

Various Phrases

Less formal	More formal
by the way ...	incidentally...
Every coin has two sides.	there are advantages and disadvantages to ... there are points both for and against ...
Government & the people must join hands together ...	cooperation between the Government and the public is vital ...
Government must make laws ...	there is a need for laws / legislation ... laws are needed / necessary ...
Hong Kong is an international city, so we all must ...	the trend of globalization makes it necessary for many people to ...
in a nutshell ...	Briefly / To state it briefly / In brief, ...
last but not least ...	a final and equally / very important point is ... to conclude ...
Life is tough / Life is not a rose garden.	Life presents a number of challenges.
on top of that ...	another point is that ... another consideration is that ...
pros & cons of ...	the points for and against ... the advantages and disadvantages of ...

Verbs and Verb Phrases

Less formal	More formal
come across ...	discover / notice ...
come up with ideas	generate / discuss / present ideas
do some fact-finding	conduct research / launch a study
Downloading songs cheats their authors ...	downloading songs infringes on the interests of their authors ...
everybody must ...	it is essential / crucial / vital that all parties....
find out ...	determine / discover ...
get (become) better	improve
get (become) worse	deteriorate
get something	obtain
go down	decrease / decline
go up	Increase
go up and down ...	fluctuate ...
hand in	submit
hand out / send out	distribute
I think it's hard to get this idea.	I find it difficult to understand this concept.
it's a must ...	it is vital / crucial / essential ...
it's high time to ...	the current situation makes it necessary to ...
It's a waste of time to delete your search results and then type them up again from a printout.	To delete search results and then type them up from a printout is an inefficient use of time.
look at ...	examine ...
make (up)	create / generate / conceive / invent
make it / things easier	facilitate
no need to ...	there is no need for ...
set up	establish

Less formal	More formal
show both sides of the coin ...	present / discuss points both for and against...
show off	boast / brag / be proud
talk about	discuss / present
to sum up ... / summing up	to conclude ... / in conclusion ...
we all know that ...	some experts / people believe that ...

Adverbs, adjectives and noun phrases

Less formal	More formal
a little (bit) ...	slightly / somewhat ... / rather
aggressive	dynamic / proactive
always	frequently / most of the time
bad	negative / detrimental / harmful / disadvantageous
cheap	inexpensive / affordable
cut-throat price	highly competitive price
famous [e.g. idea, technology]	well-known ...
foolish / stupid / silly ...	Inappropriate —
good	positive / beneficial
great / wonderful	excellent
hard facts	reliable data / information
hardly ever	seldom / infrequently
He could hardly get a pass mark.	He found it difficult to achieve a pass mark.
horrible / terrible	unacceptable / unsatisfactory
hot topic	a controversial issue / matter a much debated issue / matter
huge	vast / extensive
incredible / unbelievable ...	unsupported / unjustifiable / lacking in credibility ...
learn in a step-by-step way ...	learn in a highly structured / linear way ...
lucky	fortunate
quick(ly)	rapid(ly)
quite	fairly
Reading a lot is a must .	reading extensively is very important .
right now	currently, at present / at the present moment
rough-and-tumble environment	disorganized / chaotic environment
show off ("He's a show-off")	boastful / proud
sometimes	occasionally
straight	direct(ly)
total	complete / entire
unlucky	unfortunate
up-date(d) information ...	up-to-date information ...
very bad	highly detrimental / ineffective / disadvantageous / harmful
very	highly
very good	highly beneficial / effective / advantageous
we simply / just order goods from ...	goods can be ordered directly from ...

talk about

discuss/present

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to sum up.../ summing up

to conclude.... / in conclusion.....

we all know that.....

some experts/people believe that...

there is evidence to show that.../ according to....

Adverbs, adjectives and noun phrases

a little (bit)...

slightly/ somewhat...../ rather / quite

aggressive

dynamic/proactive

always

frequently/most of the time

bad / wrong

negative/detrimental/harmful/disadvantageous

cheap

inexpensive/ affordable

cut-throat price

highly competitive price

famous [e.g. idea, technology]

well-known....

foolish/stupid/silly.....

inappropriate/irrelevant.....

good

positive/beneficial

great /wonderful

excellent

hard facts

reliable data/information

hardly ever

seldom / infrequently

He could hardly get a pass mark.

He found it difficult to achieve a pass mark.

horrible/terrible

unacceptable/unsatisfactory

hot topic

a controversial issue/matter a much debated

issue/matter

a much discussed issue/matter

huge

large/vast/extensive

incredible/unbelievable.....

unsupported/unjustifiable/lacking in credibility...

learn in a step-by-step way....

learn in a highly structured/ linear way.....

lucky

fortunate

quick(ly)

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Reading a lot is a must.

Reading extensively is very important.

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rough-and-tumble environment

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show off ("He's a show-off")

boastful /proud

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up-date(d) information...

up-to-date/latest information...

very bad

highly detrimental/ineffective/ disadvantageous/harmful

very

highly

very good

highly beneficial/effective/advantageous

we simply/just order goods from...

goods can be ordered directly from....

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