

Grammar Hammer  
Wordiness

*Put wordy phrases on a diet. Make sentences concise by eliminating wordy phrases.*

**Wordy:** *In a situation in which* a class is overenrolled, you may request that the instructor force-add you.

**Concise:** *When* a class is overenrolled, you may ask the instructor to force-add you.

**Wordy:** Amrit made a few observations *concerning the matter of* contingency funds.

**Concise:** Amrit made a few observations *about* contingency funds.

*Here are some words you can use to trim the fat off of wordy phrases:*

Instead of...	Use...
the reason for/for the reason that due (or 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
notwithstanding/regardless/despite the fact that	although, even, though
in the event that if it should transpire/happen that under circumstances in which	if
on the occasion of under circumstances/in a situation in which	when
as regards in reference to with regard to concerning the matter of where . . . is concerned	about
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
is able to has the opportunity to is in a position to has the capacity for has the ability to	can
it is possible that there is a chance that it could happen that the possibility exists for	may, might, can, could
prior to in anticipation of subsequent to following on at the same time as simultaneously with	before, after, as

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*Sometimes, prepositional phrases aren't really necessary, especially when you use them (instead of an **apostrophe + s**) to denote possession of an object.*

*Try to avoid using too many prepositional phrases in a single sentence; they can obscure the main subject and action of a sentence.*

**Unnecessary phrase:** The opinion *of the manager*

**Correction:** The *manager's* opinion

**Unnecessary phrase:** The obvious effect *of* such a range *of* reference is to assure the audience *of* the author's range *of* learning and intellect.

**Correction:** The wide-ranging references in this talk assure the audience that the author is intelligent and well-read.

**Unnecessary phrase:** It is a matter *of* the gravest possible importance *to* the health *of* anyone *with* a history *of* a problem *with* disease *of* the heart that he or she should avoid the sort *of* foods *with* a high percentage *of* saturated fats.

**Correction:** Anyone with a history of heart disease should avoid saturated fats.

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*This writing involves past student work. It contains several errors. Revise these sentences to state their meaning in fewer words. When you can, avoid passive voice, needless repetition, unnecessary prepositional phrases, and wordy phrases, and clauses.*

(1) When first introduced, the feudal and manorial systems were mainly a way to fix the gaping hole in the military that the fall of the Roman Empire had left.

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(2) While this would indeed provide increased order and thus security to the majority of citizens, it would also pave the way for a long chain of class dependency, something still observed in modern-day Europe.

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(3) This writing came from the Church during the Carolingian Empire after the Vikings travelled to mainland Europe.

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(4) As a result of prioritizing their own opinions, scholars and monks of the Church, who controlled the writing of the Middle Ages, could change history as they please.

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(5) Their ideas seeped into the minds of historians who projected these falsifications to the rest of the world through their work.

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**Writing Exercise**

Revise these sentences to state their meaning in fewer words. When you can, avoid passive voice, needless repetition, unnecessary prepositional phrases, and wordy phrases, and clauses.

(1) He dropped out of school on account of the fact that it was necessary for him to help support his family.

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(2) Trouble is caused when people disobey rules that have been established for the safety of all.

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(3) Sometimes Stan went running with Blanche. She was a good athlete. She was on the track team at school.

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(4) The way Roosevelt came about interning the Japanese-Americans during World War II was illogical.

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(5) It is very unusual to find someone who has never told a deliberate lie on purpose.

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