

## Writing concisely

At university most of your assignments will have a required word length. While at first you may think it will be hard to write 1500 words on an unfamiliar topic, once you start researching it is not uncommon to have to cut words from your assignments. Assignment requirements generally allow you a margin of 10% over or under your word allocation, therefore it is important not to waste words with unnecessary language. Writing concisely improves the readability of your writing also. Consider these tips on word choices.

**Do not use more words than is needed. Your reader should not have to deal with unnecessary information to get to the point.**

the research data	NOT	the data from the research
regularly	NOT	on a regular basis
aware of	NOT	fully cognisant of the fact
because	NOT	in consideration of the fact that
therefore	NOT	it is apparent therefore that

**Avoid saying the same thing twice, this is called a tautology.**

blue	NOT	blue in colour
streamlined	NOT	streamlined in appearance
introduction	NOT	initial introduction
round	NOT	round in shape

**Write succinctly. Avoid abstract (nominalised) language which may be grammatically correct but can sound vague.**

*X This paper gives an analysis of the problem and offers a solution.*

*√ This paper analyses the problem and solves it.*

reported	NOT	gave a report
decided	NOT	made a decision
suggested	NOT	offered a suggestion
announced	NOT	made an announcement
catalysed	NOT	served as a catalyst
increased	NOT	resulted in an increase
destroyed	NOT	led to the destruction

**Avoid clichés** these are overused expressions which make sentences unnecessarily long and detract from the meaning.

- *take the bull by the horns = to confront*
- *done and dusted = completed*
- *tried and true = reliable*
- *at the end of the day = in conclusion/ summary*

**Remove unnecessary words that add no meaning.**

*Numerous people, who are concerned for the environment are volunteering their time, which is precious, to local Landcare and waterways groups that are trying to replant vegetation along riverbanks and clear creek beds from rubbish that is currently littering and clogging them (42 words).*

**Revised:** *Numerous local residents are volunteering their precious time to help environmental groups clear rubbish and replant vegetation along suburban creeks and riverbanks. (22 words).*

**Use fewer words by replacing more informal language with single academic words.**

<b>adequate</b>	good enough	<b>fall, decrease</b>	go down
<b>assist</b>	help out	<b>fluctuate</b>	go up and down
<b>benefit</b>	good thing	<b>finalise</b>	finish off
<b>collect</b>	pick up	<b>insert</b>	put (place) in
<b>complete</b>	fill out	<b>maintain</b>	keep up
<b>consider</b>	think about	<b>meet</b>	bump into
<b>determine</b>	find out	<b>numerous</b>	a lot of/ lots of
<b>delay</b>	put off	<b>reduce</b>	cut down (back)
<b>discard</b>	throw away (out)	<b>regarding</b>	to do with
<b>discuss</b>	talk about	<b>remove</b>	take away
<b>dismantle</b>	pull apart	<b>resume</b>	start again
<b>eliminate</b>	get rid of	<b>return</b>	go (come) back
<b>encounter</b>	meet up with	<b>raise</b>	bring up
<b>establish</b>	set up	<b>tolerate</b>	put up with
<b>extinguish</b>	put out	<b>visit</b>	come over