

## **Colloquialisms and Slang Expressions**

### **APSU Writing Center Handout**

Academic writing requires a formal and professional tone. To maintain clarity and credibility, students should avoid slang, colloquialism, and clichés.

#### **Slang**

Slang consists of informal words and expressions that are common in casual conversation but inappropriate in academic writing. These phrases often change over time and may not be universally understood.

Avoid using casual or non-standard words and contractions: (wanna, gonna, y'all, till, I'm blue, etc.)

#### **Examples & Formal Alternatives:**

Bounce ideas → Exchange thoughts or brainstorm

Level up → Improve skills or status

Low-key → Somewhat or subtly

#### **Colloquialisms**

Colloquial language reflects everyday speech and informal expressions. In academic writing, it is important to maintain a more analytical and professional tone.

Dictionaries often display colloquial words and phrases with the abbreviation *colloq.* as an identifier.

Avoid conversational expressions and contractions: (frankly, got, can't, don't)

### **Examples & Formal Alternatives:**

"Let's wrap this up." → Conclude the discussion.

"That checks out." → That is verified or logical sound.

"Pulling an all-nighter." → Staying up all night to study or work.

"Hit the books." → Study diligently.

### **Clichés**

Clichés are overused phrases that weaken the impact of writing by making it feel generic rather than insightful.

### **Examples & Formal Alternatives:**

"Think outside the box." → Consider unconventional solutions.

"Actions speak louder than words." → Demonstrated behavior is more meaningful than promises.

"At the end of the day." → Ultimately or in conclusion.

"Only time will tell." → The results will become clear over time.

"Don't judge a book by its cover." → Assess based on substance, not appearance.

## References

CLU Writing Center. (2015, August). *Colloquialisms and cliches* [PDF].

<https://cluwritingcenter.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/colloquialisms-and-cliches.pdf>

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