

## College Writing Course #4 – Simplify, Simplify, SIMPLIFY!

Now we come to the last 'improve style via proofreading' topics. We've already looked at enhancing Verbs, sticking to Active Voice and letting Nouns have their Voice.

It is time for one last proofing pass to knock out a killer of clear writing. That is, using 4 words [or 3 or 6] when 1 will suffice. Sadly, tis is all too common an attempt to sound....academic....where writers end up just sounding, well, muddled.

This series has already looked at wordiness and how it just makes writing vague. But just so you don't mistake my meaning – let's focus on wordiness itself this time. I'm including a list here of Bloated phrases and their Healthier replacements.

<u>Bloated</u>	<u>Healthier</u>
<b>Verbs</b>	
has knowledge of -- is aware of	<b>Knows</b>
is running - is taking - is having	<b>Runs – Takes – Has</b>
<b>Phrases</b>	
for the reason - due to the fact that - owing to the fact that - this is why on the grounds that in light of the fact that considering the fact that	<b>Because - Why</b>
under circumstances in which on the occasion of in a situation in which	<b>When</b>
regardless of the fact that despite the fact that	<b>Even though - Although</b>
if it should transpire/happen that in the event that under circumstances in which	<b>If</b>



<u>Bloated</u>	<u>Healthier</u>
as regards - in reference to with regard to - concerning the matter of where . . . is concerned	<b>about</b>
has the ability to - has the opportunity to has the capacity for - is in a position to	<b>can</b>
it is crucial that - it is necessary that there is a need/necessity for it is incumbent upon - it is important that	<b>must, should</b>
prior to - in anticipation of following on - at the same time as subsequent to - simultaneously with	<b>before, after, as</b>
it could happen that - it is possible that the possibility exists for there is a chance that	<b>may, might, can, could</b>
<b>Expletive construction</b>	
it is there is there are	<b>Re-write the sentence without it</b>

Cut! Slash! BUTCHER! Tear out any wordiness you find and replace it with concise, HEALTHIER options.

Finally, I am forced to mention a creeping scourge on the face of American usage....look at the following sentence

*The reason that is is that she was too early.*

*replace with – "because she was too early"*



Notice “is is”! It is infecting all kinds of language. Listen even to newscasts and you will hear it. Don’t say it, please – and for the love of good writing, don’t USE it!

This is the last best advice I have that can improve your writing AFTER the fact. The next few articles in this series will look at the ‘before you write’ steps in putting together a good piece of academic writing.

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