

Wordiness: *The beast, full of fire and fury (and excitement) that dulls even the most interesting phrase, clause, or, dare I say... word. Personally I hate it when people are too wordy, ludicrously verbose, or simply over descriptive, like a soccer player who is too engaged in his own moves, both pretty and precise, to shoot the darn ball.*

OR...

A Teacher's Guide to Talking About Wordiness...

A Definition: Wordy sentences use too many useless words that clutter writing. Good writing is simple and direct; it uses the simplest word possible that conveys the same meaning. Wordiness takes away from this clarity.

| Wordy | Better |
|---|--|
| For all intents and purposes, the reason Mr. Henderson arrived late for work was due to the fact that he stopped at very many traffic lights that were red in color.. | Mr. Henderson arrived late for work because he stopped at many red lights. |

How do we catch wordy sentences?

- Not all sentences will be as wordy as the example; however, you should always watch for unnecessary words.
- Try removing words from each sentence. If you can remove a word while keeping the sentence's meaning, the sentence is wordy.

Keep a word if

- it is necessary to the grammar of the sentence
- it is a key idea, fact, feeling, or description

How do we fix wordy sentences?

- Eliminate redundancy (*many, many different ways... quickly dashed .. quietly tiptoed... she is a woman who is...he appears to be completely finished...*)
- Delete empty words and phrases (*generally...in my humble opinion ... in the opinion of the author...*)
- Avoid clichés that don't add value (*like the plague..._*
- Avoid expressions that can be more clearly said in another way (*due to the fact that (becomes 'because') ... had an effect upon (becomes 'influenced')*...)
- Delete the following phrases and variations: there is . . . that/ it is . . . that (...*It is the desk that is uncomfortable. (becomes "The desk is uncomfortable."*)
- Avoid using the passive voice ...
- Substitute verbs with prepositions with verbs not needing prepositions. (*find out = "discover"*)

Some Examples

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>It is necessary at this point in time to inform you that I must be leaving.</i> | |
| <i>Generally it is understood that college professors should teach several if not dozens of graduate seminars each yearly academic calendar.</i> | |
| <i>It is clear that in the opinion of the author of the work that we need to understand the importance of brevity in communication, notwithstanding audience needs and desires.</i> | |
| <i>It is due to the fact that the presidential election is to be held today that we are focusing our class on political discourse, dialogue, and discussion across political platforms and positions.</i> | |

How to talk to students about wordiness...