



Writing an Article

Exercise 5

Imagine that you are writing a piece for a linguistic magazine. Read an extract from Paul Shoebottom's article on euphemisms (Page 2) and listen to an extract from George Carlin's talk on the same topic (see the link below). Then write your own **article**.

In your article:

- explain what euphemisms are and how they are used;
- include a summary of both given texts;
- express your attitude to euphemisms.

Use your own words, don't quote the given texts.

Write about **250–350 words**.

Click on the link to listen about euphemisms: [Euphemisms — George Carlin](#).

A euphemism is a word or expression that is used when people want to find a polite or less direct way of talking about difficult or embarrassing topics. Most people, for example, would find it very difficult to say in plain language that they have arranged for their sick old dog to be killed. They would soften the pain by saying: ***We had Fido put down*** or ***We had Fido put to sleep***. Many people prefer to call someone ***plain*** than ***ugly***, or ***cuddly*** rather than ***fat***. As such, euphemisms are an important part of every language.

Schools are full of euphemisms. Teachers rightly do not want to offend students or parents by being too blunt or direct, and usually choose a softer word or expression to convey the same message. For this reason, school reports often contain euphemisms such as: ***He is not working to his full potential*** or ***He has a rather relaxed attitude to his work*** (= he is lazy).

Typical of many recently-coined euphemisms are the words and expressions that try to avoid giving offence to various minority groups or unfortunate individuals. People who have severe learning difficulties are sometimes called ***intellectually-challenged***, and those with a physical handicap are referred to as ***differently-abled***. Poor people are called ***needy, under-privileged; disadvantaged*** or ***economically deprived***. Poor countries have in turn been called ***underdeveloped, developing, emergent, Third World*** — all in an effort to retain the meaning without causing offence or being patronising.

[Source of the text](#)