**Avoid these common mistakes and “Chinglish” weaknesses!**

The word “**~~nowadays~~**” is too informal. Use “**currently**” instead and you’ll sound more scientific.

“**~~How to make it?~~**” is bad style. “**How To Make It**” as a title (not a sentence) is OK. As a sentence, use “**How can we make it?**” or “**How can it be made?**”.

Avoid saying “**~~As we all know~~**…”. If we do all know it, why say it? If we don’t all know it, you’re wrong or you’re saying we are stupid for not knowing it. Simply delete “~~as we all know~~”.

Avoid saying “our country” or “our government” when you are speaking to an international audience. If you mean China, then say “China”; your country may not be my country.

**synthesis** (is a noun, sometimes used as an adjective) / **syntheses** (plural noun) / **synthesize** (is a verb, British spelling “synthesise”)

* ~~We use this to synthesis the compound.~~
* We use this to synthesize the compound.
* We use this to synthesise the compound. (British English spelling)
* The synthesis was done in three steps.
* We found a new synthesis method. (Here the noun is used as an adjective.)
* Note: “Synthetic” means artificially made, not natural. (“~~Synthetic method~~” refers to a philosophical concept, not a “method of synthesis”)

**analysis** (is a noun) / **analyses** (plural noun analyses, or British spelling as in “He analyses it.”) / **analyze** (is a verb, British spelling “**analyse**”)

**molecule** (is a noun, emphasis on the **first** syllable) / **molecular** (is an adjective, emphasis on the **second** syllable)

* ~~The molecular has four oxygen atoms.~~
* This is a diagram of the molecule.
* The molecular properties were studied.
* The properties of the molecule were studied.

Avoid starting sentences with “And”. Do not connect many sentences together with “and”.

* ~~We washed the samples with distilled water. And we dried them in air for 2 hours. And we added the catalyst.~~
* We washed the samples with distilled water, and then we dried them in air for 2 hours. After that we added the catalyst.

**both** (for exactly 2 things) / **all** (for 3 or more things, or a mass amount)

* Both experiments produced the same result. (there were exactly 2 experiments)
* Our four graphs all agree.
* All the data agrees. (any amount of data, expected to be large)

**will** (a result we know will happen, or general rule) / **would** (the result in a future situation, the situation may or may not occur)

* If we heat the mixture beyond room temperature, it will turn green. (prediction, high degree of certainty)
* If we heated the mixture beyond room temperature, it would turn green. (hypothetical situation, high degree of certainty)
* When we heat the mixture beyond room temperature, it turns green. (simple present tense makes this a rule or law, 100% certainty)
* Pollution will continue to increase.
* Further experiments would be useful.

**can** (have the ability) / **could** (a possibility)

* Adding sodium can increase the reaction speed. (we know this)
* Adding sodium could increase the reaction speed. (we are guessing this)

Beware of starting sentences with “**~~It~~ is…**” or “**~~This~~ is…**”. Say exactly what “it” or “this” is, rather than using the pronoun, or reword the sentences to avoid using “it” or “this”.

* We used data from experimentation, simulation, and theoretical analysis. ~~It is the best way to prove we are right~~. (What does “it” mean? Using data? From which one of those three? Do you mean the combination of the three?)
* We used data from experimentation, simulation, and theoretical analysis. Combining the data is the best way to prove we are right.

~~the functions~~ **~~of them~~** (awkward, bad wording) / **their** functions

* ~~We determined the boiling points of them.~~
* We determined their boiling points.
* We determined the boiling points of these compounds.

**respectively**: This is used to save space while *writing* about a series of thing-data pairs. It is best to avoid “respectively” in **oral** English.

* Written (good): The colors of compounds A and B were red and green, respectively.
* Spoken (good): “Compound A was red and compound B was green.”
* Spoken (good): “The compounds were these colors.” (when pointing to the data “A: Red, B:Green” on a slide)

**shows** / **showed** / **~~have showed~~** / **have shown**

* This graph shows that this is the best. (The graph does this as we are looking at it.)
* We showed that this is the best.
* ~~We have showed that this is the best~~.
* We have shown that this is the best. (previously, sometime before this work)