Conciseness

WHAT IS CONCISE LANGUAGE?

Concise language involves using the most effective words in order to get one's point across. Concise language entails using a minimal amount of effective words to make one's point. Writers often include words in their sentences that are unnecessary and could be omitted in order to make the sentence more concise. There are several techniques to make a sentence or paragraph more concise.

1. Replace Several Weak Words With Stronger and More Powerful Words

When drafting a paper, writers sometimes include ambiguous words in their sentences, when the point could be expressed in fewer, more direct words.

Example:

Wordy → Suzie _believed but could not confirm_ that Billy _had feelings of affection for_ her. (14 words)
Concise → Suzie _assumed_ that Billy _adored_ her. (6 words)

Wordy → Working as a _pupil under someone who develops photos_ was an experience _that really helped me learn a lot_. (20 words)
Concise: Working as a _photo technician's apprentice_ was an _educational experience_. (10 words)

2. Omit Unnecessary Words

Often, writers include words that are not needed in their sentences. This could be in an effort to extend their paper's length or an attempt to make their sentences more detailed. But, in actuality, what happens is the sentence is too wordy and non-specific.

Example:

Wordy → The teacher demonstrated some of the various ways and methods for cutting words from my essay that I had written for class. (22 words)
Concise → The teacher demonstrated methods for cutting words from my essay. (10 words)

Example:

Wordy→ Eric Clapton and Steve Winwood formed a new band of musicians together in 1969, giving it the ironic name of Blind Faith because early speculation that was spreading everywhere about the band suggested that the new musical group would be good enough to rival the earlier bands that both men had been in, Cream and Traffic, which people had really liked and had been very popular. (66 words)

Concise→ Eric Clapton and Steve Winwood formed a new band in 1969, ironically naming it Blind Faith because speculation suggested that the group would rival the musicians' previous popular bands, Cream and Traffic. (32 words)

3. Combine Sentences

Some information does not necessarily require its own sentence. The sentence can easily be integrated into a prior or latter sentence without losing any of the information presented.

Example:

Wordy→ Ludwig's castles are an astounding marriage of beauty and madness. By his death, he had commissioned three castles. (18 words)

Concise→ Ludwig's three castles are an astounding marriage of beauty and madness. (11 words)

Wordy→ The supposed crash of a UFO in Roswell, New Mexico aroused interest in extraterrestrial life. This crash is rumored to have occurred in 1947. (24 words)

Concise→ The supposed 1947 crash of a UFO in Roswell, New Mexico aroused interest in extraterrestrial life. (16 words)

4. Choose Simplicity

These are some common phrases found in writing that can be replaced with one word. When faced with a decision between a wordy phrase and a singular word, always try to choose simplicity.

Choose: Because/Since/Why
Instead of: "The reason for", "due to the fact that", "this is why", or "considering the fact that"
Choose: When
Instead of: "on the occasion of" or "under circumstances in which"
Choose: About
Instead of: "in reference to", "with regard to", or "concerning the matter of"

5. Empty Conciseness

Many pairs of descriptive words are redundant and imply one another. For instance, if a person finishes something, he/she is finishing it completely. So, "completely finish" is redundant, and both words are not needed in the sentence.

Other examples of this are:

Past memories
Very empty
Absolutely filled
Free gift
Future plans
Each individual
Various differences