



## **WORDINESS AND GOBBLEDYGOOK EXERCISES answer key**

### **A. Eliminate wordiness, repetition and unnecessary vague abstractions in the following:**

1. It is supposed that children are ready to read by age five.  
*Supposedly children are ready to read by age five.*
2. This room is used for study purposes by the students.  
*This is a student study room.*  
*This is a study room for students.*
3. Due to the fact that some of the guests that we invited to the meeting have not yet arrived at this time, we will be delaying the start of the meeting till 7:30 p.m., at which time the meeting will commence.  
*Because some of the guests have not yet arrived, we will be delaying the meeting until 7:30 p.m.*
4. I am writing this letter to let you know of an alteration in my plan to lunch with you on Friday in view of the fact that air transportation to your city has become unattainable as a result of the airline strike that is in progress at this time.  
*I will not be able to lunch with you on Friday because of the airline strike.*
5. There is a strong feeling among several members of the staff employed at this establishment that the increase in compensation that is being offered by management in its proposed new contract would be insufficient to offset the rise in our living costs as a result of the current high levels of inflation in the economy.  
*Several staff members believe compensation proposed in the new contract to be inadequate because of the rising cost of living.*
6. It has been suggested by our company legal counsel that the position you have adopted in regard to the payment of the bill that we sent you is not in accordance with the terms that you were in agreement with at the time of the purchase of the merchandise and that, accordingly, we are obliged to add a late payment penalty of \$12 to the balance owing on your account.  
*Our lawyers have advised us that you have broken your contract; therefore we are adding a late payment penalty of \$12 to your account.*

7. A decision was reached this morning by Mr. Wishywashy to go ahead with his plan to redecorate his office.

*Mr Wishywashy decided to redecorate his office.*

8. Our reason for not being on time for the meeting today was basically that a traffic problem was encountered during the times that we were attempting to get here.

*Traffic made us late for the meeting.*

9. The company is engaged in the manufacture of exact replicas of the sweaters of NHL hockey teams, identical in material and in color to the originals worn by the team members.

*The company is manufacturing NHL sweater replicas.*

10. If I do not receive satisfaction in the answer that I am given by the assistant manager, I will, shall we say, attempt to get a more satisfactory answer through a visit to the manager.

*If the assistant manager does not satisfy me, I will go to the manager.*

11. At 8:30 p.m. in the evening a car that was red in color was seen by me in collision with a truck that was blue in color.

*At 8:30 p.m. I saw a red car collide with a blue truck.*

12. He lives in the vicinity of Toronto, Ontario.

*He lives near Toronto, Ontario.*

13. They spoke to him in regard to his grades.

*They spoke to him about his grades.*

14. Due to the fact that he turned his term paper in late, he failed the course.

*He failed the course because of a late term paper.*

15. This room is reserved for purposes of play.

*This is a play room.*

16. She is a person who studies hard to make good grades.

*She studies hard to make good grades.*

17. They inquired at the hospital in regard to his condition.

*They inquired at the hospital about his condition.*

18. Owing to the fact that school is still in session, the speed limit is low.

*Because school is still in session, the speed limit is low.*

19. They spoke in a private fashion.

*They spoke privately.*

20. Campers can buy many food supplies in the village owing to the fact that it is close by.

*Campers can buy many food supplies in the nearby village.*

21. The only thing I can think of is that he is unlucky in love.  
*It seems that he is unlucky in love.*
22. Mr. Jenkins still hasn't decided the question as to whether he should fail the star football player.  
*Mr. Jenkins still hasn't decided whether to fail the star football player.*
23. The fact is that I can't decide what role suits him best.  
*I can't decide what role suits him best.*
24. He walked in a hesitant manner after the cast was first taken off.  
*He walked hesitantly after the cast was first taken off.*
25. They spoke in regard to politics and the election.  
*They spoke about politics and the election.*
26. Due to the fact that money is tight, we can't afford to go out so often.  
*Because money is tight, we can't afford to go out so often.*
27. She is the girl who is wearing the yellow coat.  
*She is the girl in the yellow coat.*
28. I was born in the city of Regina, which is located in the province of Saskatchewan.  
*I was born in Regina, Saskatchewan.*
29. They ran in a fearful way.  
*They ran fearfully.*
30. The deal is that I can get only first-class seats.  
*I can get only first-class seats.*
31. These are the clothes I wear for housework purposes.  
*These are housework clothes.*
32. They discussed the question as to whether the United States should interfere in the affairs of other nations.  
*They discussed whether the United States should interfere in other nations' affairs.*
33. Bobby Kennedy was equally as bright as President Kennedy.  
*Bobby Kennedy was as bright as President Kennedy.*
34. The solution is to rewrite the sentence in different words.  
*The solution is to rewrite the sentence.*
35. His distress was evident to the eye.  
*His distress was evident.*

36. Relations between them will probably continue to remain strained.  
*Relations between them will probably remain strained.*
37. I have never in my life experienced such poor service.  
*I have never experienced such poor service.*
38. This movie is restricted just to adults.  
*This movie is restricted.*
39. This alternative apparently seems sensible.  
*This alternative seems sensible.*
40. She wore a sweater that fitted her form.  
*She wore a form-fitting sweater.*
41. The grass is the color green.  
*The grass is green.*
42. I personally have never cheated in class.  
*I have never cheated in class.*
43. You should rewrite the composition again.  
*You should rewrite the composition.*
44. He is quite sensitive in feeling.  
*He is quite sensitive.*
45. You must write a note to thank each and every contributor.  
*You must write a note to thank each contributor.*
46. He needs basic tools such as reading, writing, math, etc.  
*He needs basic tools such as reading and writing.*
47. Its fur is smooth in texture.  
*Its fur is smooth.*
48. The food here is equally as good as that at the Student Union.  
*The food here is as good as that at the Student Union.*
49. History repeats itself over again.  
*History repeats itself.*
50. The Rocky Mountains are much bigger in size than any so-called mountains in Ontario or Quebec.  
*The Rocky Mountains are much bigger than any so-called mountains in Ontario or Quebec.*

**B. Replace “it” if does not represent something definite.**

Example: John is failing algebra. It is obvious that he should be tutored.  
John is failing algebra. It is a difficult subject for him to grasp.

Notice that in (b) “it” stands for something definite, for the subject of algebra, but in (a) “it” stands for nothing and is ambiguous. Better to change the sentence, getting rid of “it,” to “Obviously, he should be tutored.”

1. It is probable that Michael Jordan is the best professional basketball player.  
*Michael Jordan is probably the best professional basketball player.*
2. It is necessary for middle-income people to save all year for a one-week vacation.  
*Middle-income people must save all year for a one-week vacation.*
3. It was suspected that canned soup caused botulism, a severe food poisoning.  
*Canned soup was suspected of causing botulism, a severe food poisoning.*
4. A teacher has to remember so many faces that it is important for her/him to have a good memory.  
*A teacher has to remember so many faces that he or she should have a good memory.*
5. It is felt that the Orioles will win the pennant.  
*Most fans feel that the Orioles will win the pennant.*  
*The Orioles will probably win the pennant.*
6. The school year is short. It is over in June  
*“It” here has a definite reference, so the sentence need not be changed.*
7. The team has many new players this year. It is hard to recognize all of them.  
*The team has so many new players this year that they are hard to recognize.*
8. That game is fun to play; it is certain to be a bestseller.  
*“It” here has a definite reference, so the sentence need not be changed.*
9. It is supposed that children are ready to read by age six.  
*Children are supposedly ready to read by age six.*  
*Educators suppose that children are ready to read by age six.*
10. She is such a nice person. It is easy to like her.  
*She is easy to like because she is such a nice person.*  
*She is such a nice person that she is easy to like.*

### C. Replace the word “there” with something definite.

Note: When the writer hasn’t really decided who should carry the action of the sentence, he often lets “there” do it:

Example: There are many national issues that interest college students.

Correction: *Many national issues interest college students.*

In this case the word “there” does not add anything; in fact, it hides the real subject of the sentence.

Example: How many Great Lakes are there? There are five.

In this case, the word “there” serves as a useful grammatical construct and it cannot easily be removed.

If the subject is already in the sentence, avoid using “there.”

1. There are many repairs to be made on that house.  
*That house needs many repairs.*  
*Many repairs need to be made on that house.*
2. There are two reasons for taking a winter vacation.  
This sentence is okay as it is.
3. There was a recession in 1970.  
This sentence is okay as it is.
4. There are any of at least six other men who could do this job better.  
*Any of at least six other men could do this job better.*
5. There are many reasons to celebrate Martin Luther King’s birthday.  
This sentence is okay as it is.
6. There are twenty-five students in the usual composition class.  
*Twenty-five students are in the usual composition class.*
7. There is nothing more to say about it.  
This sentence is okay as it is.
8. There are several courses in ecology listed in the catalog.  
*Several courses in ecology are listed in the catalog.*
9. There are several words misspelled in that article.  
*Several words are misspelled in the article.*
10. There are only two considerations: the location and the price.  
This sentence is okay as it is.