Less is more.
ROBERT BROWNING

There is no artifice as good and desirable as simplicity.
ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

The love of economy is the root of all virtue.
GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Let thy words be few.
ECCLESIASTES 5:2

Loquacity and lying are cousins.
GERMAN PROVERB

To a Snail: If "compression is the first grace of style," you have it.
MARIANNE MOORE
Once you can use the structure of a sentence to organize your ideas, you’re a long way toward a clear and direct style. But some sentences enjoy all the virtues of grammatical clarity yet remain wordy and graceless. Even when you arrange their grammatical bones in all the right ways, they can still succumb to acute prolixity:

The point I want to make here is that we can see that American policy in regard to foreign countries as the State Department in Washington and the White House have put it together and made it public to the world has given material and moral support to too many foreign factions in other countries that have controlled power and have then had to give up the power to other factions that have defeated them.

That is, our foreign policy has backed too many losers.

In the following cases, you can just cross out useless words. You will have to rewrite little, if at all.

Redundant Pairs

English has a long tradition of doubling words, a habit that we acquired shortly after we began to borrow from Latin and French the thousands of words that we have since incorporated into English. Because the borrowed word usually sounded a bit more learned than the familiar native one, early writers would use both. Among the common pairs are full and complete, true and accurate, hope and desire, hope and trust, each and every, first and foremost, any and all, various and sundry, basic and fundamental, questions and problems, and, and so on and so forth.

Redundant Modifiers

Every word implies another. Finish implies complete, so completely finish is redundant. Memories imply past, so past memories is redundant. Different implies various, so various different is redundant. Each implies individual, so each individual is redundant. Other examples are basic fundamentals, true facts, important essentials, future plans, personal beliefs, consensus of opinion, sudden crisis, terrible tragedy, end result, final outcome, initial preparation, free gift. In every case, we simply prune the redundant modifier. Compare:

We should not try to anticipate in advance those great events that will completely revolutionize our society because past history tells us that it has been the ultimate outcome of little events that has unexpectedly surprised us.

We should not try to anticipate those great events that will revolutionize our society because history tells us that it has been the effect of little events that has most surprised us.

Redundant Categories

Specific words imply their general categories, so we usually don’t have to state both. We know that time is a period, that the mucus membrane is an area, that pink is a color, and that shiny is an appearance. So we don’t have to write.

We must consider each suggestion carefully.
During that period of time, the mucous membrane area became pink in color and shiny in appearance.

but only,

During that time, the mucous membrane became pink and shiny.

In some cases, we can eliminate a general category by changing an adjective into an adverb:

The holes must be aligned in an accurate manner.

The holes must be accurately aligned.

And in some cases, we can change an adjective into a noun and drop the redundant noun:

The educational process and athletic activities are the responsibility of county governmental systems.

Education and athletics are the responsibility of county governments.

In each case we delete the general noun and leave the more specific word. Here are some general nouns often used redundantly. In every case, we can be more direct and concise by dropping the general word:

large in size, of a bright color, heavy in weight, round in shape, at an early time.

odd in appearance, of a cheap quality, honest in character, of an uncertain condition, in a confused state, unusual in nature, extreme in degree, of a strange type.

curative process, regulation system, economics field, area of mathematics, criminal problem.

Meaningless Modifiers

Some modifiers are verbal tics that we use almost as unconsciously as we clear our throats—words and phrases such as kind of, really, basically, definitely, practically, actually, virtually, generally, certain, particular, individual, given, various, different, specific, for all intents and purposes.

For all intents and purposes, American industrial productivity generally depends on certain factors that are really more psychological in kind than of any given technological aspect.

When we prune both the empty nouns and meaningless modifiers, we have a clearer and sharper sentence:

American industrial productivity depends more on psychology than on technology.

Pompous Diction

Replacing unnecessarily formal words with more common ones may not reduce wordiness, but you will make your diction sharper and more direct.

Pursuant to the recent memorandum issues August 9, 1987, because of financial exigencies, it is incumbent upon us all to endeavor to make maximal utilization of telephonic communication in lieu of personal visitation.

All of that means only,

As the memo of August 9 said, to save the company money, use the telephone as much as you can instead of making personal visits.

There is a common word for almost every fancy borrowed one. When we pick the ordinary word we rarely lose anything important. Sometimes, of course, the more obscure, more formal word is exactly the right one:

We tried to negotiate in good faith but the union remains utterly intransigent.

Intransigent is not synonymous with stubborn or firm or fixed or unyielding or uncompromising. It means to adopt an unreasonably fixed position. We can, for example, be uncompromising about our moral behavior, but we would not want to say that we were intransigent about it, for that would suggest that we should compromise. So if we mean intransigent, then we should use intransigent.

More often, though, we choose the big word not for its precision but for its learned weight. Thus the sportscaster who intones,
4. It is true that in spite of the fact that the educational environment is a very significant and important facet to each and every one of our children in terms of his or her own individual future development and growth, different groups and people do not all support certain tax assessments at a reasonable and fair rate that are required for the purpose of providing an educational context at a decent level of quality.

5. Most likely, a majority of all the patients who appear at the public medical clinic facility do not expect specialized medical attention and treatment because their health problems and concerns often seem not to be of a major nature and can for the most part usually be adequately treated with enough proper understanding and attention.

SOME COMPLEX KINDS OF WORDINESS

In these next cases, you have to think about your prose more carefully and then rewrite more extensively.

Belaboring the Obvious

Often, we are diffusely redundant, needlessly stating what everyone knows.

*Imagine a mental picture of someone engaged in the intellectual activity of trying to learn what the rules are for how to play the game of chess.*

*Imagine* implies a mental picture; *trying to learn* implies being engaged in the activity of; we know chess is intellectual; everyone knows that chess is a game and that games are played. The less redundant version:

*Imagine someone trying to learn the rules of chess.*

Or consider this:

*When you write down your ideas, keep in mind that the audience that reads what you have to say will infer from your writing style something about your character.*

You can write down only ideas; your audience can read only what you have to say; you write only to them; they can infer something about your character only from your writing. So in fewer words,

**Exercise 5-1**

Prune the redundancy from these sentences.

1. These various agencies and offices that provide aid and assistance services to persons who participate in our program activities have reversed themselves back from the policy that they recently announced to return to the original policy that they followed earlier.

2. It is necessary that all critics cannot avoid employing complex and abstract terms in order for them to successfully analyze literary texts and discuss them in a basically meaningful way.

3. Scientific endeavor in general depends on true and fully accurate data if it is to offer theories that will allow mankind to advance forward into the future in a safe and cautious way.
Keep in mind that your readers will infer from your style something about your character.

This kind of redundancy often extends through several sentences, each sentence repeating or implying what has already been stated:

Today, the period in history known as the Holocaust is alive in the interest of many people. Dozens of films have been made, books written, and TV shows produced recording the events that took place during the Holocaust, describing the various aspects of Nazism and the systematic destruction of six million Jews by the Germans under their leader, Adolf Hitler. On the surface, this popular interest in what happened to the Jews under Hitler would appear to be a healthy phenomenon. What could be wrong with a new examination by the media of what is certainly the one single most significant event of twentieth-century history? Unfortunately, this popular interest by so many in the events of the Holocaust has brought with it serious misunderstandings about it, and inevitably incorrect views by those who have been exposed to those misunderstandings.

If we assume that what we say in one sentence doesn’t always have to appear in the next, we can make this a good deal leaner and more vigorous:

Many people have recently become intensely interested in the Holocaust through the dozens of films, books, and TV programs that have dealt with Hitler, Nazism, and the Germans’ systematic destruction of six million Jews. On the surface, this interest would appear to be healthy: What could be wrong with reexamining the most significant event of the twentieth century? Unfortunately, this interest has also resulted in some serious misunderstandings.

There is still repetition... this sentence twice. But that repetition provides a consistent sequence of Topics.

Excessive Detail

Other kinds of redundancy are more difficult to prune. Sometimes, we provide irrelevant details.

Baseball, one of our oldest and most popular outdoor sports in terms of total attendance at ball parks and viewing on television, has the kind of rhythm of play on the field that alternates between the players’ passively waiting with no action taking place between the pitchers to the batter and exploding into action when the batter hits a pitched ball to one of the players and he fields it.

That is,

Baseball has a rhythm that alternates between waiting and explosive action.

How much detail we should provide depends on how much our readers already know. In technical writing addressed to an informed audience, we can usually assume a good deal of shared knowledge.

The basic type results from simple rearrangement of the phonemic content of polysyllabic forms so that the initial CV of the first stem syllable is transposed with the first CV of the second stem syllable.

The writer didn’t bother to define phonemic content, stem syllable, or CV because he assumed that anyone reading a technical linguistics journal would understand those terms.

On the other hand, this definition of phonetic transcription, which would never appear in a technical journal on language, is necessary in an introductory textbook:

To study language scientifically, we need some kind of phonetic transcription, a system to write a language so that visual symbols consistently represent segments of speech.

A Phrase for a Word

The redundancy we’ve described so far results when we state what we could have left implied, a problem we can edit away simply by testing the need for every word and phrase. But another kind of redundancy is more difficult to edit away, because to do so we need a precise vocabulary and the wit to use it. For example,

As you carefully read what you have written to improve your wording and catch small errors of spelling, punctuation, and so on, the thing to do before you do anything else is to try to see where sequences of subjects and verbs could replace the same ideas expressed in nouns rather than verbs.

In other words,

As you edit, first find nominalizations you can replace with clauses.
We have compressed several words into single words:

carefully read what you have written  =  edit
... and so on
the thing to do before you do
anything else
try to see where ... are
sequences of subjects and verbs
the same ideas expressed in nouns
rather than verbs

=  nominalizations

There are no general rules to tell you when you can compress several words into a word or two. I can only point out that you often can and that you should be on the alert for opportunities to do so—try, that is.

You can compress many common phrases:

the reason for
for the reason that
due to the fact that
owing to the fact that
in light of the fact that
considering the fact that
on the grounds that
this is why

because, since, why

It is difficult to explain the reason for the delay in the completion of the investigation.
It is difficult to explain why. ...

In light of the fact that no profits were reported from 1967 through 1974, the stock values remained largely unchanged.
Because no profits were reported ...

despite the fact that
regardless of the fact that
notwithstanding the fact that

although, even though

Despite the fact that the results were checked several times, serious errors crept into the findings.
Even though the results ...

in the event that
if it should transpire/happen that
under circumstances in which

if

In the event that the materials arrive after the scheduled date, contact the shipping department immediately.
If the materials arrive ...

on the occasion of
in a situation in which
under circumstances in which

when

In a situation in which a class is overenrolled, you may request that the instructor reopen the class.
When a class is overenrolled, ...

as regards
in reference to
with regard to
concerning the matter of
where ... is concerned

about

I should now like to make a few observations concerning the matter of contingency funds.
I should now like to make a few observations about contingency funds.

it is crucial that
it is necessary that
there is a need/necessity for
it is important that
it is incumbent upon
cannot be avoided

must, should

There is a need for more careful inspection of all welds.
You must inspect all welds more carefully.
Inspect all welds more carefully.

It is important that the proposed North-South Thruway not displace significant numbers of residents.
The proposed North-South Thruway must not displace significant numbers of residents.

is able to
is in a position to
has the opportunity to
has the capacity for
has the ability to

can
We are in a position to make you a firm offer for your house.

We can make you a firm offer for your house.

It is possible that
there is a chance that
it could happen that
the possibility exists for

may, might, can, could

It is possible that nothing will come of these preparations.
Nothing may come of these preparations.

prior to
in anticipation of
subsequent to
following on
at the same time as
simultaneously with

before, after, as

Prior to the expiration of the apprenticeship period, it is incumbent upon you to make application for full membership.
Before your apprenticeship expires, apply for full membership.

increase
decrease

more, less/fewer; better, worse

There has been an increase in the number of universities offering adult education programs.
More universities are offering adult education programs.

We have noted a decrease in the quality of applicants.
We have noted that applicants are less qualified.

Exercise 5-2

Edit these sentences into more economical form.

1. The future of those engaged in studies at the graduate school level, seeking advanced degrees from institutions of higher education, in regard to prospects for desirable employment in teaching positions at best does not have a high degree of certainty.

2. Notwithstanding the fact that all legal restrictions on the use of firearms are the subject of heated debate and argument, it is necessary that the general public not stop carrying on discussion pro and con in regard to them.

3. Under those circumstances in which individuals with financial resources to invest for a profitable return anticipate the possibility that the continually rising prices of things we buy may continue at steadily increasing rates, those individuals will ordinarily put their financial resources into specific objects of artistic value and worth.

4. In the event that governors of the various states in the United States have the opportunity at some time to get together and talk over with one another the matter of economic needs and problems in their respective states, it is possible that they will find a way to overcome the major problem they have of specifying exactly how to divide up and then distribute Federal economic resources to their different states.

5. The major matter I want to ask about at this point is the degree to which the consciousness writers have about the individuals they create in their plays puts a disguise on the social tensions of the times in which they are writing.

6. Those engaged in the profession of education and teaching have for a long period of time been interested in having a better idea about significant improvements in how different individuals learn and commit to memory information from given written textual material. The first matter of difficulty is identifying aspects of common and different features among comparable stretches of writing. The second addresses the difficult matter of assigning some kind of value to the amount of and nature of information that a reader does not forget after that person reads a passage.

Talking to the Reader: Metadiscourse

In Lesson 2, we described metadiscourse as the language we use when we refer to our own thinking and writing as we think and write—to summarize, on the contrary, I believe; to the structure of what we write—first, second, more importantly, etc.; and to our readers' act of reading—note that, consider now, in order to understand. We use metadiscourse in personal narratives, arguments, memoirs—in any discourse in which we
Hedges and Emphatics

Each profession has its own idiom of caution and confidence. None of us wants to sound like an uncertain milquetoast or a smug dogmatist. How successfully we walk the rhetorical line between seeming timidity and arrogance depends on how we manage phrases like a good deal, a phrase that a few words ago allowed me to pull back from the more absolute statement:

How successfully we walk the rhetorical line between seeming timidity and arrogance depends on how we manage phrases like a good deal.

Hedges let us sound small notes of civilized diffidence. They give us room to backpedal and to make exceptions. An appropriate emphatic, on the other hand, lets us underscore what we really believe—or would like our reader to think we believe.

Some of the more common hedges: usually, often, sometimes, almost, virtually, possibly, perhaps, apparently, seemingly, in some ways, to a certain extent, sort of, somewhat, more or less, for the most part, for all intents and purposes, in some respects, in my opinion at least, may, might, can, could, seem, tend, try, attempt, seek, hope. Some of us use these so often that they become less hedges than meaningless modifiers.

Some of the more common emphatics: as everyone knows, it is generally agreed that, it is quite true that, it's clear that, it is obvious that, the fact is, as we can plainly see, literally, clearly, obviously, undoubtedly, certainly, of course, indeed, inevitably, very, invariably, always, key, central, crucial, basic, fundamental, major, cardinal, primary, principal, essential. Words and phrases like these generally mean not much more than "believe me." Used to excess, they sound arrogant or at least defensive. Or they become a kind of background static that robs a style of any clarity or precision. This is another case where a good ear will serve you better than a flat rule. In general, though, hedges and emphatics should be used sparingly.

Sequencers and Topicalizers

Sequencers and topicalizers are words, and phrases, sentences that lead your reader through your text. The least useful kind of sequencers are overelaborate introductions:
In this next section of this report, it is my intention to deal with the problem of noise pollution. The first thing I want to say is that noise pollution is . . .

You can announce the topic of a whole discourse—or any of its parts—and hint at the structure of its argument more simply:

The next problem is noise pollution. It . . .

Unless your paper is so complex that you have to lay out its plan in an elaborate introduction, assume that just naming the problem is sufficient to announce it as your topic, and that naming its parts suggests your organization.

Specific topicalizers focus attention on a particular phrase as the main Topic of a sentence, paragraph, or whole section:

In regard to a vigorous style, the most important feature is a short, concrete subject followed by a forceful verb.

So far as the industrial development of China is concerned, it will be years before it can compete with Japan's.

As to the matter of responsibility for security, that is the problem of the staff.

We use phrases and clauses such as in regard to, where X is concerned, in the matter of, as for, as to, speaking of, turning now to to announce that we are moving on to a new idea. Better: try to maneuver that new idea into the body of the sentence. For a vigorous style, use a short, concrete subject followed by a forceful verb.

It will be years before China's industrialization can compete with Japan's.

Responsibility for security belongs to the staff.

Probably the most common way we announce prospective Topics is with there is/are.

There are three reasons why we should recognize Outer Mongolia.

There is/are often occurs at the beginning of a section, announcing in the phrase that follows is/are the topic of that section. But whatever follows there is/are is always a static noun phrase. So use this construction only when that phrase is important enough to develop in the next few sentences, or significant enough to assert its existence.

Attributors and Narrators

Attributors and narrators tell your reader where you got your ideas or facts or opinions. Sometimes, when we are still trying to work out precisely what it is we want to say, we offer a narrative of our thinking rather than its results:

I was concerned with the structural integrity of the roof supports, so I attempted to test the weight that the transverse beams would carry. I have concluded after numerous tests that the beams are sufficiently strong to carry the prescribed weight, but no more. I think that it is important that we notify every section that uses the facility of this finding.

If we eliminate the narrators and refocus attention on what the reader needs to know, we make the passage more pointed:

We must notify every section that uses the storage facility that they must not exceed the prescribed kilogram-per-square-meter floor weight. Tests have established the structural integrity of the transverse beams. They are strong enough to carry the prescribed weights but no more.

Unless your subject matter is the way you arrived at your observations or conclusion, you can usually be more concise and direct if you simply present the most salient observations and conclusions, minus the metadiscourse or narrative.

Some writers slip anonymous attribution into their prose by stating that something has been observed to exist, is found to exist, is seen, noticed, noted, remarked, etc.

High divorce rates have been observed to occur in parts of the Northeast that have been determined to have especially low population densities.

Regular patterns of drought and precipitation have been found to coincide with cycles of sunspot activity.

Unless you have some good reason to hedge a bit, leave out the fact that any unspecified observer has observed, found, noticed, or seen something. Just state that it is:
High divorce rates occur in parts of the Northeast that have especially low population densities.

Regular patterns of drought and precipitation coincide with cycles of sunspot activity.

If this seems too flat-footed, drop in a hedge: ... apparently coincide.

Exercise 5–3

In these next sentences, edit for both unnecessary metadiscourse and redundancy.

1. But on the other hand, however, we can point out that it appears that there is going to be TV programming that will on the whole appeal to what can only be considered our most prurient and, therefore, lowest interests.

2. A definition of the term seborrhea may be formulated in the following general way: By seborrhea we basically refer to an accumulation and buildup on the surface area of the skin of what would be diagnosed as abnormal or unusual sebaceous secreted matter, with creation of scab formations or encrustations.

3. It may possibly turn out to be the case that the playwright known to us by the name of William Shakespeare could be someone else, perhaps someone whom we would find to be a member of royalty.

4. In this particular section, I intend to discuss my feelings about the need not to continue with the old approach to plea bargaining. I believe this is the case because of two basic reasons. The first reason that it is necessary to deal with plea bargaining is that it appears to let hardened criminals not receive their just punishment. The second reason is the following: Plea bargaining virtually always encourages a growing lack of respect for the judicial system.

5. In conclusion, I would like to point out that in regard to China, it appears to be a good example of a country on the verge of what many observers agree is going to be what could only be called a major industrial expansion.

6. Turning now to the next question to be discussed, there are in regard to the subject of wild area preservation activities three basic principles when attempting to formulate a way of approaching decisions as to those wild and uninhabited areas unspoiled by human activity that should be set aside and preserved and not developed for commercial exploitation or business enterprises.

7. It is my underlying belief that in regard to terrestrial-type snakes, the assumption can be made that there are in all probability none to speak of in those unmapped areas of the world not yet explored that would be in excess of the size of those we already have knowledge of.

8. As far as I am concerned, I think that in light of the fact that Leon Trotsky was clearly and distinctly in favor of the Communist Revolution and overthrow of the Tsar, there is no possibility of arguing that he would ever have an objective viewpoint in regard to those events.

9. Depending on the particular view or position that one takes on this question now before us, the family unit and a range of other social institutions that exist in society take on a degree of importance equal to or perhaps even exceeding the aforementioned educational system as a source for the transmission of social values.

10. As we can see, I think that in regard to the current interest in life stages, it would appear that most investigators into the area have a tendency to take the position that the midlife crisis is the most critical period or stage in a person's life development from a mental health point of view; that is to say, we are in a position to know that, for the most part, a large number of us seem to come to the decision at that particular time in our lives whether or not we are going to be on the winning or losing side of the game of life.

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NOT THE NEGATIVE

For all practical purposes, these two sentences mean about the same thing:

Don't write in the negative.
Write in the affirmative.

But if we want to be more concise and direct, we should prefer:

Write in the affirmative.

To understand some negatives, we have to translate them into affirmatives, because the negative may only imply what we should do by telling us what we shouldn't do. The affirmative states it directly. Compare what you just read with this:
"Don't write in the negative" and "Write in the affirmative" do not mean different things. But if we don't want to be indirect, then we should not prefer "Don't write in the negative." We don't have to translate an affirmative statement in order not to misunderstand it because it does not imply what we should do.

We can't translate every negative sentence into an affirmative. But we can rephrase many negatives as affirmatives, and unless you have some special reason to emphasize a not, no, or never, look for that affirmative sentence. Some negatives allow almost formulaic translations into affirmatives:

- not many ——— few
- not the same ——— different
- not different ——— alike/similar
- did not ——— failed to
- does not have ——— lacks
- did not stay ——— left
- not old enough ——— too young
- did not remember ——— forgot
- did not consider ——— ignored
- did not allow ——— prevented
- did not accept ——— rejected
- not clearly ——— unclear
- not possible ——— impossible
- not able ——— unable
- not certain ——— uncertain

Now certainly this advice does not apply to those sentences that raise an issue by contradicting or denying some point that we intend to correct (as this sentence demonstrates). One of the most common ways we introduce discourse is to deny, to say "not so" to someone else's idea of the truth, or even some possible truth. Once we deny it, we then go on to assert the truth as we see it:

In the last decade of the 20th century, we will not find within our own borders sufficient oil to meet our needs, nor will we find it in the world market. The only way we will increase our oil supply is by developing the one resource that we have so far ignored: massive conservation.

When you combine negatives with passives, nominalizations, and compounds in sentences that are already a bit complex, your writing can become opaque:

Disengagement of the gears is not possible without locking mechanism release.

Payments should not be forwarded if there has not been due notification of this office.

These negatives all involve two events, one a precondition of the other. We can almost always recast such negatives into more direct affirmatives if we change nominalizations into clauses and passives into actives.

To disengage the gears, first release the locking mechanism.

Before you forward any payments, notify this office.

Which you put first—the outcome or the condition—depends on what the reader already knows, or what the reader is looking for. For example, if you are trying to explain how to reach some known objective, acquire some desired object, put that first:

Except when applicants have submitted applications without appropriate documentation, benefits will not be denied.

In this case, we can assume the reader is looking for benefits. Then we put that first, but in the affirmative:

You will receive benefits if you submit appropriate documents.

Or:

To receive benefits, submit appropriate documents.

As you can see from this example, it is especially important to avoid using negatives along with implicitly negative verbs and connecting words such as these:

verbs: preclude, prevent, lack, fail, doubt, reject, avoid; deny, refuse, exclude, contradict, prohibit, bar, etc.

conjunctions: except, unless, provided, however; without, against, lacking, absent, but for.

One almost formulaic translation involves the words unless, except, and without, three favorite words when we want to stipulate conditions to an action. We often put the conditional action in the negative, and then
introduce the conditions that make it possible with unless, without, or except:

No provision of this agreement will be waived unless done in writing by either party.

The action that is conditioned is a waiver. While we might want to emphasize the importance of not doing something, we are ordinarily more concerned about how to do something. So we ought to express that action in the affirmative:

If either party wishes to waive any provision of this agreement, he must do so in writing.

The translation almost always works:

X may not do Y unless/except/without doing Z.

\[\rightarrow X \text{ may do } Y \text{ only if } X \text{ does } Z.\]

\[\rightarrow \text{In order to do } Y, X \text{ must do } Z.\]

**Exercise 5-4**

Where appropriate, change the following to affirmatives. Do any additional editing you think useful.

1. It is not possible to reduce inflationary pressures when the federal government does not reduce its spending.
2. Sufficient research has not been directed to problems of those who cannot see when there are not normal levels of light.
3. Scientists have not agreed on the question of whether the universe is open or closed, a dispute that will not be resolved until the total mass of the universe has been computed with an error of no more than 5 percent.
4. So long as taxpayers do not refuse to pay their taxes, the government will have no difficulty in paying its debts.
5. We have no alternative to developing tar sand, oil shale, and coal as sources of fuel, because we cannot make ourselves energy independent without those sources.

6. There has not been adequate carcinogen prevention established in the chemical additive area of meat production.
7. Cancerous tumor treatment is not effective if growth removal is not accomplished before tumor metastasis.
8. Not until a resolution between Catholics and Protestants in regard to papal authority supremacy is achieved will there be the beginning of a reconciliation between the two.
9. Elections in which there is no attempt at dealing with those issues which do not receive adequate attention during the time when no election campaigns are under way cannot serve the functions for which they were intended.
10. The Insured may not refuse to provide the Insurer with all relevant receipts, checks, or other evidence of costs except when such expenses do not exceed $110.
11. Do not discontinue medication unless symptoms of dizziness and nausea fail to alleviate within six hours.
12. The lack of disconfirming evidence suggests that the results are not open to dispute, unless the absence of data from other investigations is taken as a negative factor.
13. No one is precluded from participating in the cost-sharing educational programs without a full hearing into the reasons for his or her rejection.
14. Because there have been no violations of the guidelines by HHS-supported public agencies, there appears to be no reason for the rejection of their application. The conclusion that such action was a result of political pressure cannot be avoided.

**Exercise 5-5**

Edit the redundancy out of these sentences. Where appropriate change negatives to affirmatives.

1. It seems to me that in a systematic look at the nature of advertising, it is not illogical to start out with a statement that will define the term. This will establish a common point of reference so that we will not be subjective in our approach to a subject matter that is not often the topic of unemotional discussion. Unfortunately there is no single definition for the word advertising, making the chances for possible
objectivity not likely. This indicates that the generally popular notions about advertising cannot be examined carelessly.

2. Regardless of the fact that we do not know for certain whether or not there is any possibility of the existence of what we define as life forms in different parts of the universe other than the one in which we exist, it seems probable that evidence that cannot be refuted that is of a basically statistical nature makes it highly unlikely that life could not be found in a large number of planetary systems around tens of thousands of stars scattered throughout the length and the breadth of the universe as we know it.

SUMMING UP
Cutting Fat

You can cut verbal fat if you get rid of the kind of abstraction discussed in Lesson Two. But you can also make your style leaner and more direct if you clear away the more diffuse kind of wordiness we’ve discussed in this Lesson. Unfortunately, I can’t offer any strong generalizations to equal those I suggested about making subjects coincide with agents, verbs with actions, about old information first and new information last. Diffuse wordiness is like a chronic accumulation of specks and mores that individually seem trivial but together blur what might otherwise be a clear and concise style.

Here is a list of major sources of wordiness, along with examples and revisions.

1. **Redundant pairs**

   If and when we can define and establish our final aims and goals, each and every member of our group will be ready and willing to offer aid and assistance.

   If we can define our goals, every member of our group will be ready to help.

2. **Redundant modifiers**

   In this world of today, official governmental red tape is seriously destroying initiative among individual business executives.

   Today, government red tape is destroying initiative among business executives.

3. **Redundant categories**

   In the area of educational activities, tight financial conditions are forcing school board members to cut back in nonessential areas in a drastic manner.

   In education, tight finances are forcing school boards to cut back drastically on nonessentials.

4. **Meaningless modifiers**

   Most students generally find some kind of summer work.

   Most students find summer work.

5. **Obvious implications**

   Energy used to power our industries and homes will in the years to come be increasingly expensive in terms of dollars and cents.

   In the future, energy will cost more.

6. **Pompous diction**

   You must endeavor to facilitate their cognizance of the deleterious result of excessive sesquipedalianism.

   You have to help them realize that big words can have bad results.

7. **Excessive detail**

   A microwave oven that you might buy in any department store uses less energy that is so expensive than a conventional oven that uses gas or electricity.

   Microwave ovens use less energy than conventional ovens.

8. **A phrase for a word**

   A small sail-powered craft that has turned on its side or completely over must remain buoyant enough so that it will bear the weight of those individuals who were aboard.

   A small sailboat that capsizes must float well enough to support its crew.

9. **Excessive metadiscourse**

   It is almost certainly the case that, for the most part, totalitarian systems cannot allow a society to settle into what we would perceive to be stable modes of behavior or, even more crucially perhaps, stable relationships.
Totalitarian systems cannot allow a society to settle into stable behavior or stable relationships.

10. **Indirect negates**

There is no reason not to believe that engineering malfunctions in nuclear energy systems cannot always be anticipated. We can assume that malfunctions in nuclear energy systems will surprise us.

You don't have to memorize these types of redundancy, or even unfailingly distinguish one from another. What is important is an eye—or an ear—for a loose phrase, for a useless modifier, for that haze of wordiness that can afflict the prose of even the best writers.