

Write with precision: “use” vs. “utilize”

Think twice before writing “utilize.” You can almost always toss out “utilize” and replace it with “use.” “Use” is straightforward, meaning to employ something for its natural purpose. “Utilize” can mean to make effective or profitable use of something, as in to use it up or get the full value from it.

Make “use” your default. If you must write “utilize,” be sure that you have a good reason.

Examples

The police use specific provisions of the *Criminal Code* to identify, locate, and recover assets.

Explain how to use various financial reports in different scenarios.

Magnesium may be required to adequately absorb and properly utilize calcium.

The dictionary is underutilized in writing for social media.



A tip from the BCIT editing community
– Jim, Kathleen, Gary, Barb

Helping to engage—and retain—students