

Table 2.2. Fancy Words Versus Plain Words

Fancy Word	Plain Word
commence	start
employ	use
endeavor	try
finalize	end
initiate	begin
prioritize	rank
procure	get
terminate	end
utilize	use

The fifth, and last, way is to alternate *he* and *she* from one paragraph or section to the next. This technique was used in this book, so you should have seen some examples of it. Some of you were probably taken aback when we referred to an engineering manager as *she*. This type of response is a strength of this method. Alternating the pronouns *he* and *she* points out how subconscious some of our gender assumptions are, especially when *she* is used in a nontraditional context.

Plain and fancy words. Use plain words instead of fancy words unless you have a good reason not to. A saying that illustrates this rule is "Don't utilize *utilize* when you can use *use*." One potentially good reason to use a fancy word is if you have been using the plain word too many times and need to add variety to your writing. Even better would be to rewrite the offending paragraph or sentence so that you can use the plain word less and not use the fancy word. Fancy words have their place, but use them sparingly in technical writing. Table 2.2 shows some examples.

Exercises

- Imagine giving an oral presentation about a design project you worked on in one of your engineering classes. Fill out and turn in a profile sheet for each of the following individuals or groups that might be a potential audience for your presentation:
 - Your engineering instructor
 - Your parents
 - Your classmates in the course