



Training and Development Consultancy

## Quick Guide: How To Reduce Wordiness

I am sure you have all heard the quotation: 'If I had more time, I would have written a shorter letter'. When writing we should aim to write as briefly as possible. If we just wrote with a few well-chosen words and shut up, imagine the savings in time spent writing, typing, checking, copying and reading. We all too often fall into the trap of wordiness. With a little more thought before we write and keeping in mind the ten tips here we will achieve the recommended average sentence length of between 15 and 20 words. Here are the top ten tips to help you achieve this:

1. Use shorter, plainer and more familiar, everyday words. For example, say **repay** instead of **reimburse**; **use** instead of **utilize**; and **read** instead of **peruse**.
2. Use single words instead of phrases. So, **now** instead of **at this present time**, **can** instead of **has the capability to**.
3. Avoid overuse of adjectives and adverbs in your business writing. Be factual about what you are saying. Then, there can be no argument or misinterpretation.
4. Swap old fashioned wordy expressions for more familiar words. For example, say **although** instead of **notwithstanding the fact that**; **thank you for your letter** instead of **we are in receipt of your recent correspondence**; and **about** instead of **in connection with**.
5. Avoid tautologies, which means saying the same thing twice. So, starting your final paragraph with **Finally, in conclusion ...** is not necessary. One or the other is enough. Would you say that you **reversed your car backwards**? Could you reverse it any other way?
6. Use the active voice whenever possible. For example, you will use fewer words if you say **The secretary typed the letter** rather than **The letter was typed by the secretary**. Put the subject first in the sentence followed the action it is doing ie the verb.
7. Avoid smothering verbs. Verbs are 'action' words that bring life to your writing so make them do something. So instead of **We need to hold a meeting to make a decision about ...** say **We need to meet to decide about ...**
8. Avoid using 'it is ...' and 'there is ...' at the beginnings of sentences. Be more definite. Instead of **it is my intention to state I intend to**. Or instead of **It is requested that ...** simply say **Please ...**
9. Cut out useless words such as: **very, quite, really, actually, basically**.
10. Use lists and bullet points when you have several points to make. It will be much easier on the eye for your reader and quicker to read.

Related Courses: [Business Writing](#) | [Email Etiquette](#)

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