



ONW

Omit Needless Words



THE
ELEMENTS
OF
STYLE

WILLIAM
STRUNK JR.

WITH
REVISED
AND
A NEW
INTRODUCTION
BY
E.B. WHITE

THE
ELEMENTS
OF
STYLE

"Buy it, study it, use it.
It's as timeless as
in our age of volubility."
—The New York Times

WILLIAM STRUNK JR.
AND
E.B. WHITE

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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With Index

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ROGER ANGELL



Vigorous writing is concise.

A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts.

This requires not that the writer make all his sentences short, or that he avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline, but that every word tell.

Many expressions in common use violate this principle:

the question as to whether	whether
there is no doubt but that	no doubt (doubtless)
used for fuel purposes	used for fuel
he is a man who	he
in a hasty manner	hastily
this is a subject which	this subject
His story is a strange one.	His story is strange.

Redundant	Revised
1. at this point in time	
2. basic fundamentals	
3. by means of	
4. descend down	
5. green in color	
6. in the event that	
7. join together	
8. new innovation	
9. oval in shape	
10. the reason is because	
11. very unique	

Redundant	Revised
1. at this point in time	now
2. basic fundamentals	basics
3. by means of	by
4. descend down	descend
5. green in color	green
6. in the event that	if
7. join together	join
8. new innovation	innovation
9. oval in shape	oval
10. the reason is because	because
11. very unique	unique

In especial the expression *the fact* that should be revised out of every sentence in which it occurs.

owing to the fact that since	(because)
in spite of the fact that though	(although)
call your attention to the fact that remind you	(notify you)
I was unaware of the fact that	(did not know)
the fact that he had not succeeded	his failure
the fact that I had arrived	my arrival

Who is, which was, and the like are often superfluous.

His brother, who is a member of the same firm	His brother, a member of the same firm
Trafalgar, which was Nelson's last battle	Trafalgar, Nelson's last battle

Redundant	Revised
1. Due to the fact that	
2. The fact that she was successful	
3. Due to an over abundance of caution	
4. At the end of the day	
5. She enjoyed swimming, playing hockey etc.	

Redundant	Revised
1. Due to the fact that	Due
2. The fact that she was successful	She was successful
3. Due to an over abundance of caution	-cut it all-
4. At the end of the day	-cut it all-
5. She enjoyed swimming, playing hockey etc.	She enjoyed swimming and playing hockey.

Rewrite the following, ONW.

- a)It is absolutely essential that all students meet with their advisor on a regular basis.
- b)The advance preview of Transformers scored big at the box office.
- c)In my personal opinion, everyone could benefit from eating more chocolate.
- d)The final outcome of the Literature exam was better than I expected.
- e)Having just visited Washington, D.C. myself, I can say that the Lincoln Memorial is the greatest monument an American citizen can view in our nation's capital.

Rewrite the following, ONW.

a) It is absolutely essential that all students meet with their advisor on a regular basis.

It is essential that all students regularly meet with their advisor.

b) The advance preview of Transformers scored big at the box office.

The Transformers preview did very well.

c) In my personal opinion, everyone could benefit from eating more chocolate.

In my opinion, everyone could benefit from eating more chocolate.

d) The final outcome of the Literature exam was better than I expected.

My literature exam was better than expected.

e) Having just visited Washington, D.C. myself, I can say that the Lincoln Memorial is the greatest monument an American citizen can view in our nation's capital.

Having just visited Washington, DC, it is clear to me that the Lincoln Memorial is the greatest monument in the American capital.

Rewrite the following, ONW.

f) Recommending that a student copy from another student's paper is not something he would recommend.

g) Unencumbered by a sense of responsibility, Jason left his wife with forty-nine kids and a can of beans.

h) Above all, there is, of course, absolutely no need indeed to decorate your sentence with words and phrases of emphasis if, without them, the sentence undeniably is indeed equally capable of stressing your point.

Rewrite the following, ONW.

f) Recommending that a student copy from another student's paper is not something he would recommend.

He would not recommend that a student copy from another.

g) Unencumbered by a sense of responsibility, Jason left his wife with forty-nine kids and a can of beans.


Irresponsibly, Jason left his wife with forty-nine kids and a can of beans.

h) Above all, there is, of course, absolutely no need indeed to decorate your sentence with words and phrases of emphasis if, without them, the sentence undeniably is indeed equally capable of stressing your point.

Make your sentences clear and to the point.

WORDS

Many students chase the word count –
they don't look at the content.

A collection of colorful alphabet blocks, some in focus and some blurred in the background. The blocks are in various colors including red, green, blue, yellow, and purple. Some blocks show letters like 'C', 'O', 'N', 'T', 'E', 'N', 'T' in the foreground, while others in the background show letters like 'B', 'M', 'Z', 'P', 'G', 'H', 'I', 'J', 'K', 'L', 'O', 'P', 'Q', 'R', 'S', 'T', 'U', 'V', 'W', 'X', 'Y', 'Z'.

And the word count is important,
but the content is more important.

C O N T E N T

Trade barriers are a general term that explains the rules and regulations of any government that restricts national trade. Trade barriers are set up to protect local businesses and citizens, and to generate revenue. Even though trade is favorable for all countries, the rules set up to regulate trade can sometimes discourage it. (53)

De-clutter (Take out the meaningless ‘and’ clauses)

OLD: Trade barriers are a general term that explains the rules and regulations of any government that restricts national trade. (19)

De-clutter (Take out the meaningless ‘and’ clauses)

OLD: Trade barriers are a general term that explains the **rules and regulations** of any government that restricts national trade. (19)

- Why use rules AND regulations? Rules are regulations. We get it already.

De-clutter (Take out the meaningless ‘and’ clauses)

OLD: Trade barriers are a general term that explains the **rules and regulations** of **any** government that restricts national trade. (19)

- Why use rules AND regulations? Rules are regulations. We get it already.
- Why bother saying “any government”? Waste of “any”.

De-clutter (Take out the meaningless ‘and’ clauses)

OLD: Trade barriers are **a general term** that explains the **rules and regulations** of **any** government that restricts national trade. (19)

- Why use rules AND regulations? Rules are regulations. We get it already.
- Why bother saying “any government”? Waste of “any”.
- “A general term” is a wasted phrase that means nothing. Delete it.

De-clutter (Take out the meaningless ‘and’ clauses)

OLD: Trade barriers are a general term that explains the rules and regulations of any government that restricts national trade. (19)

- Why use rules AND regulations? Rules are regulations. We get it already.
- Why bother saying “any government”? Waste of “any”.
- “A general term” is a wasted phrase that means nothing. Delete it.

NEW: Trade barriers are government regulations designed to restrict trade. (9)

Combine sentences

OLD: Trade barriers are a general term that explains the rules and regulations of any government that restricts national trade. Trade barriers are set up to protect local businesses and citizens, and to generate revenue. (34)

- Cut out the garbage and combine the sentences.

Combine sentences

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Combine sentences

OLD: Trade barriers are a general term that explains the rules and regulations of any government that restricts national trade. Trade barriers are set up to protect local businesses and citizens, and to generate revenue. (34)

- Cut out the garbage and combine the sentences.

NEW: Trade barriers are government regulations designed to restrict trade, protect citizens and generate revenue. (14)

Be clear

OLD: Even though trade is favorable for all countries, the rules set up to regulate trade can sometimes discourage it. (19)

Be clear

OLD: Even though trade is favorable for all countries, the rules set up to regulate trade can sometimes discourage it. (19)

- *HUH? It's favorable and can be discouraging?*

Be clear

OLD: Even though trade is favorable for all countries, the rules set up to regulate trade can sometimes discourage it. (19)

• *HUH? It's favorable and can be discouraging?*

NEW: Government rules regulating trade can discourage it. (7)

Be specific

Be vivid

These are
NOT needless
words.



Trade barriers are a general term that explains the rules and regulations of any government that restricts national trade. Trade barriers are set up to protect local businesses and citizens, and to generate revenue. Even though trade is favorable for all countries, the rules set up to regulate trade can sometimes discourage it. (53)

Trade barriers are government regulations designed to restrict trade, protect citizens and generate revenue. However, government rules regulating trade can actually discourage it. (23)

Our bills are not organized. We have files everywhere. Things get lost. This could mean expensive late fees. This would cost the family more money. This could mean that the family can't afford things or properly save for university. This would be detrimental to the family.

Our bills are not organized. We have them everywhere. Things get lost. This could result in expensive late fees. This would cost the family more money. This could mean that the family can't afford things or properly save for university. This would be detrimental to the family.

Not specific.
Vague. No real
sense of how the
bills are stored.

Our bills are not organized. We have them everywhere. Things get lost. This could lead to expensive late fees. This would cost the family more money. This could mean that the family can't afford things or properly save for university. This would be detrimental to the family.

Not specific.
Vague. No real
sense of how the
bills are stored.

Causal chain is
weak. It's not
wrong, it's just
surface analysis.

Our bills are not organized. We have them everywhere. Things get lost. This could mean that the family can't afford things or properly save for university. This would be detrimental to the

Needs to
ONW

Not specific.
Vague. No real
sense of how the
bills are stored.

Causal chain is
weak. It's not
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Our bills are not organized. We have files everywhere. Things get lost. This could mean expensive late fees. This would cost the family more money. This could mean that the family can't afford things or properly save for university. This would be detrimental to the family.

As bills come in the mail, they are put into an unpaid pile. After payment, they are put in a paid shoe box. Bills also come to either my mother or father's email. With all of these different locations (unpaid, paid, 2 emails) it is hard to track the expenses. A centralized place to analyse expenses would be helpful.

In January, my father accidentally put a new Bell bill on the paid pile. No one noticed so in February there was a late fee of \$23.56. While this isn't a huge amount of money, it's irritating to my father: "I hate paying money in interest that we could spend it on something useful!" Better organization would mean that it will be easier to track payments and avoid late charges.

Our bills are not organized. We have files everywhere. Things get lost. This could mean expensive late fees. This would cost the family more money. This could mean that the family can't afford things or properly save for university. This would be detrimental to the family.

As bills come in the mail, they are put into an **unpaid pile**. After payment, they are put in a **paid shoe box**. Bills also come to either my **mother or father's email**. With all of these different locations (unpaid, paid, 2 emails) it is hard to track the expenses. **A centralized place to analyse expenses would be helpful.**

In **January**, my father accidentally put a new **Bell** bill on the paid pile. No one noticed so in **February** there was a late fee of **\$23.56**. While this isn't a huge amount of money, it's irritating to my father: "**I hate paying money in interest that we could spend it on something useful!**" **Better organization would mean that it will be easier to track payments and avoid late charges.**

Our bills are not organized. We have files everywhere. Things get lost. This could mean expensive late fees. This would cost money. This could mean that the family can't afford to save for university. This would be detrimental.

Specific. Not vague at all. Detailed sense of how stored.

As bills come in the mail, they are put into an unpaid shoe box. When they are paid, they are put in a paid shoe box. Bills also come to either my mother or father's email. With all of these different locations (unpaid, paid, 2 emails) it is hard to track the expenses. A centralized place to analyse expenses would be helpful.

More realistic evaluation.

In January, I accidentally put a new Bell bill on the paid pile. No one noticed. There was a late fee of \$23.56. While this isn't a huge amount of money, it's irritating to my father: "I hate paying money in interest that we could spend it on something useful!" Better organization would mean that it will be easier to track payments and avoid late charges.



- Drafts are your friend.
- Omit needless words.
- Add vividness and specific details.



Chunk, the groundhog, eating a carrot in my garden.
September 2021

My groundhog picture for the wildlife-mini-assignment was my favourite part of the photography unit. I liked the placid way that the groundhog chewed the carefully tended carrots from my garden; but it also made me consider the fact that the way we organize knowledge into different subject really limits what we know. Normally, a science course might consider the nature of light or the biology of backyard wildlife, an art class might consider lighting or composition, and a technology class might consider the components of a camera. By learning all of these subjects together, we combine all forms of knowledge to allow us to take really great wildlife shots. I have extended this into my real-life too. Since it is summer, my brother and I have started to have water-gun fights in our backyard. If you combine strategy, physics, art and playfulness together, you can make some epic shots. My brother is in for a soaking. In my future courses, even when they are taught separately, I am going to look for ways to bring in knowledge from other subjects. I don't want to be limited by the classification of knowledge; I want to be able to bring content together to allow me to create more complex and meaningful projects. [210 words]

In the photography unit, during the mini-wildlife assignment, I took an excellent picture of a groundhog placidly chewing one of the carefully tended carrots from my garden. The picture also made me realize that organizing knowledge into different subjects really limits how we see the world. Normally, the nature of light would be studied only in physics, backyard wildlife exclusively in biology, composition solely in art and the working of the camera in technology. However, in STEAM, we combined all forms of knowledge, allowing me to take this amazing wildlife shot. I have extended this into my real-life too, specifically into backyard water-gun fights. If you combine strategy, physics, art and playfulness together, you can make some epic shots. In my future courses, even when knowledge is taught separately, I won't be limited by the classification of knowledge. I will bring in content from other subjects allowing the creation of more complex and meaningful projects. [155 words]

Deep Impact, NASA



Deep Impact is a NASA space probe launched from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station on January 12, 2005. It was designed to study the interior composition of the comet Tempel 1 (9P/Tempel), by releasing an impactor into the comet. At 05:52 UTC on July 4, 2005, the Impactor successfully collided with the comet's nucleus. The impact excavated debris from the interior of the nucleus, forming an impact crater. Photographs taken by the spacecraft showed the comet to be more dusty and less icy than had been expected. The impact generated an unexpectedly large and bright dust cloud, obscuring the view of the impact crater.

Previous space missions to comets, such as Giotto, Deep Space 1, and Stardust, were fly-by missions. These missions were able to photograph and examine only the surfaces of cometary nuclei, and even then from considerable distances. The Deep Impact mission was the first to eject material from a comet's surface, and the mission garnered considerable publicity from the media, international scientists, and amateur astronomers alike.

Upon the completion of its primary mission, proposals were made to further utilize the spacecraft. Consequently, Deep Impact flew by Earth on December 31, 2007 on its way to an extended mission, designated EPOXI, with a dual purpose to study extrasolar planets and comet Hartley 2 (103P/Hartley). Communication was unexpectedly lost in August 2013 while the craft was heading for another asteroid flyby.

Deep Impact was launched by NASA from Cape Canaveral, Florida on January 12, 2005. It travelled 429 million km over 174 days to reach comet Tempel 1. Deep Impact's rocket was a Delta II 7925 and it travelled at a speed of 103,000 km/h.

Deep Impact's mission was to study the composition of a comet in space by blowing part of it up and collecting the explosion debris. The explosive used was equivalent to 4.7 tons of TNT and it blew a crater 150 m in diameter.

We learned that the comet was more dusty and less icy than we thought. In addition, the public was encouraged to get involved in the mission, people could send their names into space on a disk on the spacecraft and many amateur astronomers took pictures of the impact.

136 words

Deep Impact launched from NASA's Cape Canaveral, Florida on January 12, 2005. It travelled 429 million km reaching the comet Tempel 1 in 174 days. Deep Impact's rocket was a Delta II 7925, with a speed of 103,000 km/h.

Deep Impact's mission was to study comet composition by launching a detonator and collecting explosion debris. NASA used the equivalent to 4.7 tons of TNT and blew a crater 150 m in diameter.

We learned that the comet was dustier and less icy than anticipated. In addition, public involvement was encouraged; people could add their names to a disk on board and amateur astronomers observed the impact.

107 words

Launch Mission Template:

1. (Mission Name) launched from (Space Agency)'s (launch site) on (date). It travelled (distance) to reach (whatever it reached) in (length of time). (Mission Name)'s rocket was a (Rocket name), with a speed of (speed of rocket).
2. (Mission Name)'s mission was to (whatever mission was). (More details about how the mission happened).
3. We learned that (things learned by mission). (More details about knowledge gained or inventions form mission).