

# How to Identify and Revise Fillers

To help you strengthen your writing and editing skills, we have compiled **a list of common fillers and other unnecessary words and phrases, below.** While you can revise words and phrases in many ways, we've prepared some suggestions that work well in most situations.

Filler or Unnecessary Word/Phrase	Suggested Revision	Example
A... then B... [chronological relationship]	Use the structure "A... and B..." Sometimes, readers can understand sequences because of causality implied in the sentence's context.	Joe ran up the hill <b>then</b> fell back down. → Joe ran up the hill <b>and</b> fell back down.
Absolutely, Certainly, Completely, Definitely	Delete. In most cases, the verb accompanying these adverbs imply 100% unless otherwise qualified.	We <b>absolutely</b> agree with that theory. → We <b>agree with</b> that theory.
All of the	Use "all the."	<b>All of the</b> cells ruptured. → <b>All the</b> cells ruptured.
As to whether	Use "whether."	He was uncertain <b>as to whether</b> he would attend the event next week. → He was uncertain <b>whether</b> he would attend the event next week.
At all times	Delete. If you state a general fact, it is always true unless you qualify it otherwise.	You must follow these rules <b>at all times</b> . → You must follow these <b>rules</b> .
Commonly	Delete. Since "commonly" implies a general statement, it's unnecessary to use when your statement is a general fact.	People once <b>commonly</b> believed that the sun revolved around Earth. → People <b>once believed</b> the sun revolved around Earth.
Due to the fact that	Use "because" or	<b>Due to the fact that</b> we

	restructure the sentence using stronger verbs.	have limited resources, we will need to ration our daily intake. → <b>We must ration</b> our daily intake <b>because of</b> limited resources. OR <b>Limited resources require</b> us to ration our daily intake.
For all intents and purposes	Delete.	<b>For all intents and purposes</b> , this project will be run by the Zurich office. → <b>This project</b> will be run by the Zurich office.
For the purpose of	Use “to” + verb.	<b>For the purpose of</b> creating a new cohort, we would like to... → <b>To create</b> a new cohort, we would like to...
Has the ability to	Use “can.”	Jackson <b>has the ability to</b> mesmerize an audience with his charm. → Jackson <b>can</b> mesmerize an audience with his charm.
I/we believe; In my/our opinion	Delete unless it would become unclear that the sentence reflects your thought alone. For example, if you are describing other people’s thoughts and want to contrast those ideas with your opinion, you may wish to use these fillers. However, use them sparingly. In most cases, you can avoid the filler, as shown in the second example in the next column.	<b>In our opinion</b> , our results are inconclusive. → <b>Our results</b> are inconclusive. Scientists believe that water once flowed on Mars; however, <b>we believe</b> this theory is unlikely because... → Scientists believe that water once flowed on Mars; however, <b>this theory</b> is unlikely because...
In spite of the fact that	Use “despite” or “although.”	She agreed to volunteer for the event <b>in spite of</b> the fact that she was busy with other work. → She agreed to volunteer for the

		event <b>although</b> she was busy with other work.
In terms of	Delete and restructure or use “about” or “regarding,” depending on the context.	We can agree with you <b>in terms of</b> the proposed timeframe. → <b>We agree with</b> your proposed timeframe. <b>In terms of price</b> , we would like to request a discount. → <b>Regarding</b> price, we would like to request a discount.
In the event that	Use “if.”	<b>In the event that</b> you can’t meet the deadline, please contact us immediately. → <b>If</b> you can’t meet the deadline, please contact us immediately.
In the process of	Use “while” or “when,” depending on the context.	<b>In the process of</b> starting a new business, I hired an assistant. → <b>When</b> I started a new business, I hired an assistant
In order to	Use “to.”	<b>In order to</b> advance to the next level, we must pass this exam. → <b>To advance</b> to the next level, we must pass this exam.
It is important to note	Delete. If it wasn’t important, you wouldn’t be writing it, right?	<b>It is important to note that</b> inclusion and exclusion criteria are not used to reject people personally. → <b>Inclusion</b> and exclusion criteria are not used to reject people personally.
It is possible that	Use “can,” “could,” “may,” or “might,” depending on the context.	<b>It is possible that</b> the show will be canceled due to inclement weather. → The show <b>could be canceled</b> due to inclement weather.

Just, Really, Very, Even	Delete.	He <b>really</b> loves winter, especially when it snows. → He <b>loves</b> winter, especially when it snows.
Needless to say	Delete.	<b>Needless to say</b> , the project will end tomorrow. → The <b>project</b> will end tomorrow.
That	Delete unless it is essential for making the sentence clear.	She believed <b>that</b> he was innocent. → She <b>believed he</b> was innocent. She liked the house <b>that</b> sat on top of the hill. → She liked the house <b>that</b> sat on top of the hill. [“That” is essential to explain which house.]
The fact that	Delete and restructure.	Mary hated <b>the fact that</b> she had to work on Mondays. → Mary <b>hated</b> working on Mondays.
There/Here/It is...There has/have been...	Delete and restructure to create a stronger active subject/verb. These phrases distract from your sentence’s main point.	<b>There have been</b> many discussions among the scientific community about ethical boundaries in gene-splicing research. → The <b>scientific community has</b> frequently discussed the ethical boundaries in gene-splicing research.
With regard/reference to	Use “regarding” or “about,” depending on the context. You can also rearrange your sentence to eliminate the “with regard to”/“regarding” phrase.	<b>With regard to</b> your previous questions, we will answer them during our meeting later today. → <b>Regarding</b> your previous questions, we will answer them during our meeting later today. OR <b>We will answer your previous questions</b> during our meeting later today.