

Avoiding Redundancy

A common writing mistake is to repeat a previous point, sentence or phrase. This is called being redundant. Markers may note “wordy” or “repetitious” on your paper if your writing contains redundancies. Eliminating them can significantly improve your writing.

Here is an example of a redundant phrase and its revision:

Redundant

Only an *uneducated person who has never attended school* would forget to pack the *necessary essentials*: pencils, paper, books and a lunch.

Concise

Only an *uneducated person* would forget to pack the *essentials*: pencils, paper, books and a lunch.

Redundancy can appear in the overuse of cliché phrases. While these phrases may be acceptable in presentations and speeches, in writing they can make it seem as if the author lacks conviction.

- “This sheds light on. . .”
- “It should be highlighted. . .”
- “This is innovative/important/interesting, etc. . . .” (Wallwork & Souther, 2020)
- “Due to the fact that. . .”
- Qualifiers such as “very, often, hopefully, practically, really, mostly” (UNC, n.d.)

Redundancy can occur in your argument by repeating the same point throughout the paper. Academic papers should have several points that support the argument, so repetition of the same point is often a sign that there are not enough fully developed points. Strengthen your argument and keep the engagement of your readers by developing new ideas.

Concise writing that covers the important points is preferable to long repetitive papers.

Sources

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