

Redundancy

“Michelle was supposed to have her car’s oil changed every 3,000 miles, and since it had been 3,000 miles since her last oil change, she took her car to the mechanic.”

“Michelle had the mechanic change her car’s oil because it had been 3,000 miles since the last one.”

What Is Redundancy in English?

Redundancy in the needless repetition of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs or ideas.

Redundancy is when one uses two or more words together that mean the same thing. For example, *‘adequate enough’*. We also say something is redundant when a modifier’s meaning is contained in the word it modifies, for example, *‘merge together’*.

A redundant sentence will still mean the same thing if the extra word or words are removed. *The definition from Merriam-Webster is “an act or instance of needless repetition.”*

When one writes, one should try to be as clear and concise as possible. If one learns how to get a message across without adding unnecessary words, readers are more likely to read what the person has written.

“He was not on time”

“He was late”

“She did not remember”

“She forgot”

Though these alterations are subtle, they make writing bolder and more concrete.

Redundancy in English usually happens when an adjective is added to a verb or noun that means the same thing. A speaker or writer is often trying to add emphasis or attempting to thoroughly explain something when they make the common mistake. In general, using a redundancy might be overlooked, but it could cause problems in academic and professional writing like, email writing and report writing.

Less is More Rule:

A benefit to reducing redundancies in writing is that it helps make one’s writing clearer and more concise. Sentences that are wordy take longer to read. Looking for redundant phrases in a paper or article is an important part of the editing process. Help the readers quickly absorb the information provided.

Be Careful of Overusing Adverbs

Adverbs are often the source of egregious redundancies, and writers should be careful not to overuse them. Here are some other examples of unnecessary “-ly” adverbs:

- “shouted loudly”
- “raced hurriedly”
- “whispered softly”
- “deliberated thoughtfully”
- “finished completely”
- “jumped quickly”

Redundancy Reduces Conciseness

Writing concisely also involves avoiding redundancies. Redundancy is when you use more words than necessary to express something, especially words and/or phrases in the same sentence that mean the same thing.

Here are some common examples of redundant phrases:

- “small in size” or “large in size”
- “true facts”
- “basic fundamentals”
- “past history”
- “smiled happily”
- “evolve over time”
- “consensus of opinion”

Common redundancies to avoid in business writing:

- in my opinion, i... (use: i...)
- collaborated ~~together~~ (use: collaborated)
- ~~past~~ experience (use: experience)
- the reason ~~why~~ (use: reason)
- ~~plus~~ in addition (use: in addition)
- ~~absolutely~~ certain or sure/essential/guaranteed
- ~~basic~~ fundamentals/essentials
- came ~~at a time~~ when
- ~~during~~ the course of
- ~~end~~ result
- ~~final~~ outcome
- protest ~~against~~
- ~~usual~~ custom
- write ~~down~~
- weather ~~condition~~
- undergraduate ~~student~~
- scrutinize ~~in detail~~
- recur ~~again~~
- ~~oral~~ conversation
- ~~new~~ recruit

Some examples:

1. The resulting liquid was purple in color
The liquid was purple
2. Various modifications of the procedure have recently been developed
The procedure was recently modified
3. The compound exhibited competition with the ligand for binding
The compound competed with the ligand for binding

4. Antibody was added to each individual sample for labeling
Samples were labeled with antibody