

# Wordiness

Wordiness is the tendency to use ten words when only four or five are necessary. Adding words – better known as *fluff* – to your paper to meet an assignment page requirement does not make your paper better, just fluffier. And fluff will not get you a higher grade. Readers do not want to wade through wordy phrases or sentences to arrive at the writer’s intended meaning. In short – be concise. Make sure that every word you commit to the final draft is important to the overall completeness of the piece. And remember, fluff is what you do to pillows – not what you add to writing.

- **Deadwood Constructions**

We call these phrases on the left deadwood because they, too, are lifeless.

regardless of the fact	although
due to the fact that	because
the reason is that	because
as to whether or not	whether
there is no doubt that	doubtless
it is believed that	<u>the senate</u> believes
concerning the matter of	about
by means of	by
these are the kinds of ... that	<u>detective stories</u> engage readers
in order to	to

- **Circumlocution**

Writers take a roundabout way to say something simple.

Janice made her decision after hearing his report.

Janice decided after hearing his report.

Each candidate should be evaluated on an individual basis.

Each candidate should be evaluated individually.

The Writing Center tutors are comprised of students.

The Writing Center tutors are students.

His dog shows a great deal of obedience.

His dog is obedient.

- **Redundancy**

Writers use words that repeat the same idea or their meanings overlap.

His speech on flying saucers aroused my deepest feelings and emotions.

In this day and age, people expect to live to be at least fifty years old.

Other common redundancies include

reverted back  
reflected back  
fell down  
climb up  
a true fact

new innovation  
red in color  
resulting effect  
free gift  
circle around

- **Passive Voice**

The passive voice makes writing wordy colorless. You can often recognize sentences with passive verbs because they contain the word *by*, telling who performed the action.

The window was broken by a Laker.  
A Laker broke the window.

The essay was examined by the instructor.  
The instructor examined the essay.

The Stugo senator was angered by the newspaper reporter.  
The newspaper reporter angered the Stugo senator.

- **Unnecessary introductory or prepositional phrases**

**Introductory Phrases**

There are ten thousand students attending Longview.  
Ten thousand students attend Longview.

There are many reasons that I don't eat liver.  
I don't eat liver for many reasons.

It is the Psychology Club that is sponsoring the trip.  
The Psychology Club sponsors the trip.

To avoid passive voice constructions, keep the performer (the subject) and the action (the verb) together.

**Prepositional Phrases**

A friend of hers left class early.  
Her friend left class early.

A neighbor of ours owns a clothing store.  
Our neighbor owns a clothing store.

The hands of the referee were waving again.  
The referee's hands waved again.

Wordiness in any form can detract from your writing. Practice writing in concise language and plan to focus on identifying deadwood constructions, circumlocutions, redundancies passive voice, and unnecessary introductory or prepositional phrases during the latter stage of your revisions.