Wordiness

Revise Convoluted Writing into Clear and Concise Prose

Effective writing clearly communicates to your audience—not all audiences will appreciate rambling prose. Using complicated words and adding more phrases to your sentences may seem like an erudite form of writing, but it can make your writing unclear to your audience and cause miscommunication.

Use Active Voice

In active voice, the subject of the sentence performs the action, instead of receiving the action. Check your sentences for forms of "to be" (*is, are, am, was, were, be, been, being*) connected to a past participle.

> **Original:** Rocky *was startled* by the black bear.
> **Revision:** The black bear startled Rocky.

Avoid Qualifiers

Qualifiers modify other words, but don't always add meaning to a sentence. Check your work for qualifiers like *really*, *basically*, *essentially*, and *very*.

> **Original:** *Essentially,* the black bear *really* startled Rocky.
> **Revision:** The black bear startled Rocky.

Eliminate Unnecessary Descriptors

There is no need for extra words if your verbs are strong enough. Eliminate words and phrases that describe the obvious. Save descriptive language when something is out of sorts, like when a black bear is bald or orange.

> **Original:** The black bear, *with thick fluffy fur*, startled Rocky.
> **Revision:** The black bear startled Rocky.

Reduce Redundant Expressions

Every word matters—avoid using words or phrases that mean the same thing.

> **Original:** A black bear *unexpectedly* startled Rocky.
> **Revision:** A black bear startled Rocky.
> **Original:** Rocky gave *free gifts* to students visiting the Writing Center.
> **Revision:** Rocky gave *gifts* to students visiting the Writing Center .