

VOGUE WORDS

What appears below is a list of words that could be classified as ‘vogue’ words, i.e. they are much used, indeed over-used. While many speakers or writers remain vague about the meaning of these words, they are mesmerised (or, at the least, attracted) by the ‘importance’ they seem to suggest.

The list is divided into two parts. In the first an alternative, and ordinary, meaning is given, and you are asked to decide when the ‘grander’ word seems more suitable, and when it is more honest to use the simple and direct word. In the second part of the list you are asked to supply the meaning or the alternative word(s) yourself.

PART I

When would you choose the word in Column 1 in preference to that (or those) in Column 2? (You will probably have to supply a context for each word, in order to illustrate your meaning):

<i>Column 1</i>	<i>Column 2</i>
Viable	Workable
Finalize	Complete
Escalate	Speed up/accelerate
Detente	Agreement/understanding
Dialogue	Exchange/discussion
Rationalize	Reason/explain the logic of ...
Communicate	Tell
Expedite	Hasten
Consensus	Agreement

PART II

Are there better/simpler words for those listed below? Are they necessary (and explicit) in certain contexts? Examples should again be provided.

Commerce

Infrastructure

Expertise

Media

Motivate

Hedge (against inflation)

Orient(ed) (e.g. 'institution-oriented')

Target (e.g. 'target group', 'target market')

Phase out

Politics

Grass roots

Watershed

Profile

Basis

Stance

Normalize (relations)

Literary criticism

Central

Affirmation

Meaningful

General

Life style

Charisma

Boutique (e.g. 'sandwich boutique'; 'Meat boutique')

Any other additions to our collection of 'vogue words' will be welcome.

D.R.B.