

## Concise writing cheat sheet

No one wants to read extra words when they don't add information or meaning. Writing concisely can improve readability, and save reading time.

### 3 ways to be concise

Writing concisely requires attention to three things:

1. Only including what's necessary. If you plan before you start writing you'll know what you need to say and what your audience needs to know. Don't include trivial, irrelevant information.
2. Not repeating anything.
3. Editing ruthlessly, watching out for wordy writing habits.

### 4 wordy writing problems

Here are some examples. The word in brackets can be removed when you're editing.

#### Meaningless modifiers or qualifiers

Avoid adding words thinking they'll add meaning or clarity when they don't.

- (end) result
- (brief) summary
- (completely) destroyed
- continue (on)
- (past) history
- plan (ahead)

#### Redundant categories

Avoid including words that spell out the category of a word when it's already obvious.

- brief (in duration)
- consensus (of opinion)
- free (of charge)
- (the month of) December
- (the state of) Victoria
- (period of) 3 weeks

#### Paired words

Avoid using a pair of words when they have roughly the same meaning.

- (each and) every
- first (and foremost)
- (full and) complete
- fees (and charges)
- cease (and desist)

- various (and sundry)

### Wordy phrases

Avoid phrasing that includes extra words that aren't doing any extra work.

- (in order) to
- is (located) at
- during (the course of)
- until (such time as)
- owing to (the fact that)
- (both) x and y

### Examples

Avoid this	Try this instead
A considerable amount of	Many, a lot
Acquainted yourself with	Read, learn about
Added bonus	Bonus, extra
Advance planning	Planning
Advance warning	Warning
A large number of	Many
Along the lines of	Like
A majority of	Most, many
A number of	Some, many
Any and all	All
As a consequence of	Because
As a matter of fact	In fact or DELETE
As a means to	To
As of the date of	From
Assess whether	Work out, see if
At all times	Always
At an early date	Soon
At first glance	First or DELETE
At the present time	Now
At the same time that	While
At this point in time	Now
Basic and fundamental	Basic
Basic fundamentals	Basics
Basic necessity	Basics, needs
Because of the fact that	Because
Both of these, both of them	Both

Both [x] and [y]	[x] and [y]
Brings to mind	Reminds, suggests
By definition means	Means
By means of	By
By the use of	Using
By virtue of	By
Came to a realisation	Realised
Can be seen as	Is or DELETE
Cheap in quality	Cheap
Cease and desist	Stop
Circumstances in which	When or where
Compare and contrast	Compare
Complete failure	Failure, failed
Complete stranger	Stranger
Concerning the matter of	About
Despite the fact that	Although
Did not succeed	Failed
Due to the effects	Because
Due to the fact that	Because
During the course of	During, while
Each and every	Each, all, every
Each individual	Everyone, all
Early on in the	Early in the
End result	End, result
Excessive number of	Too many
Extreme in degree	Extreme
Final conclusion	Conclusion
Final result	Result
First and foremost	First
For all intents and purposes	Actually or DELETE
For that which is	For the
For the duration of	While, during
For the purpose of	For
For the purpose of doing	To do
Free of charge	Free
Full and complete	Full
Future plans	Plans

Gather together	Gather
General public	Public
Has a negative impact	Hurts, harms
Has (had or have) been found to	Is, was, are
Has (had or have) the ability to (capacity for)	Can, could
Has (had or have) the opportunity to	Can, could
I myself	I
In a case in which	When, where
In accordance with	By
In actual fact	In fact, actually
In a situation in which	In, when, where
In all likelihood (probability)	Likely, probably
In close proximity	Close, near
In connection with	About
In light of the fact that	Because
Inner feelings	Feelings
In order to	To
In reference to	About
In the course of	While, during
In the event that	If
In the final analysis	Finally
In the light of	Considering, because
In the majority of cases (instances)	Most
In the midst of (middle of)	During, while
In the near future (not too distant future)	Soon
In the neighbourhood of	About, around
In this day and age	Now, currently, today
In view of the fact that	Because
Is able to	Can
Is aware of the fact that	Knows
Is found to be	Is
Is going to	Will
Is in conflict with	Contradicts, is against
Is in contrast with	Compared with, contrasts with
Is of significant importance	Is important
Is located at	Is at
It can be seen that	So or DELETE

It could happen that	Could, may, might
It has to be remembered	Remember
It is apparent (clear) that	Clearly
It is necessary that	Must
Join together	Join
Last but not least	Finally
Later on	Later
Make a decision	Decide
Make contact with	Contact
Make reference to	Refer to
Manner in which	Way
Mental attitude	Attitude, opinion, view
Mix together	Mix
More preferable	Preferable
Mutual agreement	Agreement
Natural instinct	Instinct
Necessary prerequisite	Prerequisite (needed)
New initiative	New, initiative
Of great importance	Important
Of the opinion	Think, believe
On account of (the fact that)	Because
On a daily basis	Daily
On the basis of	Because, based on
On the grounds that	Because
On the occasion of	On
On the whole	Overall or DELETE
On top of all this	And then or DELETE
On two different occasions	Twice
Overall goal	Goal
Overall structure	Structure
Owing to the fact that	Because
Past experience	Experience
Past history	History
Past memories	Memories
Period of time	Period, time
Pink in colour	Pink
Plan ahead	Plan

Prior to (Previous to)	Before
Providing that	If
Real truth	Truth
Reconsider again	Reconsider
Regardless of the fact that	Although
The majority of	Most
The month of November	November
The reason why	Reason, because
There is a chance that	It may, might, could
Throughout the course of	During, while
Totally obvious	Obvious
True facts	Facts
Until such time as	Until
Was aware	Knew
Whether or not	Whether, if
Which have been found to be	Are
With regard to	About, regarding
With the exception of	Except for
Witnessed first hand	Witnessed, saw