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From the WR dictionary: contemporary: noun (pl. contemporaries) a person or thing existing at the same time as another; a person of roughly the same age as another. yeah... so r we saying that barnas is the same age as george washington ? Yeah... so are we saying that Barnabas is the same age as George Washington ? (Please use standard English on the board, per forum rules.) It means that he lived at the same time. They were both alive at the same time. It doesn't mean that they were born in the same year. Barack Obama and Queen Elizabeth are contemporaries, even though they are decades apart in age.It usually implies that they were in their productive years as adults at the same time, as far as I understand it. I wouldn't call a two-year-old and Barack Obama contemporaries, even though they are both alive right now. Hi,Can being contemporary of someone mean "being friend" or somethin' ike this case: EXT. CEMETERY. DAYPriest's cassock whipping in the wind. A few mourners (shabbygenteel ladies, contemporaries of his mother), but Billyseems to have no real connection with any of them.source: The Departed Screenplay by William Monahan There it would mean they are of the same age group or generation: not Billy's age, but his mother's. I don't think so. This just means that the women were roughly the same age as his mother. We aren't told here whether or not they are friends of his mother, just that they are of the same generation. I found out that both contempory and current have the same meaning- belonging to present. Then, in the following sentene, which one is correct? And why? The current/ or contemporary revival of platform shoes don't help and wearing shoes with heels more than several centimeters high is just asking for trouble. They don't have the same meaning. I think you need to look at the definitions more carefully. I found these in Merriam-Webster Online:Current: occurring in or existing at the present timeContemporary: marked by characteristics of the present period Current is much more immediate, it refers to what is happening right now. Contemporary is more abstract and refers to what is characteristic of the present time or age. (Bear in mind that there are other definitions for these words, but it's fairly clear which definition applies here.) So, you can't say, for example, "my contemporary ambition is is to take part in a triathlon", you must use current here. It's the ambition you have right now, it's not one that is characteristic of or belonging to the present time or age.In the topic sentence, the choice is more subtle. Fashions are quite typically characteristic of a period. But in this sentence do you think the writer is more likely to be saying that the revival is happening right now (is current) or are they saying it is characteristic of or belonging to the present (contemporary)? I think, because a "revival" is something that happens, and that the statement clearly implies it is happening now, and is not necessarily characteristic, that the best choice is "current". 'Current' belongs to now. It could be very recent, and could change very soon: if you're playing a game, your current score might be 250 - then bang! it's 300.'Contemporary' belongs to (roughly) the same period in history: our contemporaries are the people alive when we are; contemporary architecture or music is, perhaps, late twentieth century. You can also talk about people or music contemporary with Shakespeare or Leonardo da Vinci: who and what was around at the same period in history that they were.In the case of fashion, current fashions will be replaced by others in one or two or five years; contemporary fashions might include those from ten or twenty or more years ago. Hello, everyone!It must be a very typical difficulty but it doesn't seem to have been discussed here before (I have cheched the threads and haven't found this one, so correct me if I'm wrong).So, I keep getting confused with modern and contemporary. They definitions in dictionaries are very similar. How do I know if I should use "modern" or "contemporary" if I speak about, say, the cinema of the end of the 20th - beginning of the 21st centuries?thank you very much in advance! 'Contemporary' is more narrow: it applies to quite recent years. 'Modern' is a larger stage in development. This distinction will depend on the field, and in some fields they may be equivalent. Modern art starts with, perhaps, Picasso and Les Demoiselles d'Avignon of 1907. Modern music perhaps with The Rite of Spring, 1913. Modern cinema? Well, not the early, silent stages. Is Gone with the Wind modern cinema? Perhaps. It doesn't seem pre-modern to me. 'Contemporary' is for the more narrow time range you want: the most recent two or three movements perhaps. Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao is contemporary. Tarkovsky's Solaris is probably too old now to be called contemporary. Thank you! Yes, it does make sense now! And a more striking difference to illustrate entangledbank's point.Modern English is English from 1450 onwards; Shakespeare's English is Modern English.Contemporary English, for me, is something from the 21st century. So, can I write, for example: "Inthe modern, contemporary society insurance become essential part of our life". Or in this meaning modern and contemporary are the same? Is this sentence sounds correctly? I understand modern and contemporary to mean the same thing in your sentence. You need to check the grammar of your sentence, though. One important difference between the two words is that 'modern' is self-referential and 'contemporary' is not. In other words, 'modern' (except in titles) always refers to the period which is up to date from the point of view of the speaker or writer, whereas 'contemporary' does not always do so. 'Modern' means 'new' or 'up-to-date'. 'Contemporary' means 'belonging to the same period'. Thus we may say that mediaeval armour would give useful protection against contemporary weapons, but not against modern ones. When used of persons or objects, contemporary usually has the meaning of "at/from the same time as " regardless of when that time was. If that is not stated, then contemporary has the meaning of "very recent/modern" / "at/from the same time as the reader/writer**." and thus contemporary takes on its meaning of modern. **"Inside the 5,000 year old tomb, I discovered a golden necklace lying next to a contemporary bronze dagger" (i.e. a bronze dagger of the same age.) ***The exhibition is dedicated to contemporary art" "Contemporary times demand knowledge of how to use technology." Can we say this? Is contemporary times correct here? If not which words should I use? As always, please tell us where you found the sentence, i.e. the source. It sounds quite good to me.EDIT: Cross-posted with sd. Context/source is of course better. Thank you both. I want to iclude it in an essay about technology and I don't know if this is the right word to use. If it's your own sentence, once again, it sounds right to me. Thank you both. I want to iclude it in an essay about technology and I don't know if this is the right word to use. Contemporary means at the same time as the time you have established. Thus the contemporaries of Socrates were Plato, Xenophon, Aristophanes etc.Starting a sentence with contemporary without having established a time is dangerous, at best; talking about contemporary times is pleonastic - it means times at the same time.You'd do better, in my view, to re-write your sentence with a personal subject using a word like now. Last edited: Jan 18, 2014 'nowadays' ?Nowadays a knowledge of technology is essential. (as opposed to in previous times) I don't think it's pleonastic. Here's usage from the NYT:As great as tablets can be for touch-based actions, todays sharp color screens also show off detailed photographs and images quite nicely. For students and art lovers looking for a general guide that doesn't strain the shoulder, theres ART AUTHORITY (\$9.99 for iPad; \$4.99 for iPhone and Kindle Fire), featuring the work of more than 1,000 major Western artists from ancient to contemporary times. You've damaged my opinion of the NYT, Perp.They need a new editor. Indeed. The NYT should have said "from ancient to modern times" or something like that.Contemporary is used in two ways. One is comparatively, typically with with, meaning "at the same time as ". The other, where the is not specified, substitutes "now" for the frame of reference, so it just means pretty well the same as "modern", i.e. of the present time or the recent past. At a concert of contemporary music, most of the pieces will have been written within the past few decades if not years, and an exhibition of contemporary art would similarly involve works created relatively recently.That contemporary times is pleonastic should be obvious to anyone who can recognize the root embedded in the word. This is where modern and contemporary are not interchangeable synonyms; you can say "modern times", but "contemporary times" just sounds naft.To the OP I would recommend "present times" or "modern times" as a minimal change. Well, none of us write for the NYT, at least not to my knowledge. To peg their sentence wrong, would be wrong, in my opinion.I guess you guys would mark "in today's world" with a ? Or a double? If and when, "nowadays", from loghrat above does fit, but it's not as elegant. "In these times" could be an alternative. Agreed. The big but: "contemporary times" is fine and lives, until language sites kill it. I guess you guys would mark "in today's world" with a ? Or a double? I can't see why you would think that. It sounds perfectly OK. "nowadays", from loghrat above does fit, but it's not as elegant. "In these times" could be an alternative. Agreed. The big but: "contemporary times" is fine and lives. Live it might, but fine it ain't. It betrays a lack of appreciation and understanding of how words and language work. . Last edited by a moderator: Jan 18, 2014 You could just say "today" in lieu of "today's world". Is "today's world" a pleonasm? Thank you very much for all the answers. I suppose it's a bit akward to use it but some people do.I suppose if I write this in a formal essay for an American cerificate in English at least they will get what I mean but it's safer to choose another option. You could just say "today" in lieu of "today's world". Is "today's world" a pleonasm? Indeed you could, but no, it is not.The essence of a pleonasm isn't just that it might be possible to express the same idea with fewer words, but that the words being used involve unnecessary unneeded redundant duplication. There is nothing in 'world' that duplicates the meaning of 'today', but 'contemporary' literally includes 'time', and therefore to pair it with 'times' is pleonastic. A) contemporary timesB) times C) today's worldD) today ???I would use all of them, without hemming and hawing whether pleonasm or not. You haven't understood what TT explained in #6. The single word "contemporary" not only means "at the same time as " (or if nothing else has been mentioned it means "at the present time"), but it even literally incorporates the Latin root temp of the word time. "Contemporary times" therefore includes "time" twice.The word "world" does not include anything about "today". Thus "today's world" involves no duplication. From the OP: "Contemporary times demand knowledge of how to use technology."Contemporary times demand knowledge of how to use technology. Times demand knowledge of how to use technology. (Not the greatest, but it's grammatically correct, for me.)Today demands knowledge of how to use technology. (Not the greatest, but it's grammatically correct, for me.)Today's world demands knowledge of how to use technology. What's not to like? You can pick them apart as you may, and/or call the "pleonasm" card, but I don't think that card is valid. [...]The word "world" does not include anything about "today". Thus "today's world" involves no duplication. Today's day, would, on the other hand, be a similar pleonasm. There are people, Perp, who talk about things like retreating backwards, yet the idea of retreating includes the idea of moving backwards. I don't think one has to be very pernickety or difficult, or even offensively intellectual, to be irritated by pleonasm. The single word "contemporary" not only means "at the same time as " (or if nothing else has been mentioned it means "at the present time"), but it even literally incorporates the Latin root temp of the word time. "Contemporary times" therefore includes "time" twice. By the same token, you would have to rule out the phrase something is contemporary with something on the grounds that contemporary even literally incorporates Latin con, i.e with. You would therefore have to insist we say something is contemporary to something. Affix pleonasm is possible in English, but this would be going too far, as you know, I suspect. Schimmelreiter. By the same token, you would have to rule out the phrase something is contemporary with something on the grounds that contemporary even literally incorporates Latin con, i.e with. I know you're just trying to make lighthearted trouble, SR. Nice try, but the cigars are staying firmly under wraps. Your premise that con means with is a little flawed.Unlike Spanish and Italian, Latin has no word con (at least not one the authors of my reasonably extensive dictionary deemed worth listing -- the preposition you want is cum). There exists a prefix con-, which, like its close equivalents co- and com-, expresses the idea of togetherness or sameness. The preposition with expresses a similar idea, but typically the prefix con- is attached to nouns and is therefore adjectival. It does not duplicate, but rather it complements the function of the preposition, which is why in English we can say "together with" with impunity. The sort of affix pleonasm which is sick-making in English is usually associated with transitive uses of verbs, I suspect, eg.He exited out of the room.She supervised over the children. OP: "Contemporary times demand knowledge of how to use technology."How about: The here and now demands knowledge of how to use technology.Who will be the first to find that pleonastic, or ungrammatical? "In the here and now," sounds to me a fine way of beginning the sentence. I'm just not so sure whether "here and now","today" or 'modern times' or any similar expression can "demand knowledge." "In the here and now," sounds to me a fine way of beginning the sentence. I'm just not so sure whether "here and now","today" or 'modern times' or any similar expression can "demand knowledge." If it were "the times" alone, velisarius, then, can "The times demand knowledge"? Is that a deal-breaker for you? I guess that's why papers are named the such/like.EDIT: That is likely just me. I think a tree in the forest can demand knowledge: I would like to know why I am being cut down to be a newspaper. Please tree-mail me. I'm not sure that I could ever write a sentence using a clich like the here and now to mean these days or nowadays.I agree entirely with Velisarius about demanding knowledge.I'd put something like Nowadays we have to know how to handle technology, or These days we must be able to deal with technology.I spent two hours up a ladder in the middle of the village on Thursdays aligning an old woman's satellite dish for her, so that her television would work. I wasn't using technology, but dealing with it, handling it. I suspect this may be the sort of thing the OP had in mind. Last edited: Jan 19, 2014 Situations can demand knowledge, TT, or no? Neither times nor situations can really demand anything. Only people can make demands. Strictly speaking, "modern times demand that we embrace technology" is nonsense, but nevertheless we love to engage in such flowery language, and so we phrase it like that when it would sound too boring and matter-of-fact simply to say what we really mean, which is "in these modern times it is demanded of us that...". Ultimately, the demanding is done by modern society, not by modern times. I think that the weather demands that I wear boots and a scarf, and long underwear sometimes (in particular right now). I can't imagine how that's wrong in language. It isn't "wrong in language" as such, it's only wrong if you apply a very strict interpretation of what it means to demand something.Strictly-speaking, demanding, requiring, wanting, needing, etc. are actions or feelings which only humans are capable of. The weather doesn't want you to keep warm (if anything, it wants you to freeze to death); you want to keep warm. We only say the weather demands that you keep warm, because in real life we like to be flowery and poetic instead of linguistically strict. Even WRD gives the example "the situation demands attention". SR mentioned metonymy, but I think that's barking up the wrong tree. I think this is just a case of anthropomorphization. We are transferring our wishes and needs to the situation, the weather, and the times. Well, if livings things or circumstances, besides human begins can't demand, then I guess we and poetry are pretty much screwed. I like to think that a plant is demanding water, when it's withering away. (Plants can hear you.) I like to think that a goldfish is demanding food, when it goes back and forth and forth again in the tank, giving you that weird eye. (Fish can see you.) I like to think that the environment can demand that we let up on it. (Big Brother Global Warming is watching you.)Why so strict, Edinburgher? I'm not being strict and saying we can't say those things.I'm just saying that if we were so strict, then we couldn't attribute demands to non-sentient beings.It's in our nature to be poetic, and part and parcel of that is that we like to anthropomorphize, to impart human attributes to non-human entities.That's the explanation of why we can say things like that, even though we know fine well that global warming can't 'watch' us and that plants can't 'hear'(*) us.(*) Plants obviously can't 'hear' us in any conventional interpretation of what it means to hear. They have no brains and can't perceive.That's not to say that sounds have no effect on them. I've read that experiments have shown that plants 'like' certain sounds and 'hate' others. Play soothing classical music to them and they thrive. They don't do so well on rock and pop. I think plants and I are on the same wavelength. Well, it's that exact reason (in your "grey" area), that plants can demand water, they can demand attention, they are sensitive. If you have found music that appeals to them, then you are ahead of the game. I wonder if they like your singing. I would guess each plant demands a different music genre.Times, whether you call them contemporary or not, also demand certain things. I'd certainly be happier talking about plants requiring water rather than demanding water. The problem, such as it is, has resulted from what I regard as a poor choice of subject for the sentence.Give the sentence a personal subject and all this wild anthropomorphising ceases to be necessary.

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