WORDS OFTEN MISUSED

Good writing entails using the easy everyday words that your readers will understand. However, avoid overworked expressions and professional-sounding phrases that have lost their meanings through overuse or misuse. Unless you are writing for a specialized reader audience, shun technical jargon or phrases in foreign languages.

Choosing the word that conveys your meaning exactly is a talent you can cultivate. Your dictionary will be your ally. Learn to distinguish between the words whose meanings are confused through frequent misuse. Some of them are:

7.1 *Admittance* and *admission*.

Admittance means actual physical entrance. Admission means entrance, too, but it also means being admitted to the rights of entrance, as in a club. It also means the fee charged for entrance.

7.2 *Apt*, *likely*, *liable* and *subject*.

Apt suggests an inherent ability. Likely indicates possibility. Liable suggests vulnerability to something unpleasant. Subject implies being predisposed to something.

She is subject to severe headaches.

7.3 *Bar* and *ban*.

Bar means to block. Ban, to prohibit.

7.4 *Claim* and *say*.

Claim means to demand by authority. Say is the act of stating.
7.5 **Continual** and *continuous*.

Continual means steady although occasionally interrupted. Continuous means ceaseless.

7.6 **Eager** and *anxious*.

Eager means looking forward with enthusiasm. Anxious implies concern or disquiet.

7.7 **Faze** and *phase*.

Faze means to disconcert. Phase suggests a temporary state between changes, or an aspect.

7.8 **Fewer** and *less*.

Fewer refers to number. Less is used in regard to degree or cost.

7.9 **Farther** and *further*.

Farther is used with regard to distance. It means *more remote*. Further is used with regard to time, quantity or degree. It means *moreover or in addition*.

7.10 **Gibe** and *jibe*.

Gibe means to scoff. Jibe, to agree.

7.11 **Imply** and *infer*.

Imply means to suggest. Infer means to surmise or deduce.

7.12 **Intense** and *intensive*.

Intense means extreme. Intensive means concentrated or thorough.

7.13 **Majority** and *plurality*.

A majority indicates that the winner received more than half the votes cast. Plurality means the winner received more votes than any other candidate.
7.14 *Over* and *more than*.

Over should be used in the sense of beyond and above.
More than should be used when reporting numbers.

7.15 *Persons* and *people*.

Persons refers to individuals in small groups.
People implies human beings in masses.

> Seven persons were present.
> He represents the Italian people.

7.16 *Sculpture* and *sculptor*.

Sculpture is the art of carving, molding or hewing ornamental objects from materials such as wood, stone or metal.
A sculptor is the artist who practices the art of sculpture.

7.17 *Secure* and *obtain*.

Secure means to make safe or to fasten.
Obtain means to gain possession of.

7.18 Note that—

- Bills are passed.
- Treaties are ratified.
- Resolutions, constitutions, by-laws and amendments are adopted.
- Laws are enacted.

7.19 Use the terms—postmaster, author, aviator, conductor, director, poet—for both men and women.

7.20 Write *onward, toward, forward, backward, in regard*, instead of onwards, towards, forwards, backwards, in regards.

7.21 Use the term *feature* only when you mean a special attraction or to give particular prominence to an act, event or person. Not all the acts or persons on a program are featured.

7.22 Say that a person is a *member of* an organization. He does not *belong to* it.

7.23 Say *last few weeks* instead of *past few weeks*. 
7.24 Use the term *enlisted man, soldier* or *sailor* as the case may be. The terms *soldier boy* or *sailor boy* suggest children playing war games.

7.25 Avoid such terms as *very, interesting, the following, the preceding, the above mentioned, below, the foregoing*. 