



# CONCISENESS

Eliminating extra, unnecessary words from your writing is important. When writing is straightforward and clear, it is more easily understood by your audience.

## Quantity is not quality

Avoid using empty words and phrases, words that make a writing longer that are unnecessary (i.e. “fluff”)

## Avoid redundancies

Redundant writing repeats an idea or message. This type of writing is unnecessary and frustrating to the reader. Do not mistake this with *planned repetition*, which gives the writing an interesting, rhythmic quality.

## Remove expletive constructions

Expletive constructions place words like *it* and *there* before the subject of a sentence. The following underlined phrases should be removed from expletive constructions:  
It is mandatory that all teachers attend the meeting next week.

Revise as:

All teachers must attend the meeting next week.

## Verbs affect conciseness

Strong verbs are action verbs; whereas, weak verbs are verbs such as *be* and *have*.

For example:

The revisions of the paper went on for five days. (weak)

The paper was revised for five days. (strong)

The second sentence has more emphasis on “revised” as the action.

## Additional ways to reduce words in sentences

Instead of having two sentences, when it is unnecessary, try combining sentences or adding information from one sentence to another.

See chart on back for examples of eliminating unnecessary words! →

*Instead of...**Use...*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the reason for</li> <li>• for the reason that</li> <li>• due to the fact that</li> <li>• considering the fact that</li> <li>• on the grounds that</li> <li>• this is why</li> </ul>	<p><b>because, since, why</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• despite the fact that</li> <li>• regardless of the fact that</li> <li>• notwithstanding the fact that</li> </ul>	<p><b>although, even, though</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in the event that</li> <li>• if it should transpire/happen that</li> <li>• under circumstances in which</li> </ul>	<p><b>if</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on the occasion of</li> <li>• in a situation in which</li> <li>• under circumstances in which</li> </ul>	<p><b>when</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• as regards</li> <li>• in reference to</li> <li>• with regard to</li> <li>• concerning the matter of</li> <li>• where [...] is concerned</li> </ul>	<p><b>about</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it is crucial that</li> <li>• it is necessary that</li> <li>• there is a need/necessity for</li> <li>• it is important that</li> <li>• it is incumbent upon</li> <li>• cannot be avoided</li> </ul>	<p><b>must, should</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is able to</li> <li>• has the opportunity to</li> <li>• is in a position to</li> <li>• has the capacity for</li> <li>• has the ability to</li> </ul>	<p><b>can</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it is possible that</li> <li>• there is a chance that</li> <li>• it could happen that</li> <li>• the possibility exists for</li> </ul>	<p><b>may, might, can, could</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prior to</li> <li>• in anticipation of</li> <li>• subsequent to</li> <li>• following on</li> <li>• at the same time as</li> </ul>	<p><b>before, after, as</b></p>

\* Chart adapted from the University of Wisconsin, Madison Writing Center