

'93 Banished

The following words and phrases are BANISHED and included in toto and en masse on the All-Time Dishonor List of Words Banished from the Queen's English for Mis-Use, Over-Use, or General Uselessness.

"Basically, we've got to break this gridlock and empower the world-class American people right down to the grass-roots level, not by means of in-your-face color commentators, not by the downizing of safe havens, but through the growing of conventional wisdom and team chemistry. "On the whole, we'll have a win-win situation with proactive, happy campers bonding with their associates, rather than the proliferation of victimless crime." So summarizes Professor Justin Agony, who is recovering from "open-heart surgery after a close brush with an armed gunman, who went ballistic with a high-powered rifle."

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As we speak: "As with 'at this point in time,' just say 'now.'"
—Mitchell Rukavina
Kenosha, Wisconsin

Definite possibilities: "Official ambiguity, often heard at meetings of 'educated' people."
—Joan Sieffert Rose
Grosse Pointe, Michigan

Simply put: "This bullying cant epitomizes the obnoxious pretensions of the late 1980s. The speaker uses it only to separate himself, with his knowledge of complex matters (probably the law and the stock market) from the listener, poor schnook, who has to be spoon-fed these secrets as a denatured pabulum, which the wise-and-sophisticated speaker spreads before him. **Simply stated and quite simply** belong with this one."
—Bryce Butler
Altamont, New York

Bonding: "Sharing, relating to another. We used to call this friendship."
—Carol Smith
Fairbanks, Alaska

Incidences: "This word, meaning 'rate of occurrence,' is rarely made plural. Two or more happenings are incidents."
—Margaret de Chant
Newberry, Michigan

Ongoing: "I have been perusing a copy of Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*, Macmillan. This publication has been revised periodically since 1935, so I am not sure just when this 'word' incurred the wrath of E.B. White, but it may have been 1957. We hear this word used constantly on CBC Radio, but the ultimate came a few weeks ago when a woman, on CBC, converted it to an adverb: **ongoingly!** Ongoing is much over-used and mis-used. (This one was banished in 1987, but, obviously, needs it again.)"
—Brian Jarvis
Toronto, Ontario

Jackpotunity: Used to promote a sweepstakes event from an outfit that lists its address as "1 Jackpot Plaza." (Editors' Note: We think it would be acceptable if used to describe a recipe that combines jack cheese with tuna, using a crockpot.)
—Dr. H. Erik Shaar
President, Minot State University
Minot, North Dakota

In your face: find something new.
—Anton Miller
Knoxville, Tennessee

MOST-NOMINATED /OVER-USED
Got: "Maybe we have to get the country moving again, but we haven't **got** to do anything. Get, got, gotten are mostly irritating, over-used, unnecessary participles. Banish them." "We (have?) **got** to be going. They **got** to help us out. **Gotta** go now. We **gotta** get out of this place." "If one 'gets' something, one then 'has' it. 'Got' is redundant. It is the most over-used word in the language."
—Wayne Podeshorst
Mentor, Ohio

Basically: "When a person begins a sentence with this word, it indicates that he/she is not certain what he/she thinks, believes or says, and 'basically' avoids offending the listener."
—Naomi D. Spiro
Willoughby, Ohio

Apostrophe
So many people have complained about the 1992 banishment of the apostrophe because "no one knows how to use one," that we have restored it in 1993, with the sincerest hope that everyone will learn how to use it. After all, as complainant Rosalie Gordon of Vancouver, British Columbia put it: "Toms car, Marys house and LSSUs banished list aren't correct either." The apostrophe is a possessive code mark. It denotes ownership, or at least possession. Use it properly. Don't throw it in on a whim or use it to make a plural.

Victimless crime: "Ridiculous. All crimes have victims. Corporations, individuals, businesses, organizations, countries. Someone pays."
—Victoria Fox, LSSU Student
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

Open-heart surgery: "Close off open-heart surgery and take this straight from the heart."
—Ben Szczeony
Muskegon, Michigan

Not as in:
"'He's a marvelous speaker. Not.'"
"This is a nonspecific negative. It's poor usage and sounds stupid." (Editors' note: *Banished to Wayne's World - the basement.*)
—Donna Gayon
Perry, Michigan

Happy camper: "People who use this tired cliché should be required to reside for a weekend in a campground under the following conditions: rain, hordes of children, black flies, mosquitoes, raccoons, bears, drunken neighbors. It may be sarcasm, but it's old."
—Paul Moran
Marquette, Michigan

Awoken/woken: "The Bellflower couple was awoken by a fire/had just woken up...Try the proper 'awakened.'"
—H.L. Greinke
Bloomington, Illinois

GRAMMAR RAMMERS
"That for who, as in 'We would like to thank all of those friends and relatives that helped us through our recent loss.' When I went to school in the 1930s, I was taught that nouns (friends, relatives) should be referred to or followed by personal pronouns, namely 'who' or 'which' (not 'that')."
—Nell Gaball
Marquette, Michigan

Singular antecedents call for singular pronouns:
Michelle Mooney, Los Angeles, California, sent 45 examples of newspapers, magazines and other publications using plural pronouns with singular antecedents. The proper rule of grammar should be taught to elementary school students (it used to be taught to most grammar school students).
"While the studio audience makes their selection..."
"Everyone stayed in their seat..."
"Someone has to stick their chin out..."
"Everyone deals with grief in their own way..."
Michelle thinks that plural pronouns took over when writers and speakers became fearful of being labelled 'sexist' for using the singular pronoun 'his,' which has been grammatically correct. Rather than write "Everyone stayed in 'HIS' seat," it became "THEIR seat." We think that teaching grammar is difficult and learning grammar is both difficult and 'boring.' Hence, we have a lot of uneducated people writing and speaking in America, and the world, today. Where's the sexism in knowing that it's: "While the studio audience makes ITS selection?"

Team chemistry:
"Over-used by coaches, players, owners, broadcasters, writers."
(Editors' Note: What chemicals are these folks mixing, and how? Could it be group gas?)
—John P. Trevaskis, III
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

Color commentator:
"Used to describe the ex-athlete compatriot of the play-by-play announcer. What color are these commentators? Do they analyze the color selection of the teams' uniforms? Once these people begin a sports broadcasting career, they are sports announcers (more or less)."
—Karen Gooze
Westland, Michigan

Went ballistic: "This is 'hip' talk. It's irritating. It appears in tabloids and on graphic television programs. Whatever happened to 'went berserk?'"
—Connie Plant
Decatur, Georgia

BUREAUCRAP
Proactive: "This is bureaucratise (bureaucrap, Rick) for diligent, assertive, aggressive, responsive. It is a feeble substitute, a giant buzzword."
—Rick Harris, J.D.
Montgomery, Alabama

Downsizing: "A \$5.00 word for massive lay-offs and firings. In an attempt to euphemize permanent lay-offs or firings, we lost sight of the 'human side' of the term, the employees."
—Hubert A. Bailey
Grayslake, Illinois

Associates: "Empty product of PR campaigns to boost morale of those who had been known previously as 'employees.' It's a way to trick those who haven't had a pay raise into thinking they've gained something." (Editors' Note: In higher education, the word "colleague" is used to upgrade "employee.")
—Jan Shoemaker
Lansing, Michigan

SPORTS TALK
Pure freshman:
A real student who is also an athlete.

Red-shirt freshman:
A real athlete who is also in college. He or she is either academically ineligible or the team doesn't need him/her this season. Doesn't really wear a red shirt.

Fifth-year senior:
Red-shirt freshman four years later.

Academically ineligible:
Red-shirt freshman still a freshman one year later, not playing yet.

Progressing toward a degree:
Part-time student. Full-time athlete. May or may not graduate. Odds not good.
—John T. Brown
Mansfield, Ohio

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Like to: As in "I would like to thank my father for being such a terrific role model." Or "I would like to speak to you about poor speaking habits. If you'd 'like to,' then DO it. Say what you mean, and drop the 'like to' bit."
—Jon Rosenberger
Toledo, Ohio

POLITICAL PURPORTING
Win-win: "Lose-lose it."
—Bob Norris
Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Empower: "This word and its cousin 'Empowerment' are the most useless buzzwords of 1992."
—Robert A. Jenkins
Buies Creek, North Carolina

World class: "As in Ross Perot's world-class daughters. New class, no class. Give the gas to world class."
—KFYI Talk Radio
Phoenix, Arizona

Gridlock: "There's a grid, grid bias, grid current and gridleak; griddle, griddlecake, gridiron, a deadlock and interlock, but NO gridlock in any of my five dictionaries. It 'made' the 1992 American Heritage Dictionary and 'means' 'lack of involvement,' which is what 'deadlock' means! Quit inventing words when perfectly acceptable words already exist."
—G. N. Constable
Mansfield, Ohio

Grass roots: "Over-used for 'common man or woman voter,' whom every politician seeking election claims for his or her own. A grass-roots voter is one back in the home constituency who can and will carry the election for a candidate. But it's every candidate's claim that he/she has grass-roots support. Cut the grass roots. We don't want to hear it."
—Muriel S. Paule
San Rafael, California

REDUNDANCIES
Armed gunman, high-powered rifle
—Bill Eichstaedt
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Completely empty
—John & Judith Rosevear
Milford, Michigan

Co-conspirator
—Trudie Mason
Montreal, Quebec

Safe haven
—John Demoss
FPO AE 09645

Trained professional, Most complete
—Joan Sieffert Rose
Grosse Pointe, Michigan

OXYMORON
Conventional wisdom:
"If it is customary, approval by general usage, it may not be wise. Can wise people be unconventional? Don't confuse with political conventions; not much wisdom there."
—Carol Smith
Fairbanks, Alaska

Nominations for the 1994 Banished list will be accepted anytime. Open season is Nov. 1 to Dec. 1, 1993. Send nominations to: Banished Lake Superior State University Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan 49783