

Avoiding Redundancy

A common writing mistake is to repeat a previous point, sentence or phrase. This is called being redundant. Markers may note “wordy” or “repetitious” on your paper if your writing contains redundancies and eliminating them can significantly improve your writing. Here are some examples of sentences with redundant phrases and revisions.

Redundant

On your first day of school remember to pack the *necessary essentials*: pencils, paper, books and a lunch.

Revised

On your first day of school remember to pack the *essentials*: pencils, paper, books and a lunch.

Redundant

Many *uneducated people who have never attended school* achieve low scores on standardized tests.

Revised

Many *uneducated people* achieve low scores on standardized tests.

Below are some other examples of redundant phrases. Overuse of these phrases in writing can make it seem as if the author lacks conviction in his/her own statements. These phrases are more acceptable in presentations and speeches.

let me add/point out/suggest
for what its worth
we can safely say/suggest/argue
it should be pointed out/noted/observed/understood that. (NTU, 2000)

Make sure that all the information you are including is relevant. In an academic paper, have several clear points that support your argument. Often, students repeat themselves because they have only developed one aspect of their argument.

Note: Many students are attached to their repetitive sentences because they are afraid that removing them will make the paper too short. Don't make this mistake. Concise writing that covers the important points is preferable to long repetitive papers.

Sources

Northern Territory University (2000). Writing: Obstacles: Padding. Retrieved July 26, 2006 from http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/studyskills/wr/wr_ws_ob_pa.html

Quirk, S. & Hoffman, E. (1997; Last updated, April 28, 1998). *Networked Writing & Research On-Line Handbook*. Northern Illinois University English Department. Retrieved July 26, 2006 from <http://www.engl.niu.edu/sourcebook/concision.html>



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