

## Writing Concisely

*Wordiness can impede clarity and weaken the impact of your writing. Effective writing communicates an idea in the fewest words necessary. To be able to do this, you must carefully choose the words that best convey what you mean to say. Concision saves space and produces more readable prose.*

- Try to spot problem sentences by reading your paper aloud. If something gets your tongue tied, or you need to reread it, there's a good chance it could be written more succinctly.
- You may also try using the 'three line test.' If you see a sentence that spans 3 lines or more, consider shortening it. Such lengthy sentences can be confusing to read.
- Avoid starting sentences with "it is," "there is," or "there are." In many cases, 'it' is just a filler.

**Wordy:** It is expensive to own a car. **Concise:** Owning a car is expensive

- Eliminate excessive use of the word "of."

**Wordy:** The author emphasizes the significant influence of the values and ideologies of the scientists or of the decision makers involved in the policy-formulation process.

**Concise:** The author emphasizes that the values and ideologies of scientists or decision-makers significantly influence policy formulation.

- Identify the main idea(s) of your sentence and cut out the 'extra stuff.' Don't be overly concerned with making it sound fancy—the simplest expression is often the clearest.\*

**Wordy:** Antioch University offers students a comprehensive and learner-centered education that balances practical field experience with the theoretical and conceptual frameworks needed to be an effective working professional. (28 words)

**Concise:** Antioch University offers learner-centered, career-oriented education that balances theory and practice. (13 words)

**Wordy:** Being concise involves mindful consideration of your intended message and requires carefully choosing the words that best convey what you mean to say. (23 words)

**Concise:** Being concise involves carefully choosing the words that best convey what you mean to say. (15 words)

- Replace vague words with more specific alternatives. It's usually better to have one strong word than several ambiguous or redundant words. A thesaurus can sometimes help you find the word that most closely matches the sense you're going for.\*

**Wordy:** Conservation biologists often *write and speak about concepts relating to* the critical relationship between biodiversity and the *stable functioning, adaptive strength and hardiness* of ecosystems.

**Concise:** Conservation biologists often *describe* the critical relationship between biodiversity and ecosystem *resilience*.

**Wordy:** *In spite of the fact that* the fine print at the bottom of the bill *had made available an explanation of charges*, Charlie was still confused.

**Concise:** *Although* the fine print at the bottom of the bill *explained the charges*, Charlie was still confused.

\* Adapted from: Hurm, N., Weber, R. (2010, September 30). Conciseness. Retrieved from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/572/01/>