



Exercises for Eliminating Wordiness

Brought to you by the Purdue University Online Writing Lab at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>

For strategies to improve conciseness in your writing, see Methods of Eliminating Wordiness at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_concise.html

Directions: Revise these sentences to state their meaning in fewer words. Avoid passive voice, needless repetition, and wordy phrases and clauses. The first sentence has been done as an example.

- There are many farmers in the area who are planning to attend the meeting which is scheduled for next Friday.
1. Many area farmers plan to attend next Friday's meeting.
- Although Bradley Hall is regularly populated by students, close study of the building as a structure is seldom undertaken by them.
- He dropped out of school on account of the fact that it was necessary for him to help support his family.
- It is expected that the new schedule will be announced by the bus company within the next few days.
- There are many ways in which a student who is interested in meeting foreign students may come to know one.
- It is very unusual to find someone who has never told a deliberate lie on purpose.
- Trouble is caused when people disobey rules that have been established for the safety of all.
- A campus rally was attended by more than a thousand students. Five students were arrested by campus police for disorderly conduct, while several others are charged by campus administrators with organizing a public meeting without being issued a permit to do so.
- The subjects that are considered most important by students are those that have been shown to be useful to them after graduation.
- In the not too distant future, college freshmen must all become aware of the fact that there is a need for them to make contact with an academic adviser concerning the matter of a major.
- In our company there are wide-open opportunities for professional growth with a company that enjoys an enviable record for stability in the dynamic atmosphere of aerospace technology.
- Some people believe in capital punishment, while other people are against it; there are many opinions on this subject.

Directions: Combine each sentence group into one concise sentence.

- The cliff dropped to reefs seventy-five feet below. The reefs below the steep cliff were barely visible through the fog.
- Their car is gassed up. It is ready for the long drive. The drive will take all night.
- Sometimes Stan went running with Blanche. She was a good athlete. She was on the track team at school.
- Taylor brought some candy back from Europe. It wasn't shaped like American candy. The candy tasted kind of strange to him.
- Government leaders like to mention the creation of new jobs. They claim that these new jobs indicate a strong economy. They don't mention that low-wage jobs without benefits and security have replaced many good jobs.

Directions: Revise the following passage, avoiding wordiness and undesirable repetition.

A large number of people enjoy reading murder mysteries regularly. As a rule, these people are not themselves murderers, nor would these people really ever enjoy seeing someone commit an actual murder, nor would most of them actually enjoy trying to solve an actual murder. They probably enjoy reading murder mysteries because of this reason: they have found a way to escape from the monotonous, boring routine of dull everyday existence.

To such people the murder mystery is realistic fantasy. It is realistic because the people in the murder mystery are as a general rule believable as people. They are not just made up pasteboard figures. It is also realistic because the character who is the hero, the character who solves the murder mystery, solves it not usually by trial and error and haphazard methods but by exercising a high degree of logic and reason. It is absolutely and totally essential that people who enjoy murder mysteries have an admiration for the human faculty of logic.

But murder mysteries are also fantasies. The people who read such books of fiction play a game. It is a game in which they suspend certain human emotions. One of these human emotions that they suspend is pity. If the reader stops to feel pity and sympathy for each and every victim that is killed or if the reader stops to feel terrible horror that such a thing could happen in our world of today, that person will never enjoy reading murder mysteries. The devoted reader of murder mysteries keeps uppermost in mind at all times the goal of arriving through logic and observation at the final solution to the mystery offered in the book. It is a game with life and death. Whodunits hopefully help the reader to hide from the hideous horrors of actual life and death in the real world.

The following information must remain intact on every handout printed for distribution.

This page is located at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/general/gl_conciseEX1.html

Copyright ©1995-2002 by OWL at Purdue University and Purdue University. All rights reserved.
Use of this site, including printing and distributing our handouts, constitutes acceptance of our terms and conditions of fair use, available at
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/lab/fairuse.html>.

To contact OWL, please visit our contact information page at
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/lab/contact.html> to find the right person to call or email.