

## 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?"