

The Complete **WORD BOOK**

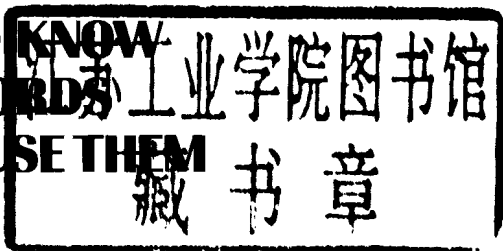
**THE PRACTICAL GUIDE
TO ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING
YOU NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT WORDS
AND HOW TO USE THEM**

MARY A. DE VRIES

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How to Use This Book

Unless you are a masochist, you won't enjoy it when the words you choose make you sound dull, arrogant, insensitive, immature, vague, abrupt, antagonistic, uneducated, negative, old-fashioned, or anything else that is equally unimpressive. But that's what happens to many of us when we fail to understand and profit from the power of words. *The Complete Word Book* will help you avoid these and other embarrassing mistakes. Not only does it provide an extensive compilation of helpful and harmful words, it is also a practical guide to the crucial matter of word choice. Indeed, it's like having many books—grammar, writing, spelling, style, word use/abuse dictionaries, and much more—all in one.

The Complete Word Book categorizes and lists all sorts of words (positive, negative, trite, slang, and many more) for quick and easy reference. Because most entries in its sixty-five chapters are arranged alphabetically, you can immediately draw on the word lists for every imaginable purpose. Whether you want to write a thank-you letter, to apply for a new job, to make a speech, to write a report, or to do anything else that requires words, you will find here an abundance of the "right" words to use as well as the "wrong" ones to avoid.

To get the greatest benefit possible from this book, first consider your weak points in spoken and written language.

Do you have trouble with spelling (chapters 41–48)?

Grammar (Chapters 24–34)?

Capitalization (Chapter 35)?

What about word choice; for example, do you say *infer* when you mean *imply* (Chapter 23)?

- Do your messages sound tired and passive (Chapters 11, 15, 32)?
- Is your tone negative (Chapter 7)?
- Do you tend to repeat words and phrases too often (Chapter 12)?
- Are you unintentionally using discriminatory language (Chapter 6)?
- Do you sometimes use the wrong preposition (Chapter 28)?

Turn to the chapters pertaining to each problem on your list. There you'll find numerous lists and examples, as well as definitions and rules, that will help you make the right choice every time.

Because of the way the book is organized—with lists and examples—you will be able to select the word you need simply and quickly. For instance:

Assume that you are writing a letter to a client in which you want to sound vigorous and positive. Select words from the various chapters in Part I, "Words That Work," especially Chapter 5, "Action Words for Productive Messages." At the same time, edit out of your letter words from Part II, "Words to Avoid," especially Chapter 7, "Negative Words and Phrases," and Chapter 10, "Vague Words."

Follow this procedure with other written and spoken material such as business messages, speeches, reports, and various types of nonfiction or fiction.

The Complete Word Book contains sixty-seven chapters organized in twelve easy-to-use parts:

- I. Words That Work
- II. Words to Avoid
- III. New and Unusual Forms of Words
- VI. Words That Are Not What They Seem
- V. The Grammar of Words
- VI. The Style of Words
- VII. Spelling and Word Division
- VIII. Abbreviated Forms of Words
- IX. Foreign Words and Phrases
- X. Famous Words
- XI. Reference Potpourri
- XII. Glossary of Linguistics

In *The Complete Word Book* you will find familiar topics such as words that *please* . . . words that *antagonize* . . . words that add *variety* . . . words that are *discriminatory* . . . words that are too *general* . . . words that are *cliches* . . . words that are easily *confused*. You'll also find less familiar subjects,

such as *oxymorons*, *slang*, *homophones*, and *neologisms*. Also included are numerous chapters with practical tips about the grammar, spelling, and style of words as well as eight chapters concerning abbreviated forms of words and seven chapters dealing with the proper use of foreign words and phrases. Chapter 65 has a large collection of quotable famous words to draw on for use in speeches and various written material. The reference section that follows consists of a medley of words and terms ranging from the names of the principal languages of the world to the Latin terms for North American mammals. The book concludes with a glossary of terms pertaining to language and word usage.

The Complete Word Book is intended for anyone whose speech consists of more than a grunt and whose written messages are more demanding than a grocery list. It is for people who simply enjoy words as well as those who realize that they must use words more carefully and judiciously to improve their social or professional status. *The Complete Word Book* is a practical guide to everything you need to know about words and how to use them properly and effectively.

Mary A. De Vries

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Skill in expression consists in nothing else than steadily choosing the fittest among all possible words, idioms, and constructions.

—Excerpt from *Modern American Usage* by
WILLIAM FOLLETT.

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Part I

WORDS THAT WORK

- 1 Words That Please**
- 2 The Use of Synonyms for Variety**
- 3 Transitional Words and Phrases**
- 4 The Use of Words for Emphasis**
- 5 Action Words for Productive Messages**

Words That Please

Certain words that we hear or read make us feel good. Perhaps they increase our self-esteem; perhaps they motivate us to do something we need or want to do; perhaps they alleviate stress or a feeling of apprehension about something we must face; or perhaps they simply help to promote happy feelings, a sense of excitement, or general well-being and confidence. Such words and expressions are positive by definition or in the context in which they are used. The following list contains examples of words you can use to make others feel better and to make your comments sound more positive. For words that have the opposite impact, see Chapter 7.

able	assure	compatible
absolutely	bargain	compliment(ary)
accommodate	basic	concur
admirable	beautiful	confident
admire	benefit	congratulate
advantage	boundless	congratulation
agree(able)	brilliant	conscientious
aid	capable	cooperate
alleviate	care(free)(ful)	cooperation
amicable	caring	cooperative
anticipate	certain	courteous
appreciate	cheerful	courtesy
appreciation	clear(ly)	creative
approval	commendable	declare
approve	common	dedicate
assist	compassion(ate)	dedication

definite	fortitude	infinite
delight(ful)	fortunate	influence
demonstrate	forward	ingenious
depend(able)	free	initiative
desirable	freedom	integrity
desire	fresh	intelligence
determine(d)	friend(ly)	intelligent
develop(ment)	fulfill	invaluable
direct	future	invincible
distinct	genuine	joy(ful)(ous)
eager	generous	jubilant
easy	glamor(ous)	kind(ness)
effective	glorious	lasting
efficient	goal	legitimate
elate(d)	good	liberal
energetic	grateful	liberate
enhance(ment)	great	liberty
enjoy	greet(ings)	lifelong
enrich(ed)	growth	like(able)
enthuse	guarantee	live(ly)
enthusiasm	handle	longevity
enthusiastic	handsome	love(ly)
establish	happily	loyal(ly)
excellent	happy	luck(y)
exceptional	harmonious	lucrative
excite(ment)	help(ful)	lustrous
exciting	hero(ine)	luxurious
explore	high	luxury
express	honest(y)	magical
extraordinary	honorable	magnetic
facilitate	hope(ful)	magnificence
faithful	humorous	magnificent
favor(able)	idea	magnitude
feasible	ideal	majestic
fervent	imaginative	majesty
fine	impetus	major
first	important	manage(able)
flair	improve(ment)	markedly
fluent	incentive	marvel(ous)
foremost	increase	massive
fortify	infallible	masterful

matchless	persistence	satisfactory
mellow	personality	satisfy
merit(orious)	pertinent	scientific
might	play	secure
miracle	pleasant	security
modern	please	sensitive
momentous	pleasure	service
motivation	plentiful	shield
moving	plenty	shine
multiply	plus	significant
mutual	popular(ity)	smile
natural	positive	smooth
necessary	prestige	solid
negotiate	pretty	soothing
negotiation	produce	sparkling
notable	productive	special
numerous	proficient	spectacular
nurture	progress(ive)	splendid
nutrient	promise	spontaneous
objective	prompt(ly)	standard
oblige	propitious	staunch
obtain	prove	steady
offer	quick(ly)	strength
often	reasonable	stupendous
onward	recommend	substantiate
open door	regular(ity)	subtle
opportune	repay	success(ful)
opportunity	respect(ful)	superb
optimism	responsible	superior(ity)
orderly	rest(ful)	superlative
original	revenue	support(ive)
palatable	revitalize	supreme
palatial	revive	sure(ly)
particular	reward	surmount(able)
patronage	right	surpass
payment	safe(ly)	sustain(ing)
peaceful	salutary	sweet
perfect(ly)	salute	sympathetic
permanent	sanction	sympathy
perpetual	sane	tempt(ing)
persevere	satisfaction	terrific

thank(s)

thank you

therapeutic

therapy

thorough

timely

together(ness)

total

tranquil(ity)

transform

tremendous

trust(worthy)

uncommon

understand(able)(ing)

undoubtedly

unforgettable

unique

unlimited

well

well-being

wonder(ful)

The Use of Synonyms for Variety

Business and social writers often search for just the right word to express an idea, or they may want to find substitutes for a word to avoid boring repetition of the same expression. The following list of synonyms includes selected examples of words that can be substituted in letters, reports, and other material to make your writing more interesting and varied. Some writers, however, may want to repeat the same word for emphasis (see Chapter 4). Using obscure synonyms merely for the sake of diversity suggests affectation and can be counterproductive, but, when chosen wisely, they can add spice to your writing and conversation.

abandon: leave, quit, discontinue

ability: capacity, capability, qualification, talent, knowledge

about: concerning, regarding, around, approximately

absolute: entire, complete, unconditional, unqualified

accept: receive, acquire, gain, agree

account: description, detail, report, statement, bill

accountable: answerable, responsible, amenable

accurate: correct, exact, precise, right, conclusive, reliable, dependable

achieve: do, accomplish, fulfill, effect, succeed

add: increase, extend, augment, amplify

adjust: arrange, regulate, adapt, accommodate

administer: dispense, execute, conduct, control, discharge, regulate, provide, manage

advise: counsel, direct, inform, tell, apprise, warn, instruct, suggest

agent: operator, actor, promoter, representative, instrument

- aid:** help, advance, encourage, assist, support, back
alleviate: mitigate, lessen, assuage, abate, relieve
allow: assent, authorize, empower, warrant, permit, let, grant, consent
announce: tell, reveal, report, state, declare, notify, communicate
apology: excuse, defense, acknowledgment, confession
arrange: adjust, classify, group, make, set, sort
business: occupation, calling, profession, work, trade, commerce, job, employment
cease: stop, quit, terminate, finish, conclude
chief: principal, leading, prime, first, main
comply: conform, concur, agree, consent
corroborate: strengthen, confirm, approve, support, affirm
decision: conclusion, opinion, resolution, result
demand: ask, request, require, want, implore
direction: way, goal, aim, end, bearing
doubt: question, mistrust, disbelieve, hesitate
efficient: competent, suitable, able, effective
error: blunder, mistake, fault, oversight, slip, indiscretion
expense: cost, price, expenditure, payment, amount, disbursement
fast: quick, rapid, swift, accelerated, brisk
forecast: prognosis, forethought, foresight, prediction, conjecture
foundation: base, basis, ground, origin
fundamental: basic, essential, principal, chief, primary
generate: make, produce, yield, cause, originate
good: honest, true, just, moral, fine, honorable, real, reputable, reliable, appropriate
habit: custom, practice, tendency, manner, method, style
illustration: example, comparison, case, instance, specimen
inclination: leaning, disposition, tendency, proneness
indicate: show, tell, point out, reveal, specify, signify
infinite: unlimited, immeasurable, eternal, countless, endless, perpetual
justice: fairness, impartiality, equity, lawfulness, truth, honor, right
large: big, vast, immense, extensive, enormous
long: lengthy, extended, lasting, continued, prolonged
make: do, form, construct, produce, establish, generate, accomplish
merit: worth, goodness, excellence, reward, value, credit
model: prototype, standard, example, form, design, pattern, copy, illustration
mutual: reciprocal, joint, common, similar, like, analogous
necessary: essential, expedient, required, urgent, imperative, binding