

AVOIDING COLLOQUIALISMS

Colloquialisms and idioms (short for idiomatic expressions) are words and phrases which are slightly informal and are not particularly useful helping a reader to understand your message. Colloquial structures have been adapted over time to lose their original purpose.

Usually, people interject several types of colloquialism into their writing without being very coherent of the problematic nature of such words, phrases, or clauses. Oftentimes, colloquialisms may be incomprehensible (especially to a non-native English speaker); moreover, the use of colloquialisms can lead to trite (overused and boring) language in a paper.

Here is a list of words, phrases, and overly colloquial structures to avoid

A bit
A bit much
Ahead of time
All along
A lot
Around the clock
At odds
Back to back
By the book
Case in point
Close call
Down the line
Draw the line
Face the music
Food for thought
In a nutshell
In so many words
In turn
Last but not least
Let alone
Loud and clear
No call for
No time to lose
Now and then
Off the chart
Off the scale
Ok (as in Okay)
On a roll
Over the top
Point of no return
Quick fix
Save time
Third degree
Turn the tables

Up in the air
Up to par
Wishful thinking
Word for word
Zero tolerance

HUMOR

One of our writers was standing next to an Engineering professor, whom he was helping to edit some classroom materials. The professor was formerly from Japan, and he was a non-native speaker. Yet, because of his exemplary knowledge in Engineering, the university invited him to lecture in the United States. As our writer was standing waiting for him to finish making a few corrections on his papers, the professor had asked students to decide on project. A young woman came up to the professor and told him her idea for the class project. Then, suddenly, she turned and headed back to the professors desk. She announced to the professor, "I just had a change of heart." The professor's face sunk immediately (and his eyes saddened). The professor told the young lady (very solemnly), "I'm so sorry. Did you spend much time at the hospital?"