

Eliminate these 5 words and phrases to simplify your writing

Aug 4, 2015, 10:25am EDT

When people ask me to share writing tips, my answer is always the same. Simplify. You'll get to the point faster and keep readers engaged longer.

If you can say something with fewer words, then do it.

If you can use smaller words, that's even better (I'm looking at you, engineers, lawyers, doctors and government workers).

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Here are five words and phrases you can eliminate to simplify your writing:

1. Actually

This word actually serves no purpose. Actually, this word serves no purpose.

See what happens when it's gone: "This word serves no purpose." Sounds better already.

"Actually" is the written equivalent of hearing somebody say "literally." If something is "actually happening," then it's just happening. Take out the "actually."

2. The fact that

These are filler words. It's fair to assume that whatever follows this phrase is a fact. You don't need to specify that it is. Try taking it out and see how much smoother it goes.

3. At the present time or currently

If you say, "I am having fun," then you don't need to say, "at the present time" or "currently."

"Am having" takes care of that. It's already present tense. We know you're talking about right now.

"Presently," "currently" and "at the moment": Take out phrases like these and you'll be surprised how much cleaner it all works.

4. The saying of this

People who write this way seem to do it a lot. They'll write something like, "the taking of notes" instead of "taking notes." Or, "the measuring of feedback" instead of "measuring feedback." When you see this, try taking out "the" and "of." You'll be saying the same thing, only with half as many words.

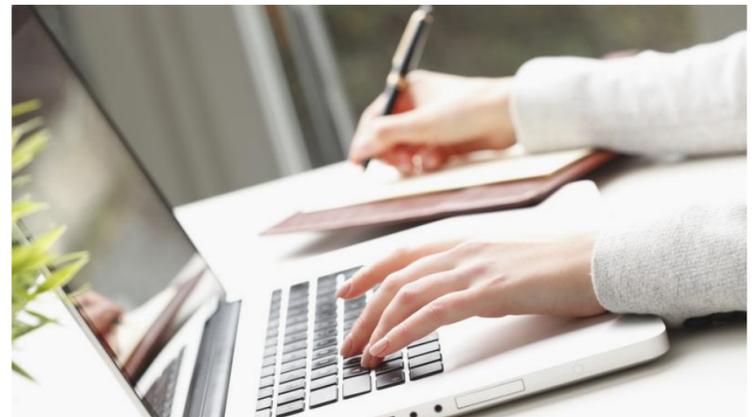


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5. In my opinion or I think

If you're writing something in first-person (that's from your perspective), then we already know that everything is your opinion or something you think. There's no need to add these words, because they're redundant.



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