



SHORT WORDS

*Short words are best,
and the old words when short
are best of all.*

Winston Churchill

Short words make things easier to read.

A one-syllable word is easier to read than a three-syllable word:

utilize vs. use

A one-syllable word is easier to read than a two-syllable word:

purchase vs. buy

Two one-syllable words are easier to read than one two-syllable word:

request vs. ask for

I've listed other examples below. No one of these words makes a lot of difference by itself. Cumulatively, however, a hundred of them can clutter your message needlessly. It is good to get in the habit of using short words whenever you can.

Instead Of:

Why Not Say:

accomplish	do, carry out, achieve
accumulate	build up
actions	steps
aggregate	total
amalgamate	combine
anticipate	expect
approximately	about, or so (e.g., 50 or so), some
ascertain	find out, learn
assist, assistance	help, aid
category	group, class, type
classification	group, class, type
commence, commencement	start
communicate	convey
component	part
concurrently	at the same time
construct	build
demonstrate	show
determine	find out, learn, decide
difficult	hard
discontinue	end, stop, cease
discover	find, learn
endeavour	try
establish	set, set up, create, launch, start
expenditures	spending

expenses	costs
finalize	finish, end
for the purpose of	for, to
frequently	often
however,	that said, even so, still
implement	carry out, do, act on
implement actions	take steps
implement changes	make changes
increment	step
incrementally	in steps
indicate	state, say
in the event that	if
internationally	abroad
in the near future	shortly, soon
in the order of	about, some (e.g., some 50 people), or so (e.g., 50 or so people)
investigate	study
a maximum of	no more than
methodology	method, way, process
necessary	needed
necessitate	require
nevertheless	even so, still, that said, despite that
obsolete	out of date
obtain	get
participate	take part
place a requisition for	order
primarily	mainly, mostly
principally	mainly, mostly
prioritize	rank

prohibit	ban
proliferation	spread
recapitulate	sum up
request, make a request	ask for
requirements	needs
requisition, place a requisition for	order
simultaneously	at the same time
subsequently	then, next, after that
terminate	end, stop
under construction	being built
undertake (a study, project, course of action)	do a study conduct a project pursue a course of action adopt a course of action adopt measures take action take steps
utilize	use