### WORN OUT WORDS

The following is a list of weak words that you should avoid when possible in most writing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIG</th>
<th>PRETTY</th>
<th>GREAT</th>
<th>LIKE</th>
<th>SMALL</th>
<th>VERY</th>
<th>A LOT</th>
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Here are some alternative words to use instead:

**BIG**: colossal, extensive, gigantic, immense, spacious, vast

**PRETTY**: appealing, attractive, enchanting, fair, lovely, stunning

**GREAT**: astonishing, excellent, glorious, magnificent, superb, terrific, superior

**LIKE**: similar to, resembling, comparable to

**BAD**: improper, unsatisfactory, careless, defective, disorderly, poor, unacceptable, objectionable, lacking

**SAYS**: announces, declares, asserts, suggests, whispers

**SMALL**: compact, diminutive, miniature, minute, petite, puny, tiny, minor, petty, limited, trivial

**GOOD**: favorable, helpful, advantageous, useful, appropriate, proper, suitable

**NICE**: agreeable, cordial, courteous, friendly, helpful, kind, pleasant

**VERY**: extremely, exceptionally, exceedingly, extraordinarily, especially, particularly

**THING**: object, substance, possession, material, item, article

**DUMB**: absurd, ridiculous, inane, illogical, ludicrous, unintelligent

**A LOT**: countless, innumerable, many, numerous, several, various, a number of

**STUFF**: material, matter, objects, possessions, belongings, bits and pieces

**GOT**: accomplished, acquired, earned, gained, gathered, obtained, received, retrieved
Other general rules for elevated word choice:

1. Avoid clichés (overused expressions like “skinny as a toothpick” or “can’t see the forest for the trees”). Try instead to be more inventive by creating your own figurative language.

2. Use vivid words whenever possible. Paint word pictures. Show, don’t tell. Help your reader to see and feel what you are saying.

3. Avoid gobbledygook (wordy or puffed up language). See, for example, how difficult it is to read the following sentence:

   A plethora of culinary specialists has a deleterious effect upon the quality of purees and other soluble pabula.

   It doesn’t matter how “scholarly” the individual words sound. If it works against clarity, it’s not good writing! Stick to clear, straightforward language as much as possible.