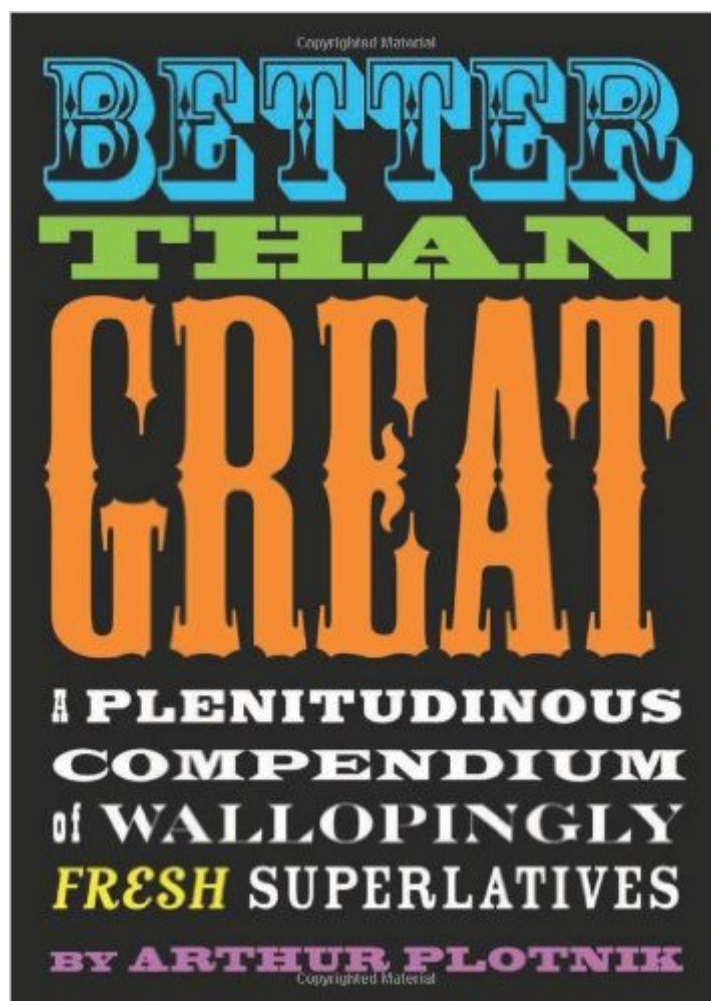


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Better Than Great: A Plenitudinous Compendium Of Wallopingly Fresh Superlatives



Synopsis

A veritable "tko of terminology," Better Than Great is the essential guide for describing the extraordinary -- the must-have reference for anyone wishing to rise above tired superlatives. Deft praise encourages others to feel as we do, share our enthusiasms. It rewards deserving objects of admiration. It persuades people to take certain actions. It sells things. Sadly, in this "age of awesome," our words and phrases of acclaim are exhausted, all but impotent. Even so, we find ourselves defaulting to such habitual choices as "good," "great," and "terrific," or stock synonyms that tumble out of a thesaurus -- "superb," "marvelous," "outstanding," and the like. The piling on of intensifiers such as "totally" only makes matters worse, while negative modifiers ("incredible," "unreal") render our common parlance nearly tragic. Until now. Not to mince words, wunderkind of word-wonks Arthur Plotnik is proffering a well-knit wellspring of worthy and wondrous words to rescue our worn-down usage. Plotnik is both hella AND hecka up to the task of rescuing the English superlative, offering readers the chance to never be at a loss for words of praise and acclamation!

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Customer Reviews

but, your use of language says a lot about you. Esteemed author and wordsmith Arthur Plotnik (The Elements of Editing a modern guide for editors and journalists) has produced a tidy little antidote to the banal. Does "awesome" just not have the kick it used to? Plotnik explains in his brief introduction that overuse tempers impact. If you want to get your point across with panache don't

use the phrases heard flying from every tongue. This little book is a hybrid dictionary-thesaurus, drawn from a variety of sources as varied as the venerable OED to "Dagrees Great Aussie Slang" and the "Rap Dictionary". Words and phrases are assorted by tone and hue. Is it great? better than great? life changing? There's a word or phrase for it. The appendices reminded me of a baby name book I flipped through years ago. In this section he provides information on words and phrases which are old but not abused, terms from across the ocean (whichever side of which ocean you are on,) txt-speak; words and acronyms drawn from our fast-paced texting society. For some it will add spice to your writing or speech, for others, maybe cue you in to what your kids (or parents) are saying. For others still it will allow you to call attention to... those things you wish to call attention to: ebay listings, event announcements, business memos...and for other still it will elevate you from the slum of linguistic turpitude. (Can I get a bulk discount of a pallet of these to hand to anyone who tacks "alicious" onto anything? If I could do that, maybe it would have a Zoroastrian impact on my existence ;) I dithered over giving this book 4 or 5 stars. It is not one of the great works of literature east or west, does not define a new paradigm or solve an old mystery. It does do what it sets out to do very nicely and so deserves superlative accolades just for that.

This is the best kind of browsing book, I think. He breaks positive words up into 15 categories and gives each category (such as 'joy-giving') a chapter, listing all sorts of marvelous adjectives that range from the erudite to the quirky. For example, under 'joy-giving' you might find 'festal' and 'felicitous' but also 'inner-space salve' and 'wit that could sharpen pencils'. He also provides a tasty quote and little boxes, such as 'vintage gold' for each chapter, and one list of four adjectives that might describe wine. End segments include some textese praise, eponymous adjectives (Napoleonic!) and my favorite--the 'habit breaker' appendix of words to replace tired out zingless words like 'amazing'. I love words, and it's clear that Plotnick loves them, too, and has spent time and humor collecting and collating this wonderful collection. And, strangely enough, it's hard to read a thesaurus of praise words without feeling...a little happier at the end.

This book has raised my benchmark for brilliance when it comes to writing with superlatives. What a relief, to move beyond "great" and "awesome!" I have been using this reference constantly for the past week and it has already earned a prime position on my desk. I now consider it a must-have for bloggers and critics. In response to the negative reviews on this book... For those who thrive on precise organization, or who twitch compulsively when facing variability, this may not be the reference for you. However, for those who feel let down by their thesaurus when their brainstorming

dead ends at the same old synonyms, this is the book that will get your mind moving once more. Personally, I find that Plotnik provides just enough organization to make the book searchable, but not so much that the reader feels limited. Whenever I want to find a synonym for a word, I simply decide if my intended meaning falls into one of his fifteen categories. Did I want to convey size? I look under "Large." If I meant to convey a sensation in the body I would look under "Physically Affecting," or if it were a sensation of the spirit I would go to "Sublime" or "Challenging Belief or Expression." This may all sound vague, but I assure you it has worked well for me. A thesaurus nitpicks over semantics. Plotnick cuts to the chase and helps you say what you mean. One more thing. For those who argued that Plotnik included too many whimsical or nonsensical words, I would respond that whimsy can come in handy when you least expect it. My blog post on cupcakes does not need the corny (and hilarious) term "Viagara on a plate" but if I ever write myself into a corner while describing a delicious barbeque sausage sandwich, I have a feeling it might prove useful. (And hilarious.) I admit, I may not be brave enough to tell my significant other that I find them coruscatingly beautiful, but what if that same person decided to, say, buy me a diamond necklace for Valentines? Do I want to find myself at a loss for words, limited to "wonderful" or "lovely"? No, thank you. I want to be able to say, "Thank you for the lovely gift, darling. It's coruscatingly beautiful." So, if you are capable of using eighth-grade skills such as brainstorming, categorizing, and judging context-clues, then this might very well be the book for you. It will reduce brain-blocking headaches and add whimsy to your writing life, I promise.

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