

Improving Your Rhythm: Concision

The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary many speak. –Hans Hoffman

Sometimes writers will write extra wordy sentences to sound sophisticated. Unfortunately, long, complex sentences aren't necessarily good sentences. Sometimes the shorter and simpler the sentence is, the better. In this worksheet, we are going to practice simplifying our sentences so that their message is clear. To do that we are going to use a technique called concision (which means cutting out the unnecessary).

There are 5 times when it is often a good idea for a writer to get rid of words:

1. When the words mean little or nothing.

Some examples of words that are often meaningless are:

*Actually *Really *Certain *Basically *Generally
*Various *Virtually *Given *Particular *Practically

*Example: Productivity **actually** depends on **certain** factors that **basically** involve psychology more than any **particular** technology*



Productivity depends on psychology more than on technology

2. When words repeat the meaning of other words.

Some words with repeated meaning are:

*Full and Complete *True and Accurate *Past History
*Future Plans * Each and Every *Personal Beliefs

Example: My future plans is to do something that fits with my personal beliefs



My plan is to do something that fits with my beliefs.

3. When the reader could figure out the meaning of the words without them.

Some examples of words that the reader could figure out are:

*round in **shape**

*at an early **time**

*large in **size**

Example: I will be there at an early time.



I will be there early.

4. When it is possible to replace a lot of words with a few words (and you don't lose meaning).

Examples of less words having the same meaning as more words:

Carefully read what you have written → Thoughtfully edit

He believed but wasn't sure → He assumed

5. When sentences can be combined without affecting meaning.

The supposed crash of a UFO in Roswell, New Mexico aroused interest in extraterrestrial life.
This crash is rumored to have occurred in 1947



The supposed 1947 crash of a UFO in Roswell, New Mexico aroused interest in extraterrestrial life.