

## Wordiness Exercises\*

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

1. It is supposed that children are ready to read by age five.
2. This room is used for study purposes by the 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.
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.
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.
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.
7. A decision was reached this morning by Mr. Wishywashy to go ahead with his plan 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.
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.

\*Adapted from the former "Wordiness and Gobbledygook Exercises" originally located on the Nipissing University website.

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.
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.
12. He lives in the vicinity of Toronto, Ontario.
13. They spoke to him in regard to his grades.
14. Due to the fact that he turned his term paper in late, he failed the course.
15. This room is reserved for purposes of play.
16. She is a person who studies hard to make good grades.
17. They inquired at the hospital in regard to his condition.
18. Owing to the fact that school is still in session, the speed limit is low.
19. They spoke in a private fashion.
20. Campers can buy many food supplies in the village owing to the fact that it is close by.
21. The only thing I can think of is 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.
23. The fact is that I can't decide what role suits him best.
24. He walked in a hesitant manner after the cast was first taken off.
25. They spoke in regard to politics and the election.
26. Due to the fact that money is tight, we can't afford to go out so often.
27. She is the girl who is wearing the yellow coat.
28. I was born in the city of Regina, which is located in the province of Saskatchewan.
29. They ran in a fearful way.
30. The deal is that I can get only first-class seats.
31. These are the clothes I wear for housework purposes.
32. They discussed the question as to whether the United States should interfere in the affairs of other nations.
33. Bobby Kennedy was equally as bright as President Kennedy.
34. The solution is to rewrite the sentence in different words.
35. His distress was evident to the eye.

36. Relations between them will probably continue to remain strained.
37. I have never in my life experienced such poor service.
38. This movie is restricted just to adults.
39. This alternative apparently seems sensible.
40. She wore a sweater that fitted her form.
41. The grass is the color green.
42. I personally have never cheated in class.
43. You should rewrite the composition again.
44. He is quite sensitive in feeling.
45. You must write a note to thank each and every contributor.
46. He needs basic tools such as reading, writing, math, etc.
47. Its fur is smooth in texture.
48. The food here is equally as good as that at the Student Union.
49. History repeats itself over again.
50. The Rocky Mountains are much bigger in size 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.
2. It is necessary for middle-income people to save all year for a one-week vacation.
3. It was suspected that canned soup caused 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.
5. It is felt that the Orioles will win the pennant.
6. The school year is short. It is over in June.

7. The team has many new players this year. It is hard to recognize all of them.
8. That game is fun to play; it is certain to be a bestseller.
9. It is supposed that children are ready to read by age six.
10. She is such a nice person. It is easy to like her.

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

Note: When writers haven’t really decided who should carry the action of the sentence, they often let “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.
2. There are two reasons for taking a winter vacation.
3. There was a recession in 1970.
4. There are any of at least six other men who could do this job better.
5. There are many reasons to celebrate Martin Luther King’s birthday.
6. There are twenty-five students in the usual composition class.
7. There is nothing more to say about it.
8. There are several courses in ecology listed in the catalog.
9. There are several words misspelled in that article.
10. There are only two considerations: the location and the price.