



Reduce unnecessary words

Introduction

After writing your assignments, it is important to proofread your work, not only to identify possible errors, but also to identify information or words that may be unnecessary, repetitive or irrelevant. Being able to identify where to edit parts of your text without changing or eliminating meaning is an important academic skill.

You should keep to the word limit specified in your assignment brief, therefore it is important for your writing to be concise. Including irrelevant information or unnecessary description can sometimes make your ideas or expression unclear and confusing.

Eliminating repetition of information, facts, or ideas

This can include repetition of the **same words** or **phrases** (**Example 1**) or repetition of the **same meaning** using different words or phrases (**Example 2**).

Example 1:

Original: Recent research has suggested that **university** students seem to benefit from attending study skills classes whilst they are at **university**. (20 words)

Revised: Recent research has suggested that university students seem to benefit from attending study skills classes. (15 words)

Why: University is already used at the beginning of the sentence so does not need to be stated again at the end of the sentence

Example 2:

Original: According to recent research, **university** students are likely to benefit from attending study skills classes **when studying in a higher education setting.** (22 words)

Revised: According to recent research, university students are likely to benefit from attending study skills classes. (15 words)

Why: **Higher education setting** is already implied by **university** at the beginning of the sentence

Unnecessary description

Description that does not add to the meaning of a sentence or text as a whole can be eliminated to ensure a concise text.

Example:

Original: According to recent research, university students are likely to benefit from attending study skills classes, ~~where they learn how to write and structure assignments, take effective notes and revise for exams.~~ (31 words)

Revised: According to recent research, university students are likely to benefit from attending study skills classes. (15 words)

Why: The description of skills is unnecessary as this is already implied by the term **study skills.**

Irrelevant description

Description that does not have a connection to the assignment question should be limited to ensure your text is **relevant** and **on topic**.

Revisit your **assignment brief** and check whether information, ideas, and arguments developed in your text are relevant.

Example:

Original: According to recent research, university students are likely to benefit from attending study skills classes ~~in small groups given by a study skills tutor at their university~~. (28 words)

Revised: According to recent research, university students are likely to benefit from attending study skills classes. (15 words)

Why: The focus is on the **benefits** of study skills classes; details on class size and tutor are not relevant to the main point of the sentence.

Condensing lengthy description

In some cases, lengthy descriptions could be condensed into shorter descriptions that highlight the **key terms**. This will help to make the ideas or information being presented in your sentences **clearer** and more **concise**.

Example:

Original: The research was conducted on a group of students, ~~who were studying~~ biology and ~~were in their~~ first year of ~~study~~. (21 words)

Revised: The research was conducted on a group of first-year Biology students. (12 words)

Why: (students) who were studying biology → **biology students**

Why: **who** and **were** do not contribute to the meaning of or highlight the **key terms: students, studying** and **biology**. Repetition is avoided by removing **studying**.

Why: (students) in their first year → **first-year** (students)

Why: **in** and **their** do not contribute to the meaning of or highlight the key terms which are **students** and **first year**.

Find out more

Check out the **Academic and Assignment Writing** section of the Study Hub: Online.



Further information

The Learning Resources Study Hub provides a range of opportunities (such as workshops and drop-ins) for you to enhance your academic skills. For more information visit:

lrweb.beds.ac.uk/studyhub

