

## WORDS OF THE WEEK – WEEK 9 2017

### words of describing large amounts and quantities

**IMPORTANTLY** - before we begin you should remember that 90% of the time when you are talking about quantities, the preposition “OF” usually follows. Eg percentage of, piece of, the whole of etc. I have tried to indicate below which ones require OF and which ones don’t.

**Prevalent** - If there are so many of something that it is everywhere, or if it is so common that it is hard to avoid, then it is prevalent (Important to note it refers to too much in frequency or number, not in size). It is generally used as a negative, for example, youth unemployment is *prevalent* these days and there is a prevalent amount of misleading news in the media.

**Prominent** – While if something is prevalent there is a lot of it, if something is prominent it is large in size or importance (closely linked to dominant). So, use *prominent* if something sticks out above the rest or is bigger than the rest. A *prominent person* is well known, a prominent colour in a painting is the colour most used and Coca-Cola is a prominent player (if not dominant player - see below) in the soft drink market.

**Prevalent vs Prominent** – it is easy to make a distinction amongst the two. If something is prevalent it is large in frequency. Eg skin cancer is more prevalent in the southern hemisphere than the northern hemisphere. Prominent on the other hand refers to size or importance. Eg Ads from the main sponsor of a football match are displayed more prominently during the game and Saunalahti is the most prominent newspaper in Finland.

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**Predominant** – Predominantly, this word is used more effectively as an adverb, so if you are thinking of “more often than not” use predominantly. (NB at the start of the description I used “predominantly” rather than “generally” because I wanted to assert it is actually more often than “generally” or “commonly”). For example, in Australia it rains predominantly in the summer. English is predominantly spoken in capital cities these days. As a word, it can be successfully used if something is extremely important or the most popular thing around. For example, driving continues to be the predominant means of transport despite increased petrol prices.

**Dominant** – if something is dominant, it is so high in number, size or strength that it can actually exercise power or control over the rest of the group. For example, a company with dominant market power can potentially influence the market and price of products and a sport team can dominate a match.

**Dominant vs Predominant** – Both words are similar and while it may seem confusing, it is not. If something is dominant it has too much power or control. In the case of predominant, PRE means before. So, if something is PRE-dominant, it is more important than the rest but hasn’t gotten to the point where it has control or influence over the rest.

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**Copious – (+ amount of)** If you have not just a lot, but really a lot of something, then use the word copious. It is almost used with “amount of” following the word, eg, there are copious amounts of people at IKEA on weekends and copious amounts of tourists in Lapland during Christmas.

**Profuse – Profuse** is a word for a copious number or even too much of something. Profuse is predominantly used as an adverb – profusely. Eg, If you are bleeding profusely you better get to the hospital for some stitches and if you forget your partner’s birthday, you will need to apologise profusely. NB “I apologise profusely” is where you may hear or see this word used the most. If someone is apologising profusely they really show true regret for their actions.

**Prolific** - Prolific means highly productive or being produced in a high number. If you are a *prolific* liar then you will probably get in trouble sooner or later. You can be a prolific song writer that releases albums every second month, or if break-ins are prolific in your neighbourhood then you should consider moving.

**Rife ( + with)** - If something is *rife* it is "full of" or "widespread", especially when used to depict something negative. If your dog is rife with fleas you won’t be happy or if your sentences are rife with errors I won’t be happy.

**Abundance ( + of)** – If something is “abundant” there is plenty of it, for example flowers are abundant in spring. Instead use “abundance” as a synonym for “more than enough of”, ie something is MORE than you need. Abundance is often used to describe positive qualities, such as “an abundance of love” or “an abundance of people” etc.

**Plenty (+ of) - (plentiful)** – Two things you need to remember with plenty, firstly it is a synonym for “a lot of” and secondly, it generally is used in cases something is supplied, produced, grown or manufactured. So, if you have “plenty of” something, it means you have a full supply of that thing you are supplying, producing, growing or manufacturing. Eg Nokia produced plenty of mobile phones in its hay day and this year there was plenty of snow in Lapland whereas last year there wasn’t.

**Surplus (+ of)** - A surplus is something extra or left over. If your tree produces more oranges than you can eat, you can make apple sauce from the surplus of left over oranges. Where you will see it the most is when talking about Government budgets. If the Government receives more income from taxes than it spends, the budget is IN surplus. (The opposite of surplus is “deficit” and unfortunately we have not heard of a budget surplus for a long time, only budget deficits).

**Plethora** - Plethora means an overly abundant or excessive amount of something that is generally positive (think huge surplus). If you have 15 different companies wanting to hire you after university, then you have a plethora of employment possibilities and if you have a plethora of experience you are super highly skilled.

**Colossal** – This is actually quite a sophisticated way of saying something is enormous (think Colosseum in Rome). So you can have a colossal amount of work to do, a colossal mess at home or a colossal headache.

**Vast amount of** – Using the term a “vast amount of” something is a perfect and professional synonym for saying “a hell or a lot of” something.