

## Writing Clear, Readable Sentences: Avoid Distracting Wordiness

During revision, good writers review and rework their sentences to eliminate unnecessary and distracting wordiness. Using three simple strategies will help avoid wordiness and thus make sentences more concise, more effective, and easier to understand.

Telling readers how to interpret your ideas makes your sentences wordy and can distract readers so that they focus attention on you, the writer, rather than on the text. Delete those unnecessary words and/or phrases.

### **Example:**

Wordy sentence:     The last point I want to make is that hard work can bring success.

Revised sentence:   Finally, hard work can bring success.

Another way to distract the reader and to make a sentence wordy is to include words that refer to you. Try to revise those sentences and to delete references to you.

### **Example:**

Wordy sentence:     It seems to me that democracy provides greater freedom to pursue individual goals.

Revised sentence:   Democracy provides greater freedom to pursue individual goals.

Unnecessarily wordy transitions also distract readers from important ideas. Change these transitions to make your writing less wordy.

### **Example:**

Wordy beginning:    Because of the fact that Maria needed to use the phone, . . .

Revised beginning:  Because Maria needed to use the phone, . . .

Here is a list of some wordy transitions and their shorter revisions.

### **Original**

### **Revised**

With regard to

Regarding, about

In the event that

if

During the time in which

while

Because of the fact that

because

As a result of the fact that

because

Due to the fact that

because

### **Exercise A**

Revise these sentences to eliminate distracting wordiness. Use the strategies taught in this lesson:

1. As we turn to the next topic, we realize that we must stop inflation now.
2. My mother was annoyed because of the fact that I arrived late.
3. I have found Mark to be the most vicious gossip I know.
4. To my way of thinking, the legislature must strengthen the current laws on speeding.
5. I admire his writing for the fact that its ideas are expressed in a clear manner.
6. During the time in which Maria wrote the conclusion, the secretary finished typing.
7. We are of the opinion that a salary cut would destroy morale.
8. In the event that the law does not change, I think that we should start a petition drive.
9. With regard to the memo you sent me, I am of the opinion that we should inform our employees of the new policy quickly.
10. Due to the fact that Phil was late, our trip was delayed by two hours.

### **Exercise B**

Revise a page from one of your essays to eliminate wordiness. Look for words and/or phrases that (1) state how you want your readers to interpret your ideas, (2) refer to you, and (3) form unnecessarily wordy transitions.