

Choosing the Right Words Exercise

The following passages were taken from papers on myths about health and the human body. Each passage contains words that are misused or have obscured the writer's intended meaning.

Directions: Underline each misused or ill-fitting word or phrase. Then write a more appropriate word or phrase above it. When you are finished, compare your revisions with the sample revisions on the next page.

- 1. This is one of the stupidest ideas I have ever heard of. Supposedly, if you run a fan all night in the room where you sleep you could die from lack of oxygen. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that that's not true because I run my fan all the time.*
- 2. Scientists' knowledge of the cranial organ's dominion over the human body is considerable and so is the number of preconceived notions about the cranial organ's capacities for neurological activities.*
- 3. There might be some truth to this diet trend. Since drinking eight glasses of water each day for five months, my roommate has lost a whopping twenty-five pounds. She looks emaciated, like a model or an athlete.*

Sample Revised Passages

- 1. This is one of the most preposterous myths I have ever heard. According to the myth, sleeping in a room with a running fan could cause asphyxia due to lowered oxygen levels. I am certain that this myth is untrue, however, because I usually sleep with my fan on.*
- 2. Scientists' knowledge of the brain's power over the human body is considerable and so is the number of preconceptions about the brain's capabilities.*
- 3. There may be some truth to this diet trend. After drinking eight glasses of water every day for five months, my roommate lost twenty-five pounds. She looks quite slender now, like a model or an athlete.*