



HOW TO REDUCE WORD COUNT

Editing Tips 101: Part I, Tip #2
by *Wordvice.com*

WHY ELIMINATE PREPOSITIONS?

- Prepositions significantly contribute to wordiness. They are used in passive voice phrases and in many unnecessary phrases that have more concise substitutes. For example, we can replace "prior to" and "in advance of" with "before."

WHEN TO REPLACE WITH WH-CLAUSE

Look for verb phrases dealing with:

- "saying" (ask, say, admit, argue, reply, agree, mention, explain, suggest, etc.)
- mental activities like thinking, studying, and deciding (e.g., know, understand, suppose, remember, forget, wonder, study, examine, decide, etc.)

HOW TO REVISE

01 Be possessive. *Ex: The approval **of** the Food and Drug Administration was received yesterday. → The Food and Drug **Administration's** approval was received yesterday.*

02 Be active. *Ex: The **approval** of the plan was given by the committee. → The **committee approved** the plan yesterday.*

03 Choose adverb substitutes. *Ex: The seller agreed **with reluctance**. → The seller **reluctantly** agreed.*

04 Replace with stronger verbs. *Ex: He **got to** the finish line. → He **reached** the finish line.*

05 Avoid nominalizations. *See our separate article on this topic.*

06 Was it really necessary? *Ex: **In our current situation**, we should decline the offer. → **We** should decline the offer.*

07 Embrace the wh-clauses. The purpose of this study was **to examine the effects of** solar radiation on bioluminescence. → This study **examined how** solar radiation affects bioluminescence.



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