

How to use words appropriately

Before you begin

What you need:

Related text: **“Seven Wonders” by Lewis Thomas**

An English dictionary (Keep your dictionary handy and use it as you try this exercise. Remember that you are allowed to bring your dictionary to the exam, so get used to looking up words.)

An English-French dictionary if appropriate

Exit With Success and *The Bare Essential Plus* (optional)

Approximate time this exercise should take you: **30 minutes**

Reminder

When writing, express yourself as precisely, accurately and concisely as possible. Writing an unnecessarily wordy sentence does not impress the graders of the exam. Also, using an esoteric or pretentious vocabulary can create awkwardness in your overall expression and writing style. The best writing is clear and succinct. Your message should be easy to follow.

Instructions

All the sentences below are wordy and overly complicated. Rewrite each sentence to eliminate the unnecessary or inappropriate words. Some words are redundant (unnecessarily repetitive), some are misused and others are clichés (words and phrases so overused that they are boring and predictable). Compare your answers to those in the **Answer key**. The answers will vary.

Exercise

Here is an example: I think it's easy as pie to see eye-to-eye with Thomas on this marvel.
(clichés)

Better: It's easy to agree with Thomas on this marvel.

1. Thomas presents his own personal ideas in the form of a list of a large number of recently discovered contemporary scientific phenomena.

2. In my opinion, I think the instances of biological phenomena that cannot be explained by evolutionary theory are few and far between.

3. Due to the fact that the children must learn language, they need the extended period of childhood.

4. Although Thomas's five initial wonders examine non-human phenomena, he finishes with a conclusion of his seventh and first which, in actual fact, focus on humanity

5. In this day and age, we must take active steps to avoid the “folly and self-destruction” that occurs when we gather as a collective unit.

6. Irregardless of what Thomas says, I personally think that human beings in large collective units are usually capable of constructive behaviour.

7. When people are prejudice against the other race, it goes without saying that they no longer think of the good of the collective but only of their own race in the group.

8. Thomas is so knowledgeable about modern science he could of probably named seven billion wonders.

9. Believe it or not, the olfactory receptor cell is suppose to send off signals to the brain but it’s “miles away out in the open air, nosing around the world.”

10. The tried-and-true benefit of the symbiotic relationship may be even greater to the mimosa tree than to the beetle.

Answer key

Note all of the changes that have been made in each sentence below. You should see revisions, particularly, in word choice and in wordiness.

1. Thomas presents his ideas in a list of recently discovered scientific phenomena.
2. In my opinion, the instances of biological phenomena that cannot be explained by evolutionary theory are few.
3. Because children must learn language, they need the extended period of childhood.
4. Although Thomas's five initial wonders examine non-human phenomena, he concludes with his seventh and first which focus on humanity.
5. We must take active steps to avoid the "folly and self-destruction" that occur when we gather as a collective unit.
6. Regardless of what Thomas says, I think that human beings in large collective units are usually capable of constructive behaviour.
7. When people are prejudiced against another race, they no longer think of the good of the collective but only of their own race.
8. Thomas is so knowledgeable about modern science that he probably could have named many more.
9. The olfactory receptor cell is supposed to send off signals to the brain but it's "miles away out in the open air, nosing around the world."
10. The benefit of the symbiotic relationship may be even greater to the mimosa tree than to the beetle.