

## Strengthen Your Writing with Strong Verbs: Your “Synonym Tool”

*\*\*Scroll to bottom of document to view examples of “weak verbs.” Think about replacing those weak verbs with strong verbs that appear on this list.*

### A

Accelerated, achieve, acquired, activated, adapted, added, adjusted, adopted, advanced, advertised, advised, aided, allocated, altered, analyzed, answered, anticipated, applied, appointed, approved, arranged, assessed, assigned, attained, attracted, authored, authorized

### B

Balanced, bargained, bought, broadened, built

### C

Calculated, centralized, chaired, championed, changed, charted, chose, clarified, cleared, closed, collaborated, collected, combined, compared, compiled, completed, composed, conceptualized, concluded, condensed, conducted, consolidated, constructed, consulted, contracted, contributed, controlled, converted, convinced, coordinated, corrected, created, critiqued, cultivated

### D

Decentralized, decreased, defined, delegated, demonstrated, designed, determined, demonstrated, designed, determined, developed, devised, directed, disclosed, discovered, distributed, documented, doubled, drafted

### E

Earned, edited, eliminated, emphasized, employed, enabled, encouraged, enforced, engaged, engineered, enhanced, enlarged, enlisted, established, evaluated, examined, exchanged, expanded, expedited, explained, exposed, extended, extracted

### F

Facilitated, featured, financed, focused, forecasted, formalized, formed, founded, furnished

### G

Gained, gathered, granted, guided

# H

Handled, headed, hired, hosted

# I

Identified, implemented, implemented, indicated, improved, increased, influenced, informed, initiated, inspected, installed, instigated, instituted, instructed, integrated, interpreted, interviewed, introduced, invented, invested, investigated, invited, isolated, issued

# J

Joined, judged

# L

Launched, lectured, led, located

# M

Maintained, managed, marketed, maximized, measured, mediated, mentored, merged, met, minimized, modernized, modified, monitored, motivated, multiplied

# N

Negotiated, nurtured, neglected

# O

Obtained, offered, opened, operated, orchestrated, ordered, organized, outlined, overhauled, oversaw

# P

Paid, perfected, performed, persuaded, pioneered, placed, planned, positioned, prepared, presented, presided, prevented, priced, prioritized, processed, procured, produced, programmed, projected, promised, promoted, proposed, proved, publicized, published, purchased, pursued

# Q

Qualified, quantified, quoted

## R

Raised, rated, recommended, reconciled, recorded, recovered, recruited, rectified, redesigned, reduced, refined, regained, regulated, reinforced, rejected, remedied, remodeled, renewed, reorganized, repaired, replaced, reported, represented, requested, researched, resolved, restored, restructured, revamped, revealed, reversed, reviewed, revised, revitalized, rewarded

## S

Saved, scheduled, screened, secured, selected, sent, separated, served, set, shaped, shortened, simplified, sold, solved, spearheaded, specified, spoke, spurred, stabilized, staffed, stimulated, streamlined, strengthened, stressed, structured, studied, submitted, suggested, summarized, supervised, supplied, supported, surpassed, surveyed, synchronized, synthesized

## T

Tailored, targeted, taught, terminated, tested, trained, transferred, translated, transmitted, traveled, tripled

## U

United, updated, upgraded, utilized

## V

Validated, verified, viewed, vitalized

## W

Widened, witnessed, won, wrote

# [Replace] Weak Verbs

Weak verbs don't show action. There are 4 types of weak verb expressions:

## 1. "State of being" verbs are considered weak.

- These include: **is, are, was, were, has, have, had, will be, have been, has been, had been, could have been, should have been, would have been**
- Substitute these words with an action word (see above)

Weak: Jamie **is** taking a class on Tuesday evenings.

Strong: Jamie **takes** a class on Tuesday evenings.

## 2. Vague expressions

- Vague expressions often plague sentences, especially when we start sentences with one of these:
- It is / It was / It will be
- There is / There are
- There was / There were
- There will be / There could be
- Ask yourself, "what is, where is, where will be, etc." Your answer to this question is what you should lead with.

Weak/Vague: **It is** true that Jimmy wishes he could play the xylophone. (What is true?)

Strong: Jimmy **wishes** he could play the xylophone.

## 3. The infinitive "To be" (an infinitive is "to" plus the simple form of a verb)

- When unnecessary to the meaning, remove it from the sentence.

Weak: After a little practice, many students find writing **to be** fun.

Strong: After a little practice, many students find writing fun.

## 4. Adjective Clauses

- Verb phrases beginning with "who," "which," or "that."
- These verb expressions make your writing too wordy.
- They can usually just be eliminated from the sentence.

Weak: Students **who are in my class** should prepare for tomorrow's presentation.

Strong: Students **in my class** should prepare for tomorrow's presentation.