

Some extra tips:

Using Two Words That Mean the Same Thing...

Use a single adjective or adverb to modify a word that implies the meaning of the modifier.

For example: “**New Invention,**”
The word invention already implies that it is new; therefore “new” is extra.

Excessive Hedging...

Limit or restrict tentative words such as “**suggest,**” “**may,**” “**possible**” in your results section. These words erode the confidence of the results. Limit hedging words to only one in the same sentence.

Directional Words...

Avoid repeating words that change the direction of a sentence or paragraph such as “**however,**” “**nonetheless,**” “**but,**” “**so,**” and “**still.**” Changing the direction confuses the reader; try to use only one directional word per paragraph.



Importance

While it’s always good to have clear and concise writing, it is especially important when you have space restrictions and word limits. This scientific practice is common in grant proposals, journals, posters, and other genres. Try applying the concepts outlined in this brochure to your own writing.



For more information about scientific writing, visit the Writing Center. To make an appointment, go to berks.mywconline.com

CLARITY & CONCISENESS

In Science Writing



Adjectives & Adverbs

You can use descriptive adjective and adverbs for your work, but you should try to avoid filler words that don't add much to your writing and can be insulting to readers.

Avoid Intensifiers

Words like “**very**” and “**extremely**” are usually unnecessary. The only instances in which the word “very” should be used is when making distinctions between two things such as high energy and very high energy.

Avoid Demeaning Words

Demeaning adverbs such as “**obviously**,” and “**clearly**,” may turn off the reader when something that appears obvious to the writer is not obvious to the reader

Generalizing

Generalizing can cause confusion for the reader. Broad, unsubstantiated statements are not good scientific writing.

You can avoid generalizing by...

- **Using exact words and aiming for precision when possible**

For instance, rather than using the word “**subject**,” use exactly what the subject was such as a turtle, a gymnast, or a mouse.

- **Use exact amounts instead of “some” or “many”**
- **Avoid the word “this” on its own**

For instance refer to “this test,” or “this problem.”

Concision

Explain topics simply and briefly:

- **Omit needless words**
- **Use simpler shorter words**
- **Avoid ineffectual phrases**

Table 1: Words to Omit

Instead of X	Consider O
This is a subject that	This subject
A large majority of	Most
Has the capacity to	Can
Whether or not	Whether
Are in agreement	Agree
Prior to	Before
Subsequent to	After
At this point in time	Now
Due to the fact that	Because
Plays a key role in	Is essential to

Table 2: Ineffectual Phrases to Delete

Examples X
Note that
It should be noted that
Respectively
It is important to realize
So-called