



# 5 Ways to Make Your Writing More Concise

Adapted From the Indiana University Purdue/Fort Wayne Writing Center [<http://www.ipfw.edu/casa/wc/handouts.beingconcise.html>]

## 1. Get rid of words that mean little or nothing.

Kind of Actually Really Certain Various Basically Generally Practically Virtually

*These words add nothing but length to your paper.*

## 2. Use one word instead of a pair of them.

Full and complete Hope and trust Any and all Each and every Basic and fundamental

*Choose one or the other.*

## 3. Eliminate nouns and adjective pairs that are redundant.

Terrible tragedy Basic fundamentals True facts Future plans Each individual Various differences Final outcome Free gift

*If you choose a good noun, you don't need the adjective.*

## 4. Try to replace phrases with single words.

It is possible that we will find a similarity in the two situations.

We may find a similarity in the two situations.

In the event that the information is ready early, we will contact you.

If the information is ready early, we will contact you.

*Ask yourself, "What do I really mean?" and then write it down in the fewest words possible. This sentence will be your start. Now, look for ways to combine sentences with common themes. If you need to add more detail, use one strong word instead of a group of weaker ones.*

## 5. Use positives instead of negatives.

Don't put items that are not recyclable in this container.

Put only recyclable items in this container.

Except in cases in which applicants have failed to submit applications without complete documentation, benefits will not be denied.

To receive benefits, submit all your documents.

*Some words are naturally negative, and if you combine them with not, you make your reader do a lot of extra work. The positive sentence is easier to read.*

## The Maytum Learning Commons

writing • speech • technology • research • tutoring • study skills • academic planning • disability services  
[sites.allegheny.edu/learningcommons](http://sites.allegheny.edu/learningcommons)