

Unit twelve

Vocabulary

SECTION 5

Substituting one phrase for another

We can use words or phrases to replace others with more or less the same meaning. We may use one phrase rather than another because it is shorter, more precise or involves a change of emphasis.

1 ADVERBS

We can use adverbs to replace phrases:

*Despite renovations, the building remains **the same in nearly every way**.* can become: *Despite renovations, the building remains **substantially the same**.*
*Some students use commas **without taking much care**.* can become: *Some students use commas **indiscriminately**.*

- 1 Replace the underlined phrases with one of the adverbs listed. Make any other necessary changes.

inevitably inadvertently

- a Such military posturing is almost certain to lead to war.
b I wiped the entire disk without meaning to.

2 NOUNS

We can use nouns to replace phrases (see Section 4 for nominalisation):

*My brother knows **nothing about** chemistry, which is why there was an explosion.* can become: *My brother's **ignorance of** chemistry led to an explosion.*
That the two sexes are not treated in the same way is taken for granted in some quarters. can become: ***Inequality between the sexes** is taken for granted in some quarters.*

- 2 Replace the underlined phrases with one of the nouns listed. Make any other necessary changes.

malnutrition inferiority

- a His feeling that he just wasn't as good as other people never went away.
b An alarming number of dieters are simply not eating as much as their body needs.

3 ADJECTIVES

We can use adjectives to replace phrases:

Everyone agreed with the decision to complain to the director. can become: *The decision to complain to the director **was unanimous**.*

They were locked together in combat, trying to kill each other. can become: *They were locked together in **mortal combat**.*

- 3 Replace the underlined phrases with one of the adjectives listed. Make any other changes necessary.

partial painstaking

- a It was an investigation that left no stone unturned.
b The driver of the second car accepted that she wasn't wholly without blame for the accident.

4 PHRASES AND MULTIPLE CHANGES

When we make grammatical changes, we usually need to change more than one word. These changes may also be a matter of collocation:

*I had **fully intended to start** this report this afternoon, but I couldn't.* can become: *I had **every intention of starting** this report this afternoon, but I couldn't.*
*The statue is **extremely tall**.* can become: *The statue **reaches a considerable height**.*

- We can also use common phrases and prepositional phrases:

We've been trying to sell our flat for over a year. can become: ***Our flat has been on the market for over a year**.*

I was so shocked by her revelations I couldn't think what to say. can become: *I was so shocked by her revelations **I was lost for words**.*

- 4 Rewrite the following sentences using one of the phrases listed.

all and sundry at sixes and sevens

- a The leaflet was distributed to absolutely everyone whether they wanted it or not.
b My filing system is hopelessly disorganised.

Practice

- 1 Replace the underlined words with one of the adverbs listed. Make any other necessary changes.

prematurely single-handedly conclusively consecutively interminably concurrently scrupulously arbitrarily



- a The leader's speech went on for hours and hours until we were all nodding off.
- b I think they have proved beyond any doubt that the painting is genuine.
- c My father with extreme care avoided any mention of the coming wedding.
- d Ian completed the renovation of the house entirely on his own.
- e I worked on the farm for three summers in a row.
- f My son was born three weeks before he was due.
- g For the experiments, they selected several animals at random.
- h On this computer you can run several programs at the same time.

2 Replace the underlined words with one of the adjectives listed. Make any other necessary changes.

antiquated cumbersome meticulous cursory ingenious frivolous unwarranted exhaustive

- a This is an extremely clever device for opening bottles with no effort.
- b The factory is still using old and out-of-date equipment on the production line.
- c Your intrusion into my affairs is unjustified and unnecessary.
- d The inspectors merely gave a brief and not very thorough glance at the records.
- e The current administrative procedures are slow, inefficient and difficult to deal with.
- f The conductor paid close and detailed attention to the composer's instructions.
- g I think your comments are silly and not to be taken seriously.
- h After a thorough and painstaking enquiry, the conclusions remained unclear.

3 Rewrite the sentences below using one of the common phrases listed. There are more phrases than you need.

with time on my hands grow on somebody round the bend slow but sure cut and thrust rule of thumb ins and outs too much of a good thing lost his touch rank and file make a go of by a hair's breadth at the best of times

- a At a party you can reckon on one bottle of wine for three people as a rough guideline.
- b Even when things are going really well, I find it hard to get on with my boss.
- c As a pianist, he's not as good as he used to be.
- d I've got plenty of spare time now the children are at school.

- e The ordinary soldiers don't get the same food as the officers.
- f I think we could try and make a success of this business.
- g That woman drives me completely mad!
- h I'm no good at the quick thinking needed in a debate.
- i That car only just missed me.
- j I really don't understand all the history and details of the controversy.

4 Finish each of the following sentences in such a way that it is as close as possible in meaning to the sentence before it.

- a What was being proposed was far-reaching in the extreme.
It
- b The builders put in an enormous amount of work to ensure their customers were happy.
The builders went to
- c The little girl looked remarkably like her grandmother at the same age.
The little girl bore
- d The water is over 50 metres deep at this point.
The water reaches
- e The painter was greatly inspired by the Italian masters.
The painter derived
- f The boxer was severely injured by his opponent.
His opponent inflicted

5 For each of the sentences below, write a new sentence as similar as possible in meaning to the original sentence, but using the word given.

Example: The campaign was at its most intense just before the election.

peak

The campaign reached its peak just before the election.

- a Nobody died in the explosion.
fatalities
- b The fact that I am the managing director's niece is beside the point.
neither
- c My teacher is always criticising my paragraphing.
fault
- d Solomon couldn't stop crying when he lost his favourite toy.
floods
- e The two lawyers worked in an atmosphere where neither trusted the other.
mutual