

EDITING FOR CONCISENESS

Writing Support Desk



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It is vital to be concise to help readers understand your writing.

Concision is vital to help readers understand your writing.

Concision is vital to help readers understand your writing.

Concision is vital to clear writing.

Concision is vital to clear writing.

Clear writing requires concision.

Clear writing requires concision.

4 words!

TIPS TO

LIMIT QUALIFIERS

LIMIT LONG PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

AVOID REDUNDANCY

CUT WORDY STARTERS

USE ACTIVE VOICE

USE STRONG VERBS

COMBINE SENTENCES

TRIM CITED MATERIAL

LIMIT QUALIFIERS

LIMIT QUALIFIERS

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE...

- ...very important?
- ...slightly hot?
- ...incredibly cold?
- ...rather interesting?

- Qualifiers, such as 'very,'
 'slightly,' 'incredibly,' and
 'rather' can be vague.
- How important is 'very?'

LIMIT QUALIFIERS

INSTEAD OF...

TRY...

very important



imperative

LIMIT QUALIFIERS

INSTEAD OF...

TRY...

slightly hot



warm

LIMIT QUALIFIERS

INSTEAD OF...

TRY...

incredibly cold



freezing

LIMIT QUALIFIERS

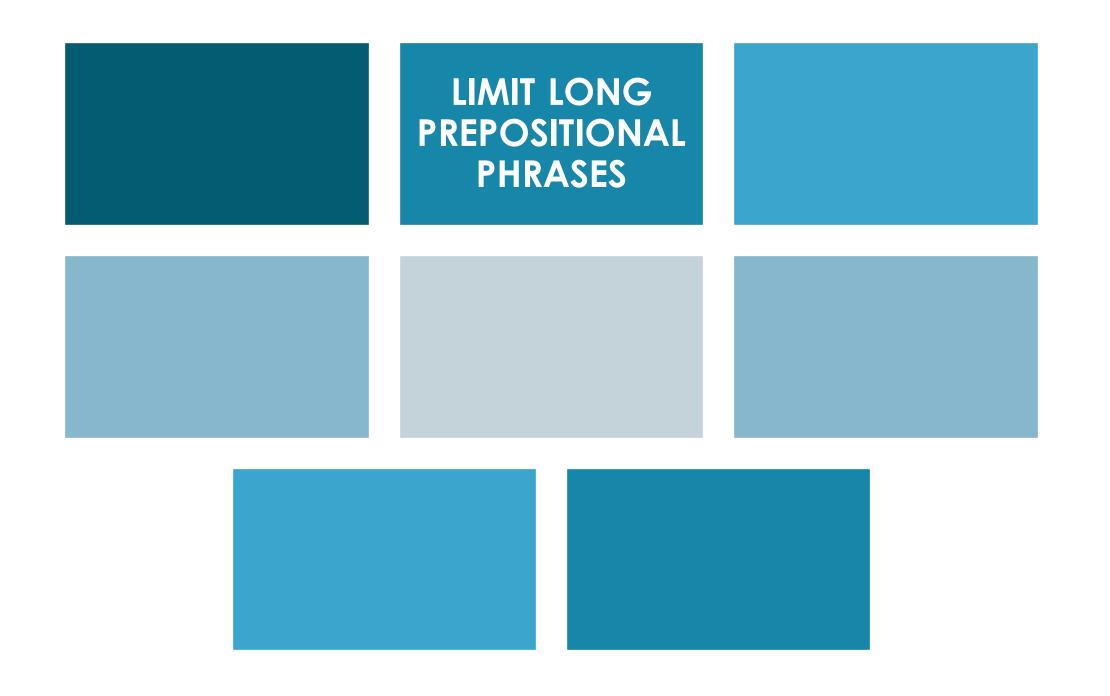
INSTEAD OF...

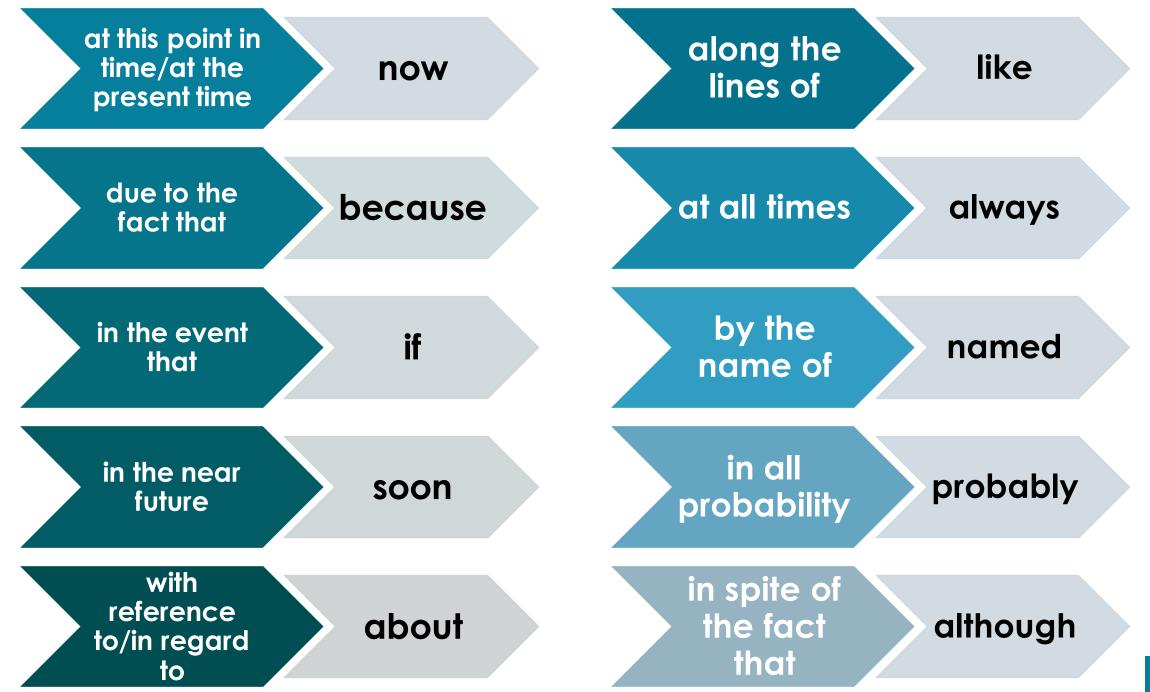
TRY...

rather interesting



intriguing





LIMIT PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

INSTEAD OF...

TRY...

a student at the university



a university student

the work of my colleague



my colleague's work

AVOID REDUNDANCY





AVOID REDUNDANCY

INSTEAD OF...

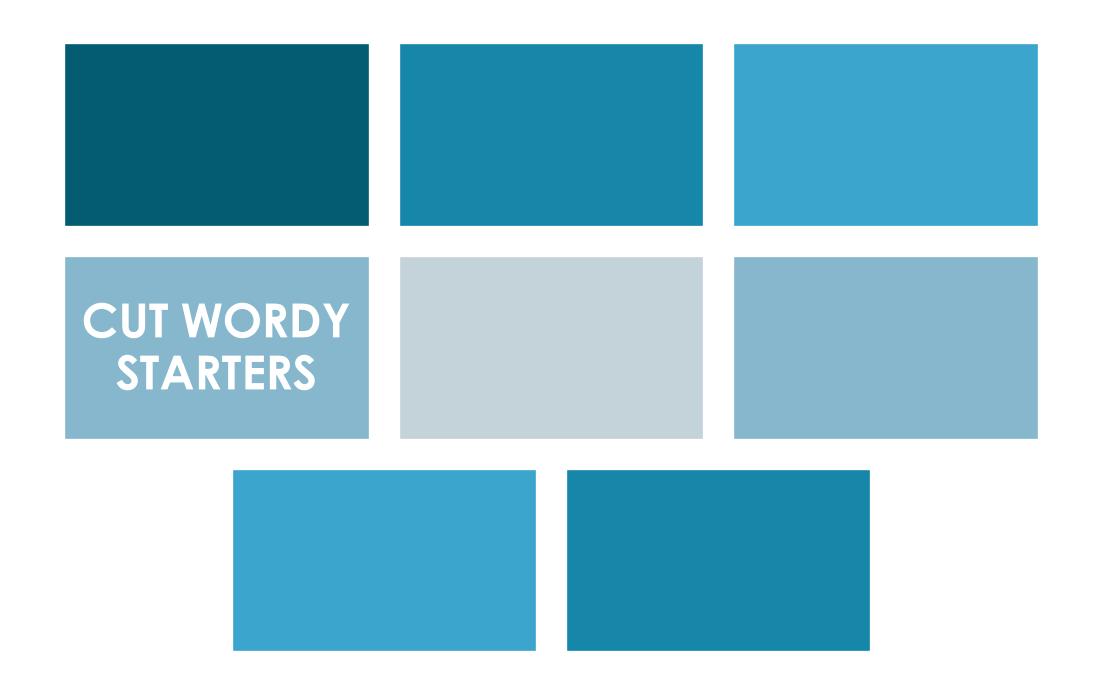
The history course I am teaching at the moment is on the topic of Latin American history.

TRY...



I am teaching Latin American history.

- 'history' does not need to be repeated
- 'at the moment' can be implied using present tense
- read each sentence closely to find redundancy



CUT WORDY STARTERS



- Watch for 'it is' or 'there are' at the beginning of sentences
- Other wordy starters are 'in terms of,' 'with regard to,'and 'on the subject of'

CUT WORDY STARTERS

INSTEAD OF...

There are 40 students studying in the library.



TRY...

40 students are studying in the library.

It is vital that you phone the office immediately.



You must phone the office immediately.

CUT WORDY STARTERS

INSTEAD OF...

TRY...

In terms of music, classical is my favourite.



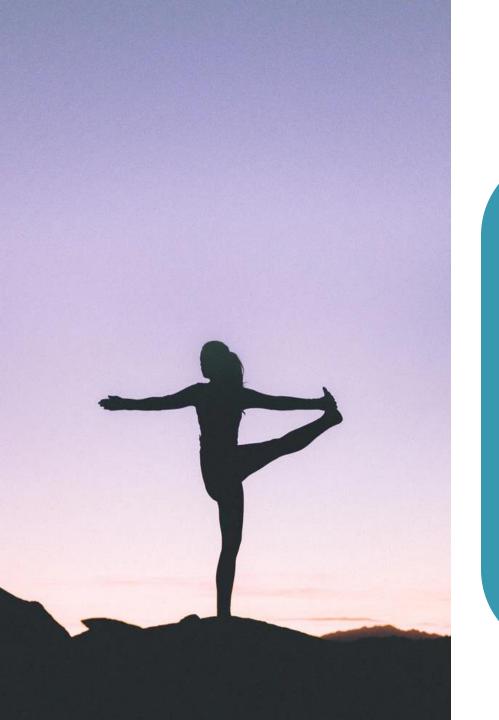
Classical music is my favourite.

By analyzing the problem, it is possible...



Analyzing the problem allows...

USE ACTIVE VOICE



USE ACTIVE VOICE

- Active voice emphasizes the subject of a sentence
 - The subject is who/what is doing the action
 - Active voice tends to be more direct than passive

USE ACTIVE VOICE

INSTEAD OF...

The dog was walked by my sister.



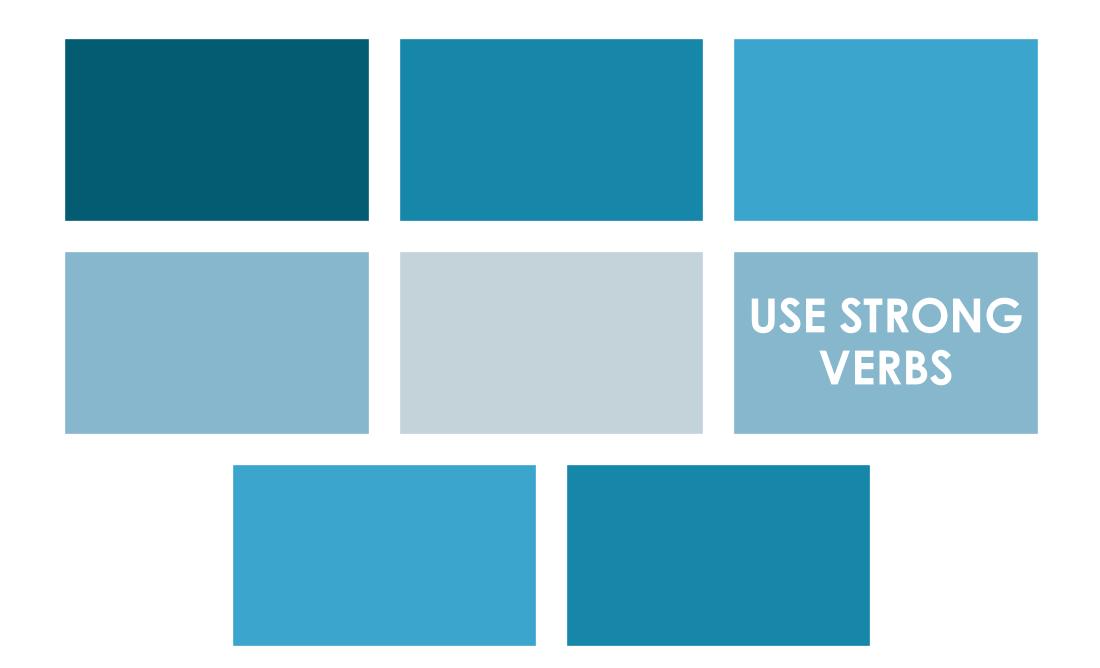
TRY...

My sister walked the dog.

Data was analyzed by researchers.



Researchers analyzed data.



USE STRONG VERBS

The reason for the bridge going over budget is that the materials increased in price.

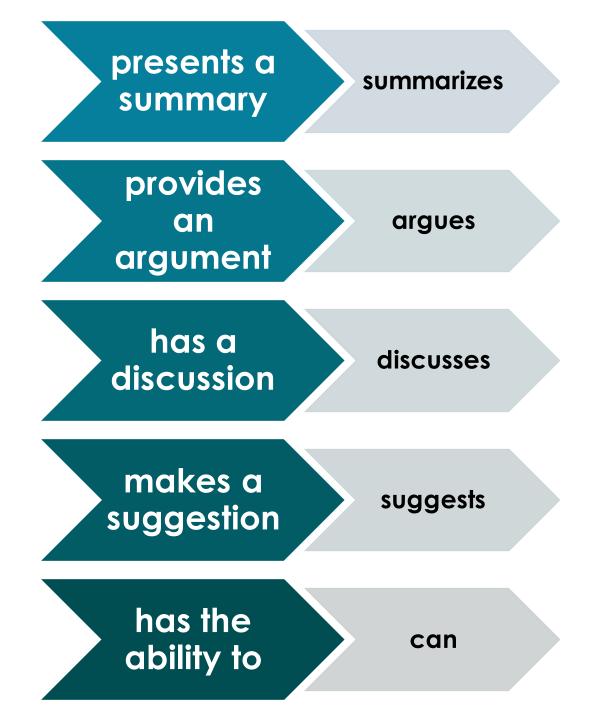


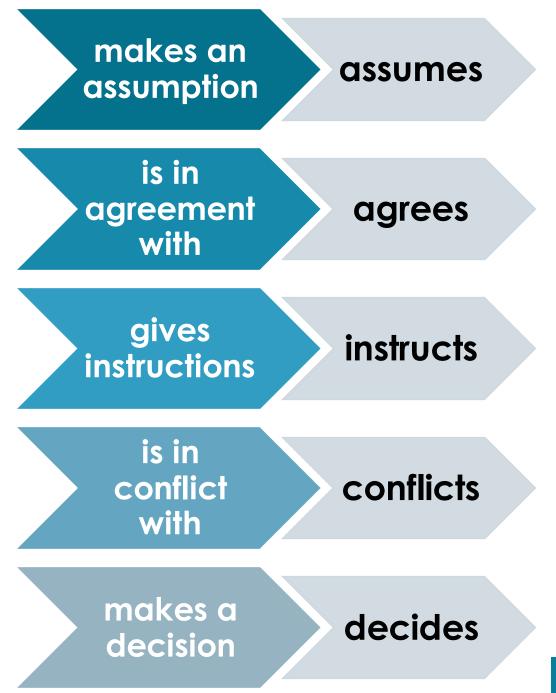
Instead of using a nominalization (turning what should be a verb into a noun), use a strong verb!

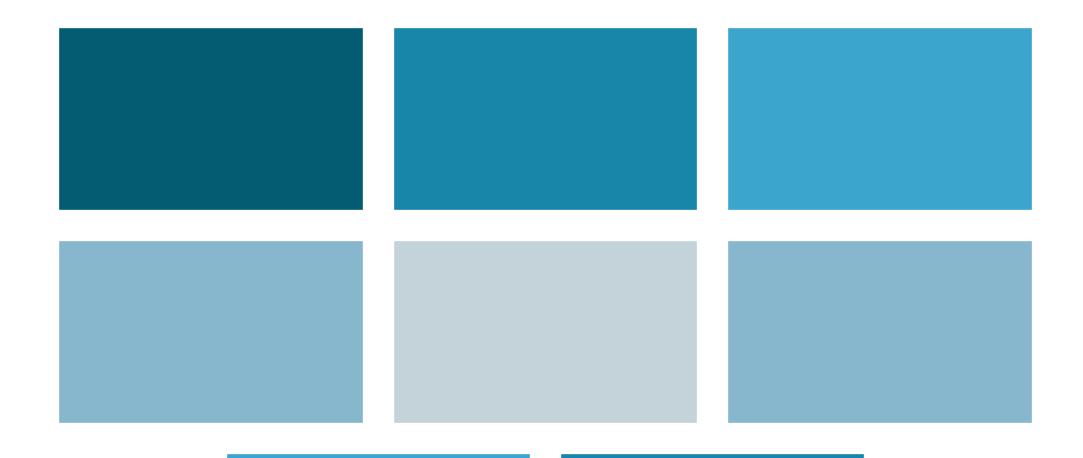
USE STRONG VERBS

The bridge went over budget because the materials increased in price.





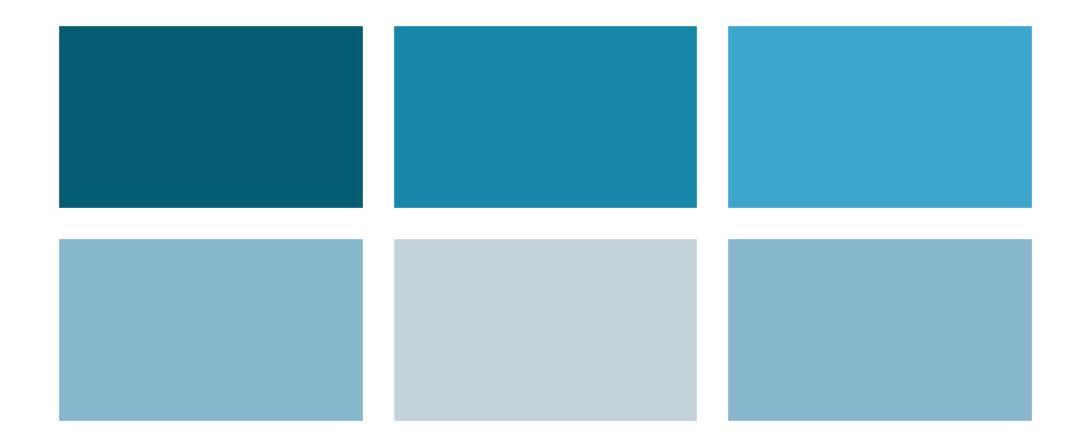




COMBINE SENTENCES

COMBINE SENTENCES





TRIM CITED MATERIAL

CITED MATERIAL

direct quotations

paraphrase

DIRECT QUOTATIONS



- Use when it is important not just what was said but how it was said
- Use when accuracy is critical
- Use to capture specific language
- Shorten using '...' where necessary



DIRECT QUOTATIONS

According to haunted house employees, people were "terrified, running out of [the building] screaming...they thought it was all real."



PARAPHRASE

- Putting cited material into your own words
- Can shorten cited material and improve clarity and flow
- Demonstrates understanding of the material



PARAPHRASE

The haunted house patrons believed the scenes were real and ran screaming from the building.

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QUESTIONS?

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