*What You Need to Know about:*

**Wordiness and Misused Words**

**What is Wordiness?**

Wordiness occurs when unnecessary words are included in a person’s writing. These unnecessary words may have been added to impress the reader or “bulk-up” a paper. Regardless of the reason, wordiness should be avoided as it is often useless and repetitive information that readers prefer not to have to read!

Sentences should be clear and concise; that is, your writing should express your ideas in as few words as possible (without sacrificing information). The following is a list of wordy phrases. Note how, in some instances, two different words are used together which have similar meanings.

**Examples of Wordy Phrases:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Absolutely complete | Absolutely nothing | Green in colour | Final conclusion |
| I personally feel | In my opinion, I think | Circled around | At that point in time |
| Collect together | In this day and age | Entirely eliminated | Personal friend |
| Exactly identical | Real, genuine leather | Small in size | True fact |
| Exact same | Combined together | Young in age | Long length of time |

**Activity:** Some wordy phrases are listed above, while others require your skill at finding and fixing them. Edit the sentences below for wordiness by putting a line through the wordy parts or phrases. How concise can you make the following sentences without changing the information contained in each?

1. My final conclusion concerning the real, genuine value of Bargain Barry’s reduced price sale goods is exactly identical with yours.
2. Small in size as he was, and surrounded on all sides by strange children he didn’t know, the uniquely courageous seven-year-old challenged the class bully to a fight.
3. The sergeant repeated again to the brand new recruits, “You will be called at 5:30 A.M. in the morning, and you will have circled around the barracks on the double by 5:45. You will at that point in time be completely free until 6:00, when you will continue on to the barracks mess for breakfast.
4. The new recruits disappeared from view after the 7:00 A.M. breakfast, to discuss what they could do to get even with a sergeant who woke them up one full hour before the necessary time.
5. They personally thought that the sergeant would probably repeat the same obnoxious behaviour again, each day, so they decided to proceed ahead with a new, innovative plan as an appropriately response.
6. In my opinion, I must admit that I thought their plan was absolutely and completely foolproof, and that it was a great idea.

**Abused or Misused Words**

Language is continually evolving. As time goes by, new words are developing and old words are changing, but not necessarily for the best. Incorrect usage and pronunciation in speech can lead to misused, misspelled and made-up words. These words are ABUSED and often MISUSED.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Abused Words** | **Explanation** | **Correct Use** |
| Alot | There is no such word | A lot (it is actually two words) |
| Anyways, anywheres and a long ways | There is no “s” on these words | Anyway, anywhere, a long way |
| Could of, would of, might of, should of, and so on | The “of” should be “have” | Could have, should have, might have, etc. |
| Off of | Use off alone | I fell off the step. |
| “real” used as an adverb: real sad, real nice | “real” should not be used as an adverb | Use really or very. |
| Suppose to, use to | Grammatically incorrect | Use supposed to and used to. |
| Themselves, theirself, ourselfs, yourselfs, and themselves | The plural of self is selves. | Themselves, ourselves, yourselves. Don’t use theirselves though, it’s not a word. |
| For granite or granite | There is no such term. This is a pronunciation problem. | It is spelled “for granted”. |