Chapter 17

Word Choice

Everyone's a Wordsmith

If you are going to write for either personal or professional reasons, you should carefully choose your words. Make sure your words say what you mean by controlling wordiness, using appropriate language, choosing precise wording, and using a dictionary or thesaurus effectively.

17.1 Controlling Wordiness and Writing Concisely

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize and eliminate repetitive ideas.
2. Recognize and remove unneeded repeated words.
3. Recognize unneeded words and revise sentences to be more concise.

It is easy to let your sentences become cluttered with words that do not add value to what you are trying to say. You can manage cluttered sentences by eliminating repetitive ideas, removing repeated words, and rewording to eliminate unneeded words.

Eliminating Repetitive Ideas

Unless you are providing definitions on purpose, stating one idea in two ways within a single sentence is redundant and not necessary. Read each example and think about how you could revise the sentence to remove repetitive phrasing that adds wordiness. Then study the suggested revision below each example.

> ## Examples
>
> **Original:** Use a **very heavy skillet made of cast iron** to bake an extra juicy meatloaf.
>
> **Revision:** Use a cast iron skillet to bake a very juicy meatloaf.
>
> **Original:** Joe thought **to himself**, "I think I'll make caramelized grilled salmon tonight."
>
> **Revision:** Joe thought, "I think I'll make caramelized grilled salmon tonight."

Removing Repeated Words

As a general rule, you should try not to repeat a word within a sentence. Sometimes you simply need to choose a different word. But often you can actually remove repeated words. Read this example and think about how you could revise the sentence to remove a repeated word that adds wordiness. Then check out the revision below the sentence.

Example

Original: The student who won the cooking contest is a very talented and ambitious **student**.

Revision: The student who won the cooking contest is very talented and ambitious.

Rewording to Eliminate Unneeded Words

If a sentence has words that are not necessary to carry the meaning, those words are unneeded and can be removed to reduce wordiness. Read each example and think about how you could revise the sentence to remove phrasing that adds wordiness. Then check out the suggested revisions to each sentence.

Examples

Original: Andy **has the ability to make** the most fabulous twice-baked potatoes.

Revision: Andy makes the most fabulous twice-baked potatoes.

Original: For his **part in the** cooking class group project, Malik **was responsible for making** the mustard reduction sauce.

Revision: Malik made the mustard reduction sauce for his cooking class group project.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- State ideas only once within a single sentence, as opposed to repeating a key idea in an attempt to clarify.
- Avoid unnecessarily repeating words within a sentence.
- Write concisely by eliminating unneeded words.

EXERCISE

1. Rewrite the following sentences by eliminating unneeded words.

   - I was late because of the fact that I could not leave the house until such time as my mother was ready to go.
   - I used a pair of hot pads to remove the hot dishes from the oven.
   - The bus arrived at 7:40 a.m., I got on the bus at 7:41 a.m., and I was getting off the bus by 7:49 a.m.
   - The surface of the clean glass sparkled.

17.2 Using Appropriate Language

> **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**
>
> 1. Be aware that some words are commonly confused with each other.
> 2. Recognize and use appropriate words, taking care to avoid jargon or slang.
> 3. Write in a straightforward manner and with the appropriate level of formality.

As a writer, you do not want inappropriate word choice to get in the way of your message. For this reason, you need to strive to use language that is accurate and appropriate for the writing situation. Learn for yourself which words you tend to confuse with each other. Omit **jargon**[1] (technical words and phrases common to a specific profession or discipline) and **slang**[2] (invented words and phrases specific to a certain group of people), unless your audience and purpose call for such language. Avoid using outdated words and phrases, such as "dial the number." Be straightforward in your writing rather than using **euphemisms**[3] (a gentler, but sometimes inaccurate, way of saying something). Be clear about the level of formality needed for each different piece of writing and adhere to that level.

Focusing on Easily Confused Words

Words in homophone sets are often mistaken for each other. (See <u>Chapter 19 "Mechanics"</u>, <u>Section 19.1.3 "Homophones"</u> for more about homophones.) <u>Table 17.1 "Commonly Confused Words"</u> presents some examples of commonly confused words other than homophones. You will notice that some of the words in the table have similar sounds that lead to their confusion. Other words in the table are confused due to similar meanings. Keep your personal list handy as you discover pairings of words that give you trouble.

Table 17.1 Commonly Confused Words

1. Vocabulary of a special group or profession.

2. Playful, informal vocabulary, often recently invented and specific to a certain group.

3. Substitution with a gentler way of expressing something.

affect	effect		good	well
all ready	already		lay	lie
allusion	illusion		leave	let
among	between		ordinance	ordnance

are	our		precede	proceed
award	reward		quiet	quite
breath	breathe		quote	quotation
can	may		sit	set
conscience	conscious		statue	statute
desert	dessert		that	which
emigrate	immigrate		through	thorough
especially	specially		who	whom
explicit	implicit			

Writing without Jargon or Slang

Jargon and slang both have their places. Using jargon is fine as long as you can safely assume your readers also know the jargon. For example, if you are a lawyer, and you are writing to others in the legal profession, using legal jargon is perfectly fine. On the other hand, if you are writing for people outside the legal profession, using legal jargon would most likely be confusing, and you should avoid it. Of course, lawyers must use legal jargon in papers they prepare for customers. However, those papers are designed to navigate within the legal system.

You are, of course, free to use slang within your personal life, but unless you happen to be writing a sociolinguistic study of slang itself, it really has no place in academic writing. Even if you are writing somewhat casual responses in an online discussion for a class, you should avoid using slang or other forms of abbreviated communication common to IM (instant messaging) and texting.

Choosing to Be Straightforward

Some writers choose to control meaning with flowery or pretentious language, euphemisms, and **double-talk**[4]. All these choices obscure direct communication and therefore have no place in academic writing. Study the following three examples that clarify each of these misdirection techniques.

Technique	Example	Misdirection Involved	Straightforward Alternative
Flowery or pretentious language	Your delightful invitation arrived completely out of the	The speaker seems to be trying very hard	We are really sorry, but we have a prior

4. Talk that includes extra verbiage in an effort to camouflage the message.

Technique	Example	Misdirection Involved	Straightforward Alternative
	blue, and I would absolutely love to attend such a significant and important event, but we already have a commitment.	to relay serious regrets for having to refuse an invitation. But the overkill makes it sound insincere.	commitment. I hope you have a great event.
Euphemisms	My father is follicly challenged.	The speaker wants to talk about his or her father's lack of hair without having to use the word "bald."	My father is bald.
Double-talk	I was unavoidably detained from arriving to the evening meeting on time because I became preoccupied with one of my colleagues after the close of the work day.	The speaker was busy with a colleague after work and is trying to explain being tardy for an evening meeting.	I'm sorry to be late to the meeting. Work ran later than usual.

Presenting an Appropriate Level of Formality

Look at the following three sentences. They all three carry roughly the same meaning. Which one is the best way to write the sentence?

1. The doctor said, "A full eight hours of work is going to be too much for this patient to handle for at least the next two weeks."
2. The doctor said I couldn't work full days for the next two weeks.
3. my md said 8 hrs of wrk R 2M2H for the next 2 wks.

If you said, "It depends," you are right! Each version is appropriate in certain situations. Every writing situation requires you to make a judgment regarding the level of formality you want to use. Base your decision on a combination of the subject matter, the audience, and your purpose for writing. For example, if you are sending a text message to a friend about going bowling, the formality shown in example three is fine. If, on the other hand, you are sending a text message to that same friend about the death of a mutual friend, you would logically move up the formality of your tone at least to the level of example two.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Some words are confused because they sound alike, look alike, or both. Others are confused based on similar meanings.
- Confine use of jargon to situations where your audience recognizes it.
- Use slang and unofficial words only in your informal, personal writing.
- Write in a straightforward way without using euphemisms or flowery language to disguise what you are saying.
- Make sure you examine the subject matter, audience, and purpose to determine whether a piece of writing should be informal, somewhat casual, or formal.

EXERCISES

1. Choose five of the commonly confused words from Table 17.1 "Commonly Confused Words" that are sometimes problems for you. Write a definition for each word and use each word in a sentence.
2. Start a computer file of words that are a problem for you. For each word, write a definition and a sentence. Add to the file whenever you come across another word that is confusing for you. Use the file for a quick reference when you are writing.
3. List five examples of jargon from a field of your choice. Then list two situations in which you could use the jargon and two situations in which you should not use the jargon.
4. Work with a small group. Make a list of at least fifty slang words or phrases. For each word or phrase, indicate where, as a college student, you could properly use the slang. Share your final project with the class.
5. Work with a partner. Write five sentences that include euphemisms or flowery language. Then trade papers and rewrite your partner's sentences using straightforward language.
6. Make a list of five situations where you should use very formal writing and five situations where more casual or even very informal writing would be acceptable.

17.3 Choosing Precise Wording

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. Understand connotations of words and choose words with connotations that work best for your purposes.
2. Incorporate specific and concrete words as well as figurative language into your writing.
3. Recognize and avoid clichés and improperly used words.

By using precise wording, you can most accurately relay your thoughts. Some strategies that can help you put your thoughts into words include focusing on denotations and connotations, balancing specific and concrete words with occasionally figurative language, and being on guard against clichés and misused words.

Focusing on Both Denotations and Connotations

Consider that the words "laid-back" and "lackadaisical" both mean "unhurried and slow-moving." If someone said you were a "laid-back" student, you would likely be just fine with that comment, but if someone said you were a "lackadaisical" student, you might not like the **connotation**[5]. Nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs all have both **denotations**[6] and connotations. The denotation is the definition of a word. The connotation is the emotional sense of a word. For example, look at these three words:

- excited
- agitated
- flustered

The three words all mean to be stirred emotionally. In fact, you might see one of the words as a definition of another one of them. And you would definitely see the three words in a common list in a thesaurus. So the denotations for the three words are about the same. But the connotations are quite different. The word "excited" often has a positive, fun underlying meaning; "agitated" carries a sense of being upset; and "flustered" suggests a person is somewhat out of control. When you are choosing a word to use, you should first think of a word based on its denotation. Then you should consider if the connotation fits your intent. For more on using a

5. The emotional sense of a word; the various ways in which it can be received by a listener or reader.

6. The definition of a word.

dictionary or thesaurus to enhance and add precision to your word choices, see Section 17.4 "Using the Dictionary and Thesaurus Effectively".

Choosing Specific and Concrete Words

You will always give clearer information if you write with **specific words**[7] rather than **general words**[8]. Look at the following example and think about how you could reword it using specific terms. Then check out the following revision to see one possible option.

> ## Examples
>
> **Original:** The **animals** got out and ruined the **garden produce**.
>
> **Revision:** The *horses* got out and ruined the *tomatoes and cucumbers*.

Another way to make your writing clearer and more interesting is to use **concrete words**[9] rather than **abstract words**[10]. Abstract words do not have physical properties. But concrete words evoke senses of taste, smell, hearing, sight, and touch. For example, you could say, "My shoe feels odd." This statement does not give a sense of why your shoe feels odd since odd is an abstract word that doesn't suggest any physical characteristics. Or you could say, "My shoe feels wet." This statement gives you a sense of how your shoe feels to the touch. It also gives a sense of how your shoe might look as well as how it might smell. Look at the following example and think about how you could reword it using concrete words. Then check out the following revision to see one possible option.

7. A detail within a category (e.g., cat within the category animals).

8. A category (e.g., animals).

9. A word that evokes a physical sense such as taste, smell, hearing, sight, or touch.

10. A word that does not have physical properties.

> ## Examples
>
> **Original:** The horses **got** out and **ruined** the tomatoes and cucumbers.
>
> **Revision:** The horses *stampeded* out and *squished and squirted* the tomatoes and cucumbers.

Study this table for some additional examples of words that provide clarity to writing.

General Words	Specific Words
children	Tess and Abby
animals	dogs
food	cheeseburger and a salad

Abstract Words	Concrete Words
noise	clanging and squealing
success	a job I like and enough money to live comfortably
civility	treating others with respect

Enhancing Writing with Figurative Language

Figurative language[11] is a general term that includes writing tools such as **alliteration**[12], **analogies**[13], **hyperbole**[14], **idioms**[15], **metaphors**[16], **onomatopoeia**[17], **personification**[18], and **similes**[19]. By using figurative language, you can make your writing both more interesting and easier to understand.

11. A writing tool that plays on the senses, creates special effects, or both.

12. Repetition of single letters or sets of letters.

13. The comparison of familiar and unfamiliar ideas or items by showing a feature they have in common.

14. A greatly exaggerated point.

15. A group of words that carries a meaning other than the actual meanings of the words.

16. An overall comparison of two ideas or items by stating that one is the other.

17. A single word that sounds like the idea it is describing.

18. Attributing human characteristics to nonhuman things.

19. Using the word "like" or "as" to indicate that one item or idea resembles another.

Figurative Language

Alliteration: Repetition of single letters or sets of letters.

Effect: Gives a poetic, flowing sound to words.

Example: *D*ana *d*anced *d*own the *d*rive *d*aintily.

Analogy: The comparison of familiar and unfamiliar ideas or items by showing a feature they have in common.

Effect: Makes an unfamiliar idea or item easier to understand.

Example: Writing a book is *like raising a toddler*. It takes all your time and attention, but you'll enjoy every minute of it!

Hyperbole: A greatly exaggerated point.

Effect: Emphasizes the point.

Example: I must have written *a thousand pages* this weekend.

Idiom: A group of words that carries a meaning other than the actual meanings of the words.

Effect: A colorful way to send a message.

Example: I think this assignment will be *a piece of cake*.

Metaphor: An overall comparison of two ideas or items by stating that one is the other.

Effect: Adds the connotations of one compared idea to the other compared idea.

Example: This shirt *is a rag.*

Onomatopoeia: A single word that sounds like the idea it is describing.

Effect: A colorful way to describe an idea while adding a sense of sound.

Example: The jazz band was known for its *wailing* horns and *clattering* drums.

Personification: Attributing human characteristics to nonhuman things.

Effect: Adds depth such as humor, drama, or interest.

Example: The *spatula told me* that the grill was just a little too hot today.

Simile: Using the word "like" or "as" to indicate that one item or idea resembles another.

Effect: A colorful way to explain an item or idea.

Example: Hanging out with you is *like eating watermelon* on a summer day.

Using Clichés Sparingly

Clichés[20] are phrases that were once original and interesting creations but that became so often used that they have ceased to be interesting and are now viewed as overworked. If you have a tendency to use a cliché or see one while you are proofreading, replace it with plain language instead.

20. A phrase that was once an original and interesting creation but that became so often used that it has ceased to be interesting and is now viewed as overworked.

> **Example**
>
> I'm loose as a goose today.
>
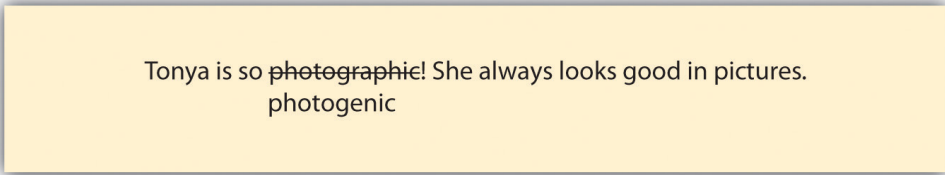> Replace cliché: I'm very relaxed today.

Table 17.2 A Few Common Clichés

as fresh as a daisy	as slow as molasses	as white as snow
beat around the bush	being led down the primrose path	big as life
bottomless pit	busy as a bee	can't see the forest for the trees
chip off the old block	dead of winter	dirt cheap
don't upset the apple cart	down to earth	flat as a pancake
for everything there is a season	from feast to famine	go with the flow
gone to pot	green with envy	growing like a weed
heaven on earth	here's mud in your eye	in a nutshell
in the doghouse	just a drop in the bucket	knock on wood
light as a feather	like a duck out of water	made in the shade
muddy the water	naked as a jaybird	nutty as a fruitcake
old as dirt	our neck of the woods	plain as the nose on your face
raking in the dough	sick as a dog	stick in the mud
stubborn as a mule	sweet as apple pie	thorn in my side
two peas in a pod	under the weather	walks on water
water under the bridge	when pigs fly	

Guarding against Misusing Words

If you are uncertain about the meaning of a word, look the word up before you use it. Also, if your spellchecker identifies a misspelled word, don't automatically accept the suggested replacement word. Make an informed decision about each word you use.

Look at the Figure 17.1.

Figure 17.1

> Tonya is so ~~photographic~~! She always looks good in pictures.
> photogenic

Equipment and memories can be photographic, but to look good in pictures is to be photogenic. To catch an error of this nature, you clearly have to realize the word in question is a problem. The truth is, your best chance at knowing how a wide range of words should be used is to read widely and frequently and to pay attention to words as you read.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Words have both denotations and connotations, and you need to focus on both of these meanings when you choose your words.
- Specific words, such as "fork" or "spoon" instead of "silverware," and concrete words, such as a "piercing siren" instead of a "loud sound," create more interesting writing.
- Figurative language, including alliteration, analogies, hyperbole, idioms metaphors, onomatopoeia, personification, and similes, helps make text more interesting and meaningful.
- Both clichés and improperly used words detract from your writing. Reword clichés using straightforward language. Eliminate improperly used words by researching words about which you are not sure.

EXERCISES

1. Fill in the blank in this sentence with a word that carries a connotation suggesting Kelly was still full of energy after her twenty laps:

   Kelly ____ out of the pool at the end of her twenty laps.

2. Identify the general word used in this sentence and replace it with a specific word:

   I put my clothes somewhere and can't find them.

3. Identify the abstract word used in this sentence and replace it with a concrete word:

   I smelled something strong when I opened the refrigerator door.

4. Identify the cliché used in the following sentence and rewrite the sentence using straightforward language:

   We should be up and running by ten o'clock tomorrow morning.

5. Identify the misused word in the following sentence and replace it with a correct word:

   I'd rather walk then have to wait an hour for the bus.

6. Write a sentence using one of the types of figurative language presented in Section 17.3.3 "Enhancing Writing with Figurative Language".

7. Over the course of a week, record any instances of clichés or trite, overused expressions you hear in conversations with friends, coworkers, or family; in music, magazines, or newspapers; on television, film, or the Internet; or in your own language. Share your list with members of your group or the class as a whole.

17.4 Using the Dictionary and Thesaurus Effectively

> ### LEARNING OBJECTIVES
>
> 1. Understand the information available in a dictionary entry.
> 2. Understand the benefits and potential pitfalls of a thesaurus.
> 3. Use dictionaries and thesauruses as writing tools.

Dictionaries and thesauruses provide writing assistance for writers of all levels of experience and ability. Think of them as tools that will help you to do your very best writing. A dictionary can help you determine the precise denotations of words, while a thesaurus, used responsibly, can help you to capture subtle differences in the connotations of words.
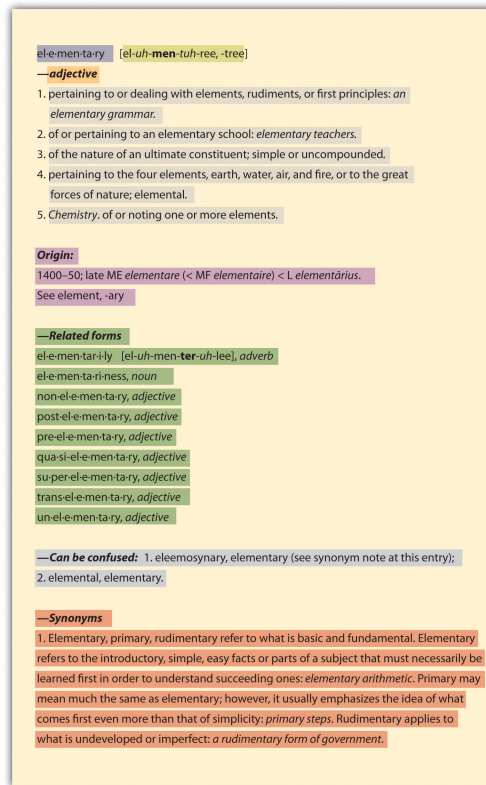
Using Dictionaries

Technology is changing the face of dictionaries. A short twenty or thirty years ago, a good graduation gift for a college-bound student was a hardcover dictionary. Today very few college students even own one because online dictionaries are so readily available. Using an online dictionary, you can look up a word in the time it takes to type it, as opposed to taking the time to flip pages and scan through a page of words in a print dictionary. On the other hand, a hard-copy dictionary is still a great backup if you're unable to get online, and it can lead to some surprising discoveries of other words on the same page, just as browsing through a shelf of library books can put you in contact with books you might not have otherwise encountered.

The important issue is that you use a dictionary of some kind and that you understand what it can provide for you. Whether you use a print or online dictionary, the entries offer a wealth of information. Figure 17.2 includes some of the most common dictionary entry components. Following the list is a color-coded entry for "elementary" (from Dictionary.com, based on the *Random House Unabridged Dictionary*) showing where various parts of the entry can be found:

Figure 17.2

- Spelling: The correct arrangements of letters for the word.
- Pronunciation: Phonetic pronunciation.
- Syllabication: Division of the word into syllables.
- Part of speech: Explanation of how a word is used within a sentence.
- Plural formation: Spelling for the plural form of a word (e.g., "babies" for the word entry "baby").
- Word origin: History of the word.
- Meaning(s): At least one, but usually more than one, explanation of the sense of a word.
- Examples in context: The word used in a phrase or sentence.
- Synonyms and antonyms: Words with similar and opposite meanings. In the case of the "elementary" entry, only synonyms (similar meanings) are given.
- Common usage situations: Specific circumstances where a word is used or misused.
- Other forms: Examples of related versions of the word.
- Alternate spellings: Some words have more than one acceptable spelling (e.g., "grey" and "gray"). The word "elementary" has no alternate spelling.

Figure 17.3

el·e·men·ta·ry   [el-*uh*-**men**-*tuh*-ree, -tree]

—*adjective*

1. pertaining to or dealing with elements, rudiments, or first principles: *an elementary grammar.*
2. of or pertaining to an elementary school: *elementary teachers.*
3. of the nature of an ultimate constituent; simple or uncompounded.
4. pertaining to the four elements, earth, water, air, and fire, or to the great forces of nature; elemental.
5. *Chemistry.* of or noting one or more elements.

Origin:

1400–50; late ME *elementare* (< MF *elementaire*) < L *elementārius.* See element, -ary

—*Related forms*

el·e·men·tar·i·ly   [el-*uh*-men-**ter**-*uh*-lee], *adverb*

el·e·men·ta·ri·ness, *noun*

non·el·e·men·ta·ry, *adjective*

post·el·e·men·ta·ry, *adjective*

pre·el·e·men·ta·ry, *adjective*

qua·si-el·e·men·ta·ry, *adjective*

su·per·el·e·men·ta·ry, *adjective*

trans·el·e·men·ta·ry, *adjective*

un·el·e·men·ta·ry, *adjective*

—*Can be confused:* 1. eleemosynary, elementary (see synonym note at this entry); 2. elemental, elementary.

—*Synonyms*

1. Elementary, primary, rudimentary refer to what is basic and fundamental. Elementary refers to the introductory, simple, easy facts or parts of a subject that must necessarily be learned first in order to understand succeeding ones: *elementary arithmetic.* Primary may mean much the same as elementary; however, it usually emphasizes the idea of what comes first even more than that of simplicity: *primary steps.* Rudimentary applies to what is undeveloped or imperfect: *a rudimentary form of government.*

Using a Thesaurus Effectively

Like dictionaries, thesauruses are available in both print and online media. And as with dictionaries, the convenience of modern technology dictates that online thesauruses are the preferred choice of most college students these days. One warning about thesauruses: they can be overused or used out of context. You might be tempted to use a "fancier" **synonym**[21] or **antonym**[22] for a word when a simple and direct approach might be best.

Whether you use an online or hard-copy thesaurus, you will encounter the following features.

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21. A word with a meaning similar to another word.

22. A word with the opposite meaning of another word.

Figure 17.4

- Identified word: The word you enter will typically be shown at the top of the page.
- Number of thesaurus entries: In online thesauruses, all entries related to your identified word will be included. Sometimes, as in the case of the fifty entries that go with the sample "walk" entry, you will have to click to subsequent pages to see all the entries.
- One whole entry: A thesaurus page has running entries (one after the other). Each entry follows the same format, so you can easily see where one entry ends and another begins.
- The identified word as the main word in an entry.
- The part of speech of the word as the word is used in the different entries. As is the case with "walk," words often can be used as more than one part of speech. "Walk" has both noun and verb entries.
- The definition of the identified word as used in each entry.
- Synonyms for each of the main words.
- Antonyms for the main word. Due to the nature of the word "walk," only one of the first seven entries shows an antonym.
- The identified word as a synonym for a related main word.

Figure 17.5 shows four color-coded entries for the word "walk" (out of fifty) at Thesaurus.com (based on *Roget's Thesaurus).*

Figure 17.5

Main Entry:	**walk**
Part of Speech:	*noun*
Definition:	brief travel on foot
Synonyms:	airing, carriage, circuit, constitutional, gait, hike, jaunt, march, pace, parade, perambulation, peregrination, promenade, ramble, saunter, schlepp, step, stretch, stride, stroll, tour, traipse, tramp, tread, turn

Main Entry:	**walk**
Part of Speech:	*noun*
Definition:	pathway
Synonyms:	aisle, alley, avenue, boardwalk, boulevard, bricks, bypath, byway, catwalk, cloister, course, court, crossing, esplanade, footpath, gangway, lane, mall, passage, path, pavement, pier, platform, promenade, road, sidewalk, street, track, trail

Main Entry:	**walk**
Part of Speech:	*noun*
Definition:	discipline
Synonyms:	area, arena, bailiwick, calling, career, course, domain, dominion, field, line, metier, profession, province, sphere, terrain, territory, trade, vocation

Main Entry:	**walk**
Part of Speech:	*verb*
Definition:	move along on foot
Synonyms:	advance, amble, ambulate, canter, escort, exercise, file, foot, go, go on foot, hike, hit the road, hoof it, knock about, lead, leg*, locomote, lumber, march, meander, pace, pad, parade, patrol, perambulate, plod, prance, promenade, race, roam, rove, run, saunter, scuff, shamble, shuffle, slog, stalk, step, stride, stroll, strut, stump, take a walk, toddle, tour, traipse, tramp, travel on foot, traverse, tread, trek, troop, trudge, wander, wend one's way
Antonyms:	run

* = informal/non-formal usage

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Dictionary entries include much information in addition to the correct spelling of the words.
- Thesauruses provide synonyms and antonyms for different parts of speech and different meanings of an identified word and for words related to the identified word.
- Dictionaries and thesauruses (when used judiciously) are helpful tools for all writers.

EXERCISES

1. Use a dictionary to answer these questions:

    a. What is the origin of the word "margin"?
    b. How many different definitions does your dictionary have for the word "best"?
    c. What, if any, related forms of the word "subject" are provided in your dictionary?
    d. What parts of speech are listed in your dictionary for "close"?
    e. What, if any, common usage situations are given in your dictionary for the word "scale"?

2. Use a thesaurus to write five versions of the following sentence that mean roughly the same thing. Change at least two words in each version:

    Hannah considered accepting a job with Bellefor Inc. but decided against it.