



Cooperative Online Writing Lab

Word Choice:

Tighten Wordy Sentences

Bluefield College COWL, 2005

What is word choice?

Moo! I am hungry
for some grass.



- Word choice is choosing words that communicate clearly.
- *Moo* is not clear until it is backed up with the next sentence.

Tighten wordy sentences.

- Eliminate redundancies or expressing the same idea repeatedly.

Matt --**very quickly**-- rushed to his eight o'clock class.

“Very quickly” restates the same meaning as “rush,” so “very quickly” is not needed in the sentence.

Tighten wordy sentences continued..

- Shorten or cut out empty or inflated phrases.

The student sitting in the corner **is the student that** needs tutoring in math.

Better word choice: The student sitting in the corner needs tutoring in math.

Tighten wordy sentences continued..

- Avoid unnecessary repetition of words.

The last **classroom** down the hallway is the cleanest **classroom**.

Better word choice: The last classroom down the hallway is the cleanest.

Tighten wordy sentences continued..

- Simplify the structure and look for opportunities to strengthen the verb.
- Colorless verbs *is, are, was, and were* frequently generate excess words.
- Beginning sentences with *it, there is, and there are* can also generate excess words.

Strengthening your sentences.

- A basketball game **is so thrilling** when a player dunks the basketball.

Better choice: A dunk during a basketball game **thrills** me.

- **There was** a player **that** was injured in the last game.

Better choice: **A player was** injured in the last game.

It's your turn.
Correct the following sentences.

As a matter of fact, I like the red dress.

In fact, I like the red dress.

The bus driver is responsible for transporting the students to and from school.

The bus driver transports the students to and from school.

There was a crowd gathered outside the courthouse.

A crowd gathered outside the courthouse.



Now,
you
have
wonderful
word choice!

Need More Assistance?

Stop by the
Writing Center **or**

Come back to
COWL again
and again!

We Mooove
fast to
help you!



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