

QUICK GUIDE

to Making Your Writing More Concise

- 1** Watch for forms of the verb *to be* (*am, is, are, was, were, has been, have been*)
Turn passive constructions into active ones.

X is done by Y → *Y does X*

Consider rewriting sentences that begin with *there is, there are, it is*.

- 2** Watch for prepositional phrases

If you have strings of phrases beginning with words like *in, on, of, by, around, about*, and *between*, consider rephrasing them:

the permission of the customer → *the customer's permission*
in many circumstances → *often*

- 3** Watch for nominalizations

"Nominalization" means turning a word into a noun. Typically, nominalizations are verbs that have been turned into nouns, which then require a verb for use in a sentence. Convert these phrases back to the original verbs:

reach an agreement = *agree*
make a decision = *decide*
achieve a balance = *balance*
suffer a loss = *lose*

have a response = *respond*
conduct an investigation = *investigate*
engage in a search = *search*

- 4** Watch for padding

Look out for redundancies:

7 a.m. in the morning
basic fundamentals
lag behind

absolutely essential
future plans

meet together
final conclusion

Look out for "filler" words and phrases that don't add meaning:

actually
at the end of the day

in many ways
foundationally

essentially
ultimately

Don't use a fancy expression where a plain one will do:

utilize → *use*
with reference to → *about*
initiate → *start*

in light of the fact that → *because*
at this point in time → *now*

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For more help with your writing, visit www.howtowriteanything.com