# excellence in written expression

## FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS

SAMPLE

by Peter Howard

PHOENIX EDUCATION

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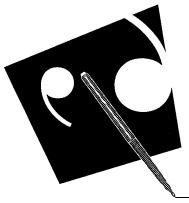
SAMPLE

# Using other words besides 'big' and 'small'



1

**Look for words that express your meaning precisely.**
**Select an appropriate word from the box to replace 'big' and 'small'.**

| *inflated* | *swollen* | *bulging* | *never-ending* | *lengthy* | *colossal* | *spacious* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

1 To cast over the reef into deep water, Dad needed a big _____ fishing rod.
2 During the housing shortage, people were prepared to pay big _____ prices.
3 The visiting pop star was housed in a big _____ suite in the hotel.
4 It looked as if I had a dose of mumps as my neck glands were big _____ .
5 The pyramids are big _____ tombs for ancient Egyptian royalty.
6 The opposing boxer stood there flexing his big _____ muscles.
7 Several people began whispering to each other during his big _____ speech.

| *brief* | *diminutive* | *insignificant* | *petty* | *limited* | *paltry* | *miniature* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

8 She insisted on telling me all about her small _____ troubles.
9 The doll's house came complete with small _____ furniture.
10 Only a small _____ number of seats were available for the visiting football fans.
11 After working hard for eight hours, I was paid only a small _____ amount.
12 A small _____ shower interrupted play for only five minutes.
13 A five-cent coin is too small _____ in value to pick up if you drop it.
14 In Tibet we stayed in a hotel with no shower and only a small _____ wash basin.

| *commodious* | *liberal* | *bloated* | *stout* | *gigantic* | *grand* | *ponderous* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

15 The wealthy stockbroker lived in a big _____ house on the waterfront.
16 The man seen driving off in the stolen car was short and big _____.
17 The dead bull had become big _____ after lying two days in the paddock.
18 Tyrannosaurus was a big _____ dinosaur with limited mobility.
19 A Rolls Royce is big _____ as well as powerful.
20 We were swamped by a big _____ wave and all ended up in the ocean.
21 She spread a big _____ amount of butter on her toast.

SAMPLE

# 2 Varying sentence beginnings 1

**The easiest way to begin a sentence is to start with the subject. However, to continue in this form would make monotonous reading. Sentences should not only be varied in length but also in word order.**
**Seven of the sentences below begin with the subject. Make the suggested changes.**
**The result will be a paragraph without monotony of style.**

1 Joseph Hansom was born in 1803 and became an architect. [Write this sentence as it stands.]

2 He was not involved with any famous buildings although he is famous.
[Begin with the conjunction. Use a comma.]

3 Vehicles in London at the time were horse-drawn. [Begin with the preposition. Use a comma.]

4 The main one in use had wheels as high as the vehicle itself. [Write this sentence as it stands.]

5 Joseph Hansom accepted the challenge and designed a far better model.
[Change the first verb into a present participle. Leave out 'and' and use a comma.]

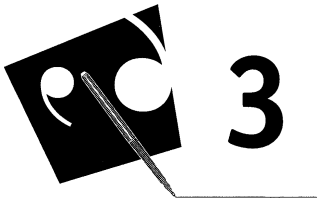
6 So the 'hansom' cab was born. [Write this sentence as it stands.]

7 The cab was a familiar sight in London for many years until motorised taxis appeared.
[Begin with the word 'for'.]

8 The hansom cab is now only seen in old films set in the 19th century or in museums.
[Begin with the adverb. Use a comma.]

SAMPLE

# Using words to describe feelings



**3**

**Choose an appropriate word from the box to complete each sentence.**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *elated* | *embarrassed* | *petrified* | *exhausted* |
| *crestfallen* | *astounded* | *sober* | *wistful* |

1 She came home _____ after failing the examination.
2 Her thoughts were _____ as she remembered the happy days.
3 Although the man had several drinks, he thought he was still _____.
4 Dad was _____to hear his football team had won.
5 The man's ability to multiply in his head completely _____ me.
6 I felt _____ when my mother discussed my bad habits in front of other people.
7 We were all _____ when we saw what appeared to be a ghost.
8 Towards the end of the marathon you could see he was _____.

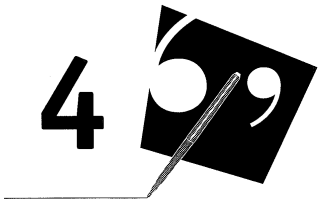
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *sulky* | *nostalgic* | *solemn* | *affectionate* |
| *tense* | *drowsy* | *inquisitive* | *composed* |

9 I was not nervous during the exam, but felt quite _____ .
10 Having had no sleep that night, I felt _____ at school.
11 Before the match I felt _____, but this feeling soon went away.
12 One bird that visits us is _____ and loves watching us play.
13 The priest had a _____ look as he announced the sad news.
14 Because she was left out of the team, Mary was in a _____ mood.
15 My new puppy knows me well and is very _____ towards me.
16 When listening to that old tune I feel quite _____.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *languid* | *compassionate* | *hostile* | *hilarious* |
| *cheeky* | *haughty* | *peckish* | *preoccupied* |

17 The humid climate in Singapore made me feel _____.
18 About midday I felt _____ as I had only a cup of tea at breakfast time.
19 Cockatoos are _____ birds and often seem to be laughing at us.
20 I tried to attract her attention but she was _____ .
21 The whole cast acted well, and we laughed at the _____ dialogue.
22 People who work for the RSPCA must be _____ towards animals.
23 A person who is arrogantly proud is _____ .
24 The opposing supporters were _____ and challenged us to fight.

SAMPLE



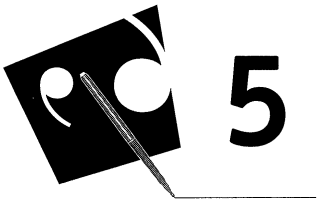
# Choosing the more effective word 1

**Choose from the words in brackets the alternative that you think is the more effective. (Think about the short word versus the long word, the simple versus the less simple, the specific versus the general, and the less formal versus the more formal.)**

1 We live [adjacent, next] _____ to the golf course so lots of balls end up in our garden.
2 The students need to [explain, elucidate] _____ how they want the project to work.
3 After delaying for weeks, Sue [ultimately, finally] _____ decided to buy a house.
4 I need to [gain, attain] _____a better understanding of this subject.
5 The shop assistant asked the [client, customer] _____ what they wanted.
6 Marty really liked the [concept, idea] _____ of going camping in the holidays.
7 Derek asked a question [about, concerning] _____ the end-of-year exam.
8 These simple preludes [are, constitute] _____ an excellent introduction to the composer's work.
9 The new city [edifice, building] _____ will be set back from the river.
10 We need to [eliminate, get rid of] _____ our negative feelings.
11 The junk mail that [emanates, comes from] _____ the local traders can be very irritating.
12 It is [highly, eminently] _____ desirable that you spend at least two hours a night doing homework.
13 I [endeavor, try] _____ to do two hours of homework each night.
14 When they create something, most people [feel, experience] _____ great satisfaction.
15 You should always stretch carefully [prior to, before] _____ any vigorous exercise.
16 In order to [facilitate, help] _____ plant growth, you could use one of the many available plant foods.
17 [Following, after] _____ a preliminary interview, the candidates were given a simple task to perform.
18 You will remember this moment many years [hence, from now] _____ .
19 Please find [enclosed, enclosed herewith] _____ a copy of my latest novel.
20 The new course covered subjects that had [until now, hitherto] _____ been neglected.
21 It took two years to [implement, carry out] _____ the plans for the new sports complex.
22 [Individuals, people] _____ who drop litter show a disrespect for the environment.
23 To be liked is an/a [inherent, basic] _____ need of human beings.
24 [Initially, at first] _____ Kara found the flute a difficult instrument to play.

SAMPLE

# Using commas




**If a clause or phrase merely adds something extra to the main part of the sentence, then it is set off with commas. If the clause or phrase is essential to the whole meaning, then no commas are used.**
**Commas are also used to separate adjectives and items in a list, between independent clauses, to set off an introductory phrase or clause and before the name of a person spoken to.**

**Put in any commas that are needed in the following sentences. Three of the sentences need no comma.**

1 Mr Tang Uan who came from Vietnam is running a hot-bread shop.
2 People who visit Australia are pleasantly surprised.
3 This is the bicycle that I was given for Christmas.
4 I may go with my parents to Queensland or I may stay here by myself.
5 We saw wombats kangaroos galahs and some small rock wallabies.
6 Racing to catch the train Dad tripped and sprained his ankle.
7 She bought a number of coloured pencils but she did not think they were of good quality.
8 The racquet my Dad first bought me was one I remember well.
9 May I have some more cake please?'
10 'No I am not going go surfing with you and you know why.'
11 Buffeted by the wind our television aerial is facing the wrong way.
12 'Please Angela you be careful whom you meet at the party.'
13 'It is time you helped clean up after dinner' remarked Steven.
14 Most accidents especially head-on collisions on highways are caused by driver fatigue.

**Now add one or two commas to each sentence, to make it sound sensible.**

15 It hasn't rained yet the grass is wet.
16 'I want to shower Dad before I go to the dance.'
17 'Should we start painting Mrs Jones?'
18 After eating our dog has a nap.
19 When we baked Alex we forgot to add the herbs.
20 She wrote to say she would stay with us as we were leaving.
21 When the man slipped down the ladder broke.
22 The cat will drink when it wants to not before.

SAMPLE

# Answers

## 1 Using other words besides 'big', and 'small'

**1** lengthy **2** inflated **3** spacious **4** swollen **5** colossal **6** bulging **7** never-ending **8** petty **9** miniature **10** limited **11** paltry **12** brief **13** insignificant **14** diminutive **15** grand **16** stout **17** bloated **18** ponderous **19** commodious **20** gigantic **21** liberal

## 2 Varying sentence beginnings 1

**2** Although he is famous, he was not involved in any famous buildings. **3** At the time, vehicles in London were horse drawn. **5** Accepting the challenge, he designed a far better model. **7** For many years the cab was a familiar sight in London until the motorised taxis appeared. **8** Now the hansom cab is only seen in old films set in the 19th century, or in museums.

## 3 Using words to describe feelings

**1** crestfallen **2** wistful **3** sober **4** elated **5** astounded **6** embarrassed **7** petrified **8** exhausted **9** composed **10** drowsy **11** tense **12** inquisitive **13** solemn **14** sulky **15** affectionate **16** nostalgic **17** languid **18** peckish **19** cheeky **20** preoccupied **21** hilarious **22** compassionate **23** haughty **24** hostile

## 4 Choosing the more effective word 1

**1** next **2** explain **3** finally **4** gain **5** customer **6** idea **7** about **8** are **9** building **10** get rid of **11** comes from **12** highly **13** try **14** feel **15** before **16** help **17** after **18** from now **19** enclosed **20** until now **21** carry out **22** people **23** basic **24** at first

## 5 Using commas

**1** Uan, Vietnam, **2** none **3** none **4** Queensland, **5** wombats, kangaroos, galahs, **6** train, **7** pencils, **8** none **9** cake, **10** No, you, **11** wind, **12** Please, Angela, **13** dinner, **14** accidents, highways, **15** rained, **16** shower, Dad, **17** painting, **18** eating, **19** baked, Alex, **20** wrote, us, **21** down, **22** to,

## 6 A job application

Parent or teacher to correct

## 7 Developing an opening paragraph 1

Parent or teacher to correct

## 8 Using better words than 'go'

**1** attempt **2** withdraw **3** disperse **4** circumnavigate **5** ascend **6** precede **7** penetrate **8** recede **9** pursue **10** negotiate **11** divert **12** emigrate **13** revise **14** proceed **15** submerge **16** enlist **17** descend **18** reverse

## 9 Proofreading a sample essay 1

counsellors foreign nuisance numerous conceited Pharaoh endurance desperately papyrus brought

## 10 Using a variety of colour words

**1** blue **2** orange **3** yellow **4** green **5** light brown **6** black **7** purple **8** grey **9** brown **10** yellow **11** red **12** orange **13** green **14** blue **15** grey **16** purple **17** yellow **18** red

## 11 Correcting faulty sentences

**1** I can hardly ... **2** Unless it rains ... **3** ... is my favourite ... **4** ... held up the bank ... **5** ... herd was ... **6** I could have ... **7** ... class you should ... **8** ... wants to be in ... **9** hanged [not hung] **10** ... try to open ... **11** omit 'a' **12** motorists [or people] drive .... **13** her [not their] **14** ... choir sang loudly ... **15** ... never expected ...

## 12 Using capital letters

**1** Fiona Tasmania **2** Father **3** French **4** Earth Sun [optional] **5** Australia Greece **6** Uncle **7** Italian **8** Friday **9** none **10** Doctor Newton **11** Hunter Valley High School **12** Churchillian God **13** Buddhist **14** English **15** Battle Coral Sea **16** Northpac Bank **17** South Pole **18** none **19** Democrats **20** none **21** Blue Rose Cafe Sundays **22** Ministry Defence **23** Spitfire Second World War **24** Easter

## 13 Choosing the more effective word 2

**1** instantly **2** set up **3** death **4** Now **5** most **6** most **7** tell **8** now **9** many **10** aim **11** trying **12** choose **13** key **14** best **15** whole **16** happens **17** have **18** risk **19** about **20** read **21** part **22** mainly **23** harm **24** Earlier

## 14 Using colour words

**1** red **2** golden **3** blue **4** green **5** yellow **6** pink **7** blue **8** purple **9** red **10** golden **11** green **12** black **13** red **14** purple **15** blue **16** white **17** black **18** grey

## 15 Using words to link sentences 1

**1** ; by a strange coincidence, **2** ; however, **3** ; despite this, **4** ; in addition, **5** ; as a result, **6** ; in the same way, **7** ; by contrast, **8** ; in this instance,

## 16 Choosing the more effective word 3

**1** Most **2** soon **3** rash **4** building **5** before **6** main **7** investigation **8** if **9** skill **10** near **11** buy **12** follow **13** about **14** about **15** needed **16** live **17** home **18** show **19** later **20** large **21** enough **22** After **23** guess **24** end

## 17 Check your apostrophes

**1** the girl's hat **2** the two girls' blouses **3** James's coat **4** two foxes' tails **5** a duchess's tiara **6** a hippopotamus's foot **7** the princesses's jewels **8** My friend Ian finds that Smith Brothers' suits are the smartest. **9** This was the Balmain Tigers' most important win. **10** You'll not regret knowing that the Mississippi has four s's. **11** All the team's raincoats were left in the men's room.

## 18 Check your hyphens

**1** poker-faced quick-thinking twenty-one **2** ex-Prime bull-necked **3** twenty-third U-boat Circle: 5, 10, 13, 14 and 15

## 19 Using a single word 1

**1** automatically **2** cowardice **3** bullion **4** verdict **5** trespassing **6** impregnable **7** meanders **8** debtor **9** extensive **10** vacated **11** eroded **12** amnesia **13** postponed **14** airworthy **15** agriculture **16** synonym **17** contaminated **18** disembarked **19** conspicuous **20** remorse **21** armistice **22** insomnia **23** fratricide **24** verbosity

## 20 Using other words besides 'said'

**1** observed **2** instructed **3** snarled **4** concluded **5** recalled **6** sneered **7** confided **8** corrected **9** taunted **10** translated **11** consented **12** informed **13** suggested **14** objected **15** disputed **16** queried **17** shrieked **18** entreated **19** proclaimed **20** assured **21** acknowledged

## 21 Words easily confused 1

**1** placebo **2** morale **3** gaffe **4** prophesy **5** testimony **6** gamut **7** sewerage **8** deficient **9** voluble **10** prodigy **11** practice **12** peaceful **13** official **14** negligent **15** appreciative **16** heredity **17** detracted **18** effect **19** incite **20** curb **21** hues **22** cited **23** lax **24** poll **25** rote **26** steppe

## 22 Maintaining the same tense

**1** lost **2** feels **3** disobeyed **4** have written / write **5** had listened **6** have finished **7** are **8** hit **9** would have won **10** be **11** see **12** have been finished

## 23 Choosing the more effective word 4

**1** many **2** lacked **3** count **4** think **5** sum up **6** soon **7** promptly **8** until **9** help **10** now **11** near **12** because **13** agrees **14** about **15** after **16** soon **17** told **18** find out **19** by **20** fair

## 24 Identifying euphemisms

**1** funeral director: undertaker **2** having a weight problem: overweight **3** passed away: died **4** downsize: sack **5** pay a call of nature: urinate **6** hair loss: bald **7** rest room: toilet **8** in the all together: naked **9** lose his lunch: vomit **10** sales consultant: shop assistant **11** economically disadvantaged: poor **12** given early retirement: dismissed **13** in the family way: pregnant **14** under the weather: drunk **15** blew the whistle: informed **16** little light fingered: thief **17** friendly fire: their own side **18** hard of hearing: deaf **19** corrective centre: prison **20** lacking in moral fibre: cowardly **21** fiddling the books: embezzlement

## 25 Using better adjectives 1

**1** durable **2** diabolical **3** meticulous **4** genuine **5** placid **6** nocturnal **7** frigid **8** potent **9** tainted **10** premier **11** harmonious **12** pallid **13** intense **14** negligent **15** astute **16** elated **17** vigorous **18** defective **19** insolent **20** incompetent **21** obscure **22** bland **23** strident **24** antique

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