bombasticide when used with MS Word. Facilitating the elimination of bombast will be good. Eliminating it will be even better.