In this next module, I'm going to give you a few more tricks for cutting clutter. These are small things, but good little tips.

So I'm going to review three things how do we eliminate negatives, to get rid of knots from your sentences, how to get rid of superfluous uses of There are and there is and how to omit needless prepositions.

So starting with eliminating negatives, this is a great little tip that you may not have ever thought of before. But things like, she was not often right. There's a way to turn that into a positive. You can say she was usually wrong. Whenever you encounter a knot in your writing, see if you can turn it into a positive. You can almost always do it, and it's usually much clearer when you use the positive construction.

For example, she did not want to perform the experiment incorrectly. You can see that there's a double negative here, which is confusing. So how would we turn that one into a positive? You would just say she wanted to perform the experiment correctly. That's obviously much clearer. Or how about they did not believe the drug was harmful? How would you turn that into a positive? You would say they believed the drug was safe.

So there's almost always a way to turn a negative into a positive. Instead of not honest, you can say dishonest. Instead of not harmful, say safe. Not important. You can just say, unimportant. Does not have that's lacks. Did not remember. You can say, forgot. Did not pay attention to say, ignored, did not succeed, failed. You get the idea. So pay attention to this in your writing. Sometimes you have to be a little clever about it, but if you think about it carefully, you can usually find a way to put it in the positive.

Also pay attention to superfluous uses of there are, and there is. Here's a simple example. There are many ways in which we can arrange the police on 1st read. You may feel like that there are is needed, but it's really not. We can just say we can arrange the pulleys in many ways. You can drop the there are altogether. Here's another example. There was a long line of bacteria on the plate. How can we get rid of the there was here. How about if we just say bacteria lined the plate? You can see, by getting rid of the there was, we get a much more exciting verb blind rather than a to be a verb was.

Or try there are many physicists who like to write, you can just cut that there are completely without rearranging the sentence at all. Instead of saying, there are many physicists who like to write, just say, many physicists like to write that there are was completely unnecessary. Or the data confirm that there is an association between vegetables and cancer. You can change that too. The data confirm an association between vegetables and cancer. So when you find yourself writing, ah, there is, or there are, or there was, check and make sure that it's really necessary. A lot of times you can get rid of it.

Finally, another thing that I want you to start paying attention to our needless prepositions. Often, prepositions like that and on are completely unnecessary. And when you have to get your word count down, like in an abstract, this is a good place to strip some extra words.

For example, the meeting happened on Monday? Well, actually, that on is unnecessary. You could just say, the meeting happened Monday, you don't lose anything. Or they agreed that it was true. Just say they agreed it was true. You don't need that. So you can often get rid of extraneous prepositions. You might think you need them, but if you take them out, you realize that you actually don't.

在本节我会给出更多关于去除句子冗余的建议这些会是小而有用的建议首先来回顾三件事情如何消除句子中的使用not的否定形式如何摆脱多余的there are与there is以及如何去除不必要的介词首先是消除否定词这是一个非常好的小建议你之前可能从来没在意过但是像she was not often right这种否定句有办法把它们变成肯定句你可以说她通常是不正确的每当你在写作中用到否定句式尝试是否能把它变成肯定句式这几乎总是可行的当你使用肯定句式时句意通常更加清楚比如她不想错误地开展那项实验可以看出双重否定让这句话难以理解所以要怎么把这句话变成肯定呢你可以说她想正确地开展那项实验很明显句意更清楚了另一个例子他们不相信那个药有害如何把这句话变成肯定句呢？可以说他们认为那个药是安全的所以几乎总有把否定句变成肯定句的方法相比于不诚实你可以说狡诈相比于没有害处你可以说安全不是重要的可以说不重要没有拥有可以说没有不记得可以说忘记没有注意可以说忽视所以在写作中要注意这方面有时需要发挥才智但是只要经过仔细思考你总能找出用肯定句表达的方法另外，注意there are与there is的过度使用举一个简单的例子有很多方法可以让我们来布置滑轮初次阅读你可能觉得there are是必须的但其实不是可以直接说我们有很多方式布置滑轮你完全可以删去there are下面是另一个例子这里有一长串细菌在平板上我们要如何摆脱这里有呢是否可以说细菌在盘子上排成一条线可以看出通过删除这里有我们有了更加吸引人的动词使用排成直线而不是使用be动词下面一句这里有许多喜欢写作的物理学家直接删除这里有而完全不必对句子做其它改动不必说这里有许多喜欢写作的物理学家直接说许多物理学家喜欢写作“这里有”在这个句子中完全是没必要的或者另外一个例子“数据证实这里存在蔬菜与癌症之间的关系”你可以改成“数据验证了蔬菜与癌症之间的关系”所以当你发现你在使用“there are” “there is”或者“there was”的句式写作时检查并确保这种句式时必须的多数情况下你可以摆脱这种句式最后我想让你们注意的另外一件事是不必要的介词很多情况下想“that”与“on”等词汇是完全不需要的当你需要减少字数时比如写摘要这些是考虑删除的好地方比如“the meeting happened on Monday”事实上这里的“on”是不需要的你可以直接说“the meeting happened Monday”句意完全没有改变或者“they agreed that it was true”"they agreed it was true"你不需要用“that”所以你总是可以摆脱无关的介词你可能认为你需要他们但如果你把他们删除你会意识到事实上你并不需要