



Ms. Particular Presents: *Absolutes*

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Some words in English are “absolutes”

Think of them as binary—they’re either 1 or 0

Some common absolutes abused by science writers: unique, complete, final, identical, essential, first, infinite, perfect, equal

Comparatives (more or less) and superlatives (most or least) may not be used with absolutes; something is either *unique* (one of a kind) or it isn’t; it cannot be *more unique* or *less unique* than something else

Intensifiers are not used with absolutes

Examples of intensifiers: very, strongly, much, extremely, significantly

Don't use intensifiers with absolutes—they're witless (very unique, extremely final)

Some modifiers could be used with absolutes if they "back off" the absolute (nearly unique, almost finished, substantially complete)