CLICHÉS AND TRITE EXPRESSIONS

The following is a partial list of overused phrases that you should avoid in your prose – unless you have a very particular, well-thought-out reason for using them! These phrases have been compiled from a number of stylebooks; they are but a sampling of the wordy, overused expressions that writers should seek to translate into succinct and focused language of their own.

a brilliant performance  
a chip off the old block  
a crying shame  
after all is said and done  
all things being equal  
arrived at the scene  
as a last resort  
as a matter of course  
as a matter of fact  
as an end result  
as the crow flies  
at a complete loss for words  
at long last  
at one fell swoop  
at the crack of dawn  
at this point in time  
avoid __________ like the plague  
beat a hasty retreat  
beating around the bush  
believe it or not  
better late than never  
bite the bullet  
bounce back  
budding genius  
busy as a bee
by leaps and bounds
by no means

conspicuous by its (his/her) absence
cool as a cucumber
corridors of power
crystal clear

destined for greatness
doomed to disappointment

easier said than done

few and far between
final outcome
first and foremost
follow in the footsteps of
for all intents and purposes
from dawn till dusk

gentle as a lamb
getting [his or her] just deserts
good as gold
grave danger

heated opposition
hit the spot
hoping against hope

if and when
in a manner of speaking
in a very real sense
in-depth study
in one ear and out the other
in no uncertain terms
in no way, shape or form
in the final analysis
in the foreseeable future
in the long run
in this day and age

integral part
it goes without saying
it stands to reason

last but not least
light as a feather
lock, stock, and barrel

make a beeline for
many and diverse
moment of truth

needless to say
nipped in the bud

off the beaten track
old as the hills
on the right track
once and for all
one and the same
one in a million
out of the blue

par for the course
playing with fire
pride and joy
proves conclusively

raining cats and dogs
rears its ugly head
rude awakening
rule with an iron fist

sadder but wiser
seeing is believing
selling like hotcakes
slowly but surely
sneaking suspicion
sowing wild oats
starting out at the bottom of the ladder
step in the right direction
strike while the iron is hot
strong as an ox
supreme moment

tangible proof
the bottom line
the final straw
the top of the heap

unforeseen events/obstacles

vicious circle
vital role

water over the dam
when all is said and done
when push comes to shove
wrong side of the tracks