

- Concise writing means finding the right words to make the clearest point.

### **1. REPLACE VAGUE WORDS WITH SPECIFIC ONES**

**Wordy:** The teacher talked about several of the merits of extra-curricular sports in her speech.

**Concise:** The teacher touted extra-curricular sports in her speech.

**Wordy:** At this point it is completely unclear why the door to the classroom was left open.

**Concise:** It is unclear why the classroom door was left open.

**Wordy:** It is to be hoped that we discover a means to create an absolutely proper and fitting plan to deal with the stray dog population.

**Concise:** We hope for an appropriate way to deal with stray dogs.

### **2. MAKE SURE WORDS HAVE A PURPOSE – ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY ONES**

**Word:** The teacher demonstrated some of the various interesting ways and methods for cutting unnecessary words from essays that are written during class time.

**Concise:** The teacher demonstrated methods for cutting words from essays.

**Wordy:** Many have made the wise observation that when a stone is in motion rolling down a hill or incline that that moving stone is not as likely to be covered all over with the kind of thick green moss that grows on stationary unmoving things and becomes a nuisance and suggests that those things haven't moved in a long time and probably won't move any time soon.

**Concise:** A rolling stone gathers no moss.

### **3. ELIMINATE WORDS THAT EXPLAIN THE OBVIOUS OR PROVIDE EXCESSIVE DETAIL**

Always consider readers while drafting and revising writing. If passages explain or describe details that would already be obvious to readers, delete or reword them. Readers are also very adept at filling in the non-essential aspects of a narrative, as in the fourth example.

**Wordy:** Imagine a mental picture of someone engaged in the intellectual activity of trying to learn what the rules are for how to play the game of chess.

**Concise:** Imagine someone trying to learn the rules of chess.

**Wordy:** After booking a ticket to Dallas from a travel agent, I packed my bags and arranged for a taxi to the airport. Once there, I checked in, went through security, and was ready to board. But problems beyond my control led to a three-hour delay before takeoff.

**Concise:** My flight to Dallas was delayed for three hours.

### **4. ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY DETERMINERS AND MODIFIERS**

Writers sometimes clog up their writing with one or more extra words or phrases that seem to narrow or modify the meaning of a noun but don't actually add meaning to the sentence. Although these words can be useful in the right context, they are often just filler and can be eliminated.

**Wordy:** Any particular type of dessert is fine.

**Concise:** Any dessert is fine.

Here's a list of some words and phrases that can often be pruned away to make sentences clearer:

- kind of; sort of; type of; really; basically; for all intents and purposes; definitely; actually; generally; individual; specific; particular