About Me

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Education

- PhD, Educational Psychology, University of Munich, Germany
- PhD, Science of Nursing, Chonnam National University
- MA, TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), Sookmyung Women's University
- BA, Science of Nursing, Yonsei University

Research & Work Experiences

- Assistant Professor, Nursing Department, Kwangju Women's University
- Guest Researcher, Educational Psychology, University of Munich, Germany
- Research Committee Chair, Korea TESOL (대한영어교육학회)
- Editorial Board member, Journal of Korea TESOL
- Academic Trainer & Consultant, Editage
- Research Project, National Research Foundation of Korea (한국연구재단)
- Research Project, Bio-medical Research Institute, Chonnam National Univ. Hospital
- Former Visiting Scholar, Educational Psychology, University of Texas (UTSA), USA
- Published papers in international & domestic venues (SCI, SSCI, SCOPUS, KCI)

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Types of Errors in Manuscript Writing

Punctuation

Comparison

Word Choice

Grammar

Content

Clarity

Sentence Structure

Continuity

Outline

1. Common Errors in Manuscript Structure

2. Common Errors in Sentence Structure

3. Common Errors in Grammar

4. Common Errors in Word Choice

5. Other Common Errors

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1. Common Errors in Manuscript Structure

Most common errors in each section

- Introduction

- Methods

- Results

- Discussion

- Conclusion

Guidelines

Jorge Faber (2017), Editor-in-Chief (former)
Dental Press Journal of Orthodontics &
Journal of the World Federation of Orthodontists

Introduction <Common errors>

1. Writing a too long Introduction

- many manuscripts originate from dissertations or theses.
- most of us are not interested in long, non-objective texts!

2. Lack of coherence

- focus on many different questions.
- their rationale is unclear.

Introduction

Guidelines

➢ Be concise: no one wants to read excessively long studies.

> Remember "KISS"
> (Keep It Simple, Scientist!)

➢ No specific word limit, but a rule of thumb is about 10 % of the total length of the manuscript.

➢ Pay special attention to text coherence and cohesion.

➢ Do not present long reviews of the literature; use the literature to set the context for the problem under study.

Methods **<Common errors>**

1. Using wrong tenses

2. Lack of IRB approval

3. Incomplete data, lack of information

4. Lack of detailed descriptions of statistical methods

Methods

Guidelines

➤ Write Methods section in the <u>past tense</u>, because they refer to what has been done (※ Results section).

***Present tense** is used only when describing how data are presented, because this information is still true. ex) Data are summarized as mean...

➤ Never forget to include IRB approval.

➤ Describe all methods thoroughly.

➤ Include all the materials used.

➤ Include a detailed description of the statistical methods.

Results \<Common errors>

1. Often inadequately short; summarizing findings insufficiently and then only refer tables, figures, and graphs.

2. Poor quality of illustrations (photos).

Results

Results   **Guidelines**

➢ Do not be too concise.

➢ Avoid being verbose. Briefly report most important findings and then refer tables, figures, and graphs.

➢ Include professional quality illustrations.

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Discussion <Common errors>

1. Writing Discussion section as a literature review

2. Failing to include limitations

3. Not discussing all the results presented.

Discussion Guidelines

➢ Do not make a review of the literature: use the literature to compare and contrast findings with those of existing studies.

➢ Make clear what the study limitations are.

➢ All results reported should be fully discussed.

Conclusion <Common errors>

1. Not addressing all the objectives listed in the beginning of the study

2. Presenting conclusions that are beyond the scope of the study design

Guidelines

2. Common Errors in Sentence Structure

Error 1: Subject-Verb agreement

The ratio of positive cells per 1000 cells were defined as the positivity index.

✓ The ratio of positive cells per 1000 cells was defined as the positivity index.

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Error 2: Sentence fragment

A sentence fragment is an <u>incomplete sentence</u> that is punctuated like a complete sentence.

Example: "Removed a cancer-affected tumor weighing 1750 grams from the liver of a 70-year old patient"

"The surgeon removed…"

Error 3: Comma splices

A comma splice occurs when two complete sentences are joined with only a comma.

Example: We included a control group and briefed the participants, the results were still unreliable.

We included a control group and briefed the participants. The results were still unreliable.

We included a control group and briefed the participants, but the results were still unreliable.

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Error 4: A run-on sentence

A fused or a run-on sentence occurs when two complete sentences are joined without any punctuation.

Example: We included a control group and briefed the participants the results were still unreliable.

We included a control group and briefed the participants. The results were still unreliable.

We included a control group and briefed the participants, but the results were still unreliable.

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※ Comma splices and run-on sentences are corrected the same way.

– Use a period (.) to join the two complete sentences.

– Use a comma (,) and one of the **FANBOYS** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) conjunction to connect the two sentences.

– Use a semi colon (;) if the two complete sentences are closely connected.

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Error 5: Sentence shifts

1) a shift in tense

Example: Before the surgery, the surgeons **examine** the report and **reviewed** all the tests that were performed.

2) a shift in person

Example: **Each** patient was asked to submit **their** blood sample the next day.

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Error 6: Faulty modification

Example: The physicians were also trained to detect lung and breast cancer in breath samples from people collected in tubes.

The physicians were also trained to detect lung and breast cancer in people by using breath samples collected in tubes.

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3. Common Errors in Grammar

1. Noun Strings
2. Modifiers

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1. Noun Strings

What are Noun Strings?

- Contains a noun(s) that modifies another noun

NOUN + NOUN + ... NOUN

Examples: blood flow, cancer treatment, plasma membrane

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Problem with Noun Strings

- Overuse of nouns as modifiers causes lack of clarity.

a 15-day-old **female mouse embryo** dorsal **root ganglia**
(wordy and confusing)

the dorsal **root** of the **ganglia** of a 15-day-old

embryo from a **female mouse**

The Scientific Literature: A Guided Tour edited by Joseph E. Harmon, Alan G. Gross

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Untangling Noun Strings
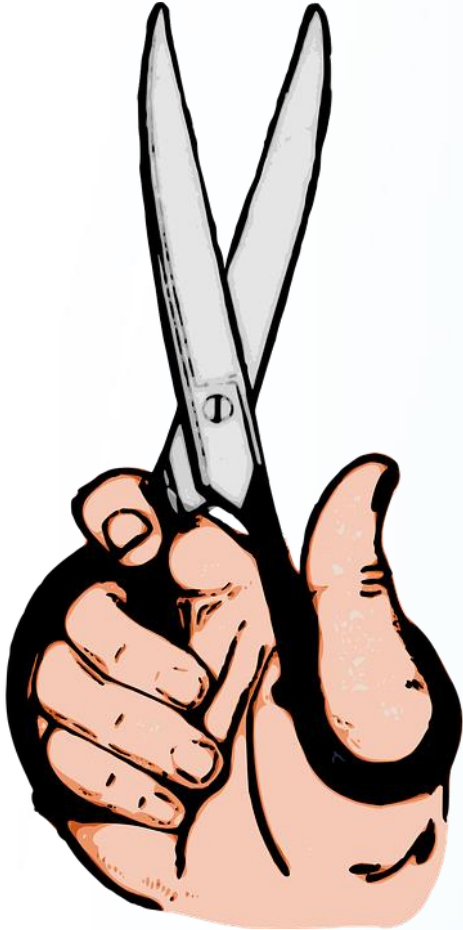
1. Expand them using <u>prepositions</u>.

2. Turn the modifier noun into its <u>adjective form</u>.

3. If you must use noun strings, use <u>hyphens</u> to make them clearer.

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Use prepositions

<u>a</u> depression <u>episode</u>
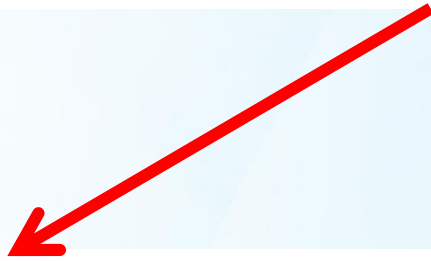
an episode of depression

Use adjectives

<u>a</u> depression <u>episode</u>

A depressive episode

Which sounds better?

a *depression* episode

VS

a *depressive* episode

- "depression symptoms" queried in PubMed gives 3897 hits

3897 hits

- "depressive symptoms" queried in PubMed gives 34375 hits

Examples of Accepted Noun Strings

- community hospital program

- risk factor surveillance system

- baseline CD4 cell counts

- sudden infant death syndrome

- nicotine replacement program

- clinical research organization

- placebo pain medication

three-item or even four-item noun strings

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2. Modifiers

Misuse of Modifiers

a. Misplaced modifiers

A misplaced modifier is a modifying word, phrase, or clause that seems to refer to the wrong word in a sentence. It is not close enough in the sentence to the person, place, or thing that it modifies.

b. Dangling modifiers

A modifier that does not have anything in the sentence to modify.

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We studied serum samples from participants stored in the departmental laboratory.

Can you spot the modifier?

participants **stored**…? **Nonsense!**

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REVISION

We studied serum samples, *stored in the departmental laboratory,* from participants.

Better **REVISION**

We studied the participants' serum samples *stored in the departmental laboratory.*

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b. Dangling modifiers

A modifier that does not have anything in the sentence to modify.

As a pediatric oncologist, the opportunity to work with these courageous children is wonderful.

Can you spot the dangling modifier?

As a pediatric oncologist, the **opportunity** to work with these courageous **children** is wonderful.

- "As a pediatric oncologist" is the modifier. But what does it modify?
- Who is the pediatric oncologist?
- Is the "opportunity" "a pediatric oncologist"?
- Are the "children" "pediatric oncologists"?

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Correcting a Dangling Modifier

As a pediatric oncologist, **I have** <u>the wonderful opportunity</u> to work with these courageous children.

☞ Add the missing noun (usually the real subject)
☞ Re-structure the sentence

Important Principles of Modifiers

1. Place them as close as possible to the word (s) being modified.

2. Ensure that the word (s) being modified is actually there.

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4. Common Errors in Word Choice

Commonly Confused Words

Alternately vs. Alternatively

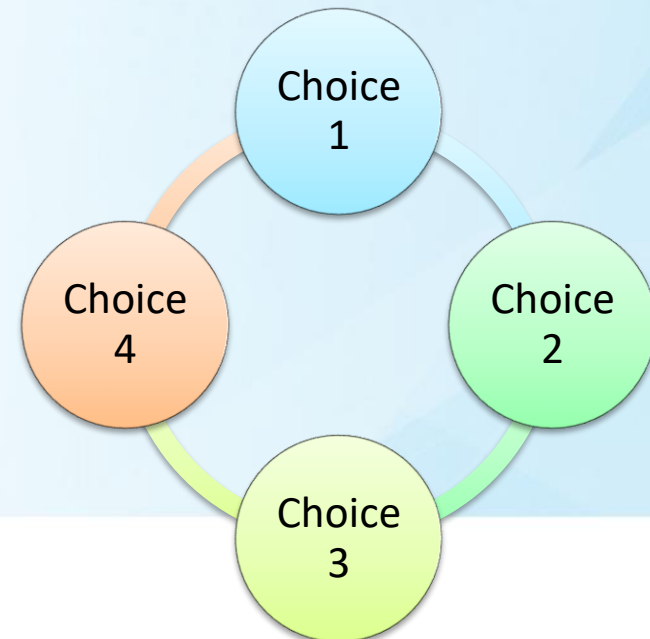- **Alternately**
  - ✓ following by turns
  - ✓ you first, and me second
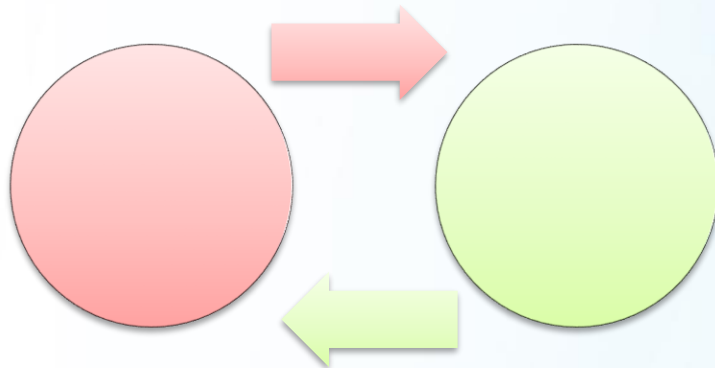
- **Alternatively**
  - ✓ involving a choice between two or more courses of action/possibilities

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•Alternately

•Alternatively

Bodyweight can be controlled by diet or, _____, by drugs.

The mice were _____ fed and deprived of food.

I have headache and toothache _____.

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Among vs. Between

- **Among**
  - ✓ in the midst of
  - ✓ used to express the relation of **one** thing to a group of **many things**
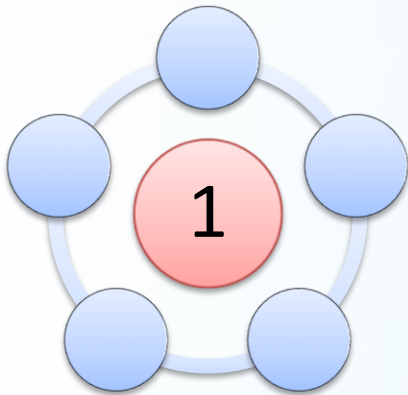
- **Between**
  - ✓ used to express the relation of **two or more things** *as individuals*
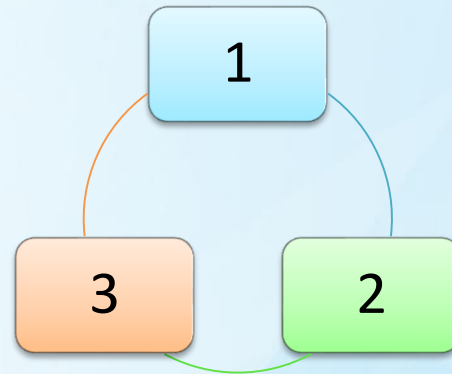
•**Among**

•**Between**

There were no significant differences _____the three experimental groups.

We found one intact test tube _____ the broken ones.

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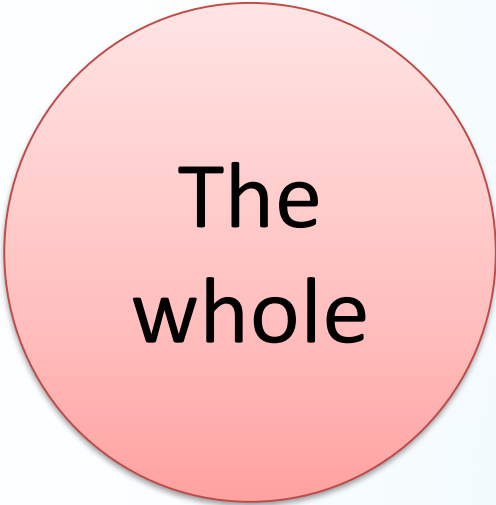
Comprise vs. Compose

- **Comprise**
  - ✓ a whole comprises parts

- **Compose**
  - ✓ parts compose a whole

The whole

The NIH *comprises* 27 Institutes and Centers.

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- **Comprise**
  - ✓ a whole comprises parts

- **Compose**
  - ✓ parts compose a whole

Several Institutes and Centers *compose* **the NIH.**
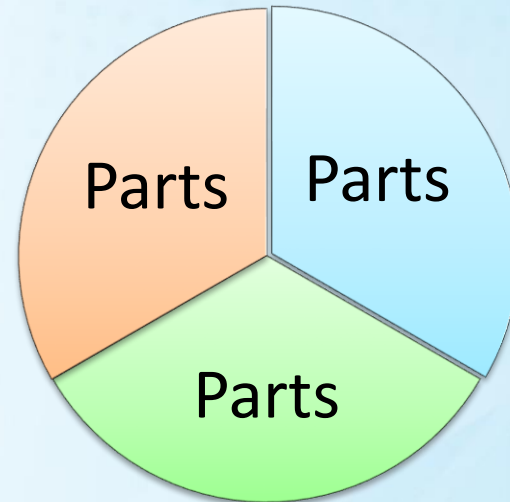
A common mistake

•**Comprise** ✓passive SELDOM	•**Compose** ✓passive OFTEN

A symphony comprises millions of notes.	Millions of notes compose a symphony.

⬇ ⬇

Millions of notes are comprised of a symphony. ✗	A symphony is composed of millions of notes.

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Increase vs. Augment vs. Improve vs. Enhance

Quantity	Quality
Increase	Improve
Augment	Enhance

Increase vs. Augment <Quantity>

•Increase ✓to become or to make greater ✓in respect to size, quantity, number, degree, value, or intensity	**•Augment** ✓to increase by <u>addition</u> ✓often to something that is already of a considerable size or amount

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Increase vs. Augment <Quantity>

Confiscation of the monasteries greatly _____ the resources of the crown.

Although the insulin concentration _____, the insulin ratio decreased.

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Improve vs. Enhance <Quality>

Improve	Enhance
•**Improve** ✓to advance to a better state or quality ✓to make better	•**Enhance** ✓to <u>add</u> to something already attractive, worthy, or valuable ✓to add to increase its value

Improve vs. Enhance <Quality>

The patient's condition did not _____after chemotherapy.

The Arabian carpet _____ the polished floor.

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Show vs. Reveal vs. Indicate

- **Show** – use when the statement obviously follows from the source

- **Reveal** – means that the conclusion is not obvious but requires some thinking on the part of the reader

- **Indicate** – similar to "show" but introduces a note of uncertainty; use when you want to avoid a definitive statement.

  *However, do **<u>NOT</u>** use "indicate" too often; if you do, your findings may be considered too tentative for publication.

Table 1 _____ that of the six months; December was the coldest.

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***As a result vs. Based on the result

- **As a result** – because of; used when implying that one event is the cause of another

- **Based on the results** (or the results revealed) – refer to inferences drawn from certain results

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***As a result vs. Based on the result

– The results of the experiment were inconclusive. <u>As a result</u>, the research had to be repeated.

– <u>Based on the results</u> of the experiment, we concluded that bats are nocturnal creatures.

• Since the phrases have different implications, <u>they cannot be used interchangeably!</u>

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5. Other Common Errors

1. Starting sentences with a number (AVOID!)

150 nm thick indium tin oxide was deposited as a transparent current spreading layer.

✓ Note that 150 nm thick indium tin oxide was deposited as a transparent current spreading layer.

✓ One hundred and fifty nanometer thick indium tin oxide was deposited as a transparent current spreading layer.

✓ In this study, 150 nm thick indium tin oxide was deposited as a transparent current spreading layer.

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2. Using letters instead of symbols (AVOID!)

The equation for estimate this value is
A = 3.65 x 10-2 γ [a + b].

✓ The equation for estimate this value is
A = 3.65 × 10-2 γ [a + b].

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3. Using tilde (~) instead of en-dash (–) (AVOID!)

Additional questions were added based on the length of time at the current address (less than a year, between **1~2 years**, between **2~5 years**, between **5~10 years**, more than 10 years).

✓ Additional questions were added based on the length of time at the current address (less than a year, between **1–2 years**, between **2–5 years**, between **5–10 years**, more than 10 years).

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4. No spaces between a number and its unit (AVOID!)

The body weight of beagles ranged between 5kg and 10kg.

✓ The body weight of beagles ranged between 5 kg and 10 kg.

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5. Repeating information

Always try to write clear and concise.
Learn to use "respectively" appropriately!

The baseline characteristics are shown in Table 1. Table 2 shows the body temperatures of all female subjects.

✓ The Tables 1 and 2 show the baseline characteristics and body temperatures of all female subjects, respectively.

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6. Colon (:) vs. Semi-colon (;)

Colon (:)

-introduces a <u>simple list</u>

-provides a pause before introducing related information: A, B, and C.

Ex) To make a jam sandwich you need three things: bread, butter and jam.

Semi-colon (;)

-a break in a sentence that is stronger than a comma but not as final as a full stop

-helps make <u>complex lists </u>that contain commas in each item clear (the semi-colon becomes a 'super comma')

Ex) There were four professors assigned to the task force: Peter Jones, professor of Mathematics; Ronald Smith, professor of English; Kim Lee, professor of Education; and Wendy West, professor of Political Science.

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Semi-colon (;)

-to join two clauses that could each be separate sentences (closely connected), creating a longer sentence

-to join two clauses, changing the sentence in combination with words like 'therefore', 'however', 'in addition', etc.

Examples
John calls it football; Sam calls it soccer.
Maria is German; however, she lives in Canada.
He likes to play video games; in addition, he likes to read classical literature.

*Comma splices, run-on sentences revision

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7. Faulty comparison

The error occurs when authors compare two things incorrectly or provide examples that don't make sense.

Diagnosis of depression is easier than bipolar disorders.

✓ Diagnosis of depression is easier than that of bipolar disorders.

✓ Diagnosis of depression is easier than bipolar disorders diagnosis.

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※ **Keep it simple: 3 easy steps**

1. Avoid big words

2. Avoid wordiness

3. Avoid redundancies

1. Avoiding big words

Big words	Simple words
Ascertain	Determine
Cessation	Stop
Orientate	Orient
Amorphous	Shapeless
Terminate	End
Coagulate	Clot

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Example

Initial categories were then subsumed into more encompassing categories.

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Example

Initial categories were then subsumed into more encompassing categories.
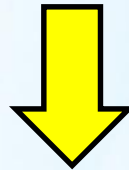
Initial categories were then expanded to include more factors.

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2. Avoiding wordiness

In the not too distant future, college freshmen must all become aware of the fact that there is a need for them to make contact with an academic advisor concerning the matter of a major.

- Wordiness slows down readers.

- It makes writing vague, confusing, and weak.

- It often makes writing more difficult to understand.

Example

In the not too distant future, college freshmen must all become aware of the fact that there is a need for them to make contact with an academic advisor concerning the matter of a major.
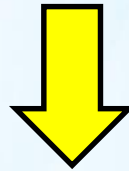
Soon college freshmen must realize that they need to contact an academic advisor about choosing their majors.

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Wordy adverbs, participles & prepositions	Succinct
it is often the case that	often
in the majority of instances	usually
on a daily basis	daily
with regards to	regarding
in order to	to
during the course of	during

Wordy conjunctions	Succinct
in the event that	if
due to the fact that	because
inasmuch as	since
in spite of the fact that	although

Wordy verbs	Succinct
come to the realization that	realize
has proved itself to be	is, has proved
is aware of the fact	know
are indicative of	indicate
exhibits the ability	can

3. Avoiding redundancies

They arrived one after the other in succession.

In my opinion, I think he is wrong.

The storm hit at 2 p.m. in the afternoon.

HIV virus

Only the lucky ones get lucky.

Having a drug test is a necessary requirement for the job.

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Redundancies

absolutely essential	final outcome	in ten years' time	combine into one
small in size	current status	in close proximity	circle around
empty space	past history	for a period of	summarize briefly
original source	a number of examples	the reason is because	has been previously found

Wrapping up Common Mistakes

- Editing is key to survival!

- Pay attention to journal style guides.

- Be aware of common mistakes and watch for them.

- Use resources available to you.
    - http://www.editage.co.kr
    - Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab)
      https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html

- Always have another reader.
    - colleagues

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Thank you for your attention! ☺

Questions?

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