

**Wordiness 101** A sentence is wordy when its sound exceeds its meaning. As you edit, cut or restate anything that does not help the reader focus on your point. Common types of wordiness include:

**Pointless prepositions: Cut them and let the main words do their job.**

the story continues ~~on~~ to its climax  
 when Lincoln entered ~~into~~ the room  
 this occurred alongside ~~of~~ another event  
 throughout ~~in~~ the story  
 in ~~the~~ making ~~of~~ the movie  
 filling ~~up~~ the pipes  
 write ~~out~~ the answers  
 establishing ~~of~~ the truth

**Conceptual clutter: Don't bury key words in heavy phrases.**

do a study of the effects	→	study the effects
is indicative of	→	indicates
provides a summary of	→	summarizes
has a tendency to	→	tends to
the author is saying that	→	the author says
I will provide arguments for	→	I argue
we were able to complete	→	we completed
the process of writing	→	writing
the amount of effort required	→	the effort required
one of the main reasons why	→	one reason
the field of linguistics	→	linguistics
take into consideration	→	consider
on a regular basis	→	regularly
on the educational front	→	in education
during the month of April	→	in April
has an ability to	→	can
carried out an experiment	→	experimented

**Empty sentence openers: Cut them to save space.**

As a matter of fact	It is apparent, therefore, that
If you ask me	In regards to the matter at hand
Probably	It is my belief that
For that matter	It is obvious that
In other words	It seems to me that
For all intents and purposes	I'm not sure but
In my opinion	For one thing
Believe it or not	Supposedly

Empty modifiers: Cut them to improve your tone.

<del>truly</del> incredible	really relevant	<del>wholly</del> impossible
<del>clearly</del> evident	<del>completely</del> satisfied	<del>perfectly</del> clear
<del>somewhat</del> true	<del>plainly</del> demonstrated	most importantly of all
<del>totally</del> false	<del>finally</del> recognized	everyone <del>in the world</del>
<del>generally</del> accepted	<del>actually</del> completed	<del>practically</del> always

Clichés and slang: Avoid them because they are stale and vague.

hindsight is twenty-twenty	time to get real	see the light at the end of the
in his heart of hearts	breaks new ground	tunnel
over and over again	a different ball game	doesn't have a clue
hit the nail on the head	get over it	only time will tell

Circumlocutions: Prefer active, concise phrasing.

mean

1. When people say *science* they ~~are relating it to~~ what happens in a laboratory.

2. The readers ~~can relate and~~ sympathize with the main character.

imagine

3. The viewers can ~~relate by imagining~~ King Kong's feelings.

uses

4. Orwell's ~~ideas are related to the audience with~~ strong examples.

5. The author<'s> ~~provides several convincing statements which make her arguments~~  
<are> a persuasive ~~one~~.

Winn's definition of

6. ~~The definition used here to describe~~ addiction applies to t.v. watching.

addicts

7. Drug ~~addiction is an addiction which enables the user to~~ lead a damaged life.

8. ~~In a previous study (Ji-Dong Gu et al <1999>) it was shown~~ that the pigment forming eubacterium, *Voesella indigofera*, is sensitive to hexavalent chromium.

Some

9. ~~There have been findings of certain~~ *Stapholococcus Areus* strains ~~that~~ are resistant to all known antimicrobials.