

Formality Levels

Colloquial spoken, first-draft words with some synonyms, in order of increasing formality

<u>Avoid these</u>	<u>Choose among these</u>
a bit	a little, slightly, somewhat
a couple	two, a pair, a duo (for people, “couple” implies man and woman)
a lot, a lot of, lots of	several, many, multiple (see “plenty of”)
anyhow	in any case, in any event, nevertheless, nonetheless
anyway	although, thus, however
besides; too	also, in addition, likewise; furthermore, moreover
enough	sufficient (insufficient is also useful)
fix (verb)	arrange, manage, handle OR repair, renovate, recondition
give (verb)	supply, furnish, offer, provide, yield
gone; none	lacking, absent; missing (think cops)
hard	difficult, demanding, laborious, time-consuming, taxing
let (v)	allow, permit, give permission for
little (= few)	few, insufficient, lacking, rare, scarce, sparse
look for (v)	try to find, seek (sought), search for
make	produce, construct, form, compose, build, create, originate, constitute
plenty of	abundant, ample (vs. sparse), numerous, frequent (occurring over time)
pretty; quite	somewhat, almost, moderately, not uncommon, not infrequent
quite X	very (a weak word), rather, considerably, noticeably, notably, markedly, greatly (I would avoid “remarkably” as too emotional.)
so	therefore, thus, hence
start (v)	begin, initiate, undertake
take (v)	adopt (100%), adapt (with changes), transfer, possess
think X is	consider X to be, judge X to be, deem X to be
though	even though, although, notwithstanding
too	also, in addition, as well as, likewise
try (to)	attempt to / endeavor to
turn out (v)	prove/proven to be X (show by evidence; “It proved to be a wise choice.”)
way	means, approach, method, procedure, manner
work out (v)	solve, resolve, determine, devise, OR clarify, elucidate

(**Sources** include *The Words Between*, JM Perttunen, 2000, and many author-editors.)