



# 297 Flabby Words and Phrases That Rob Your Writing of All Its Power

Want to be a more powerful writer?  
Simple. Stop using these words and  
phrases.

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1. **About** – Try not to use this term when discussing quantities. Use “approximately” or a range instead. Ex: About 20 people attended. Better: Approximately 20 people attended. Or: Fifteen to twenty people attended.
2. **Absolutely essential** – Redundant phrase. You don’t need *absolutely*. Ex: Fresh eggs are absolutely essential to this recipe. Better: Fresh eggs are essential to this recipe.
3. **Absolutely necessary** – Redundant phrase. You don’t need *absolutely*. Ex: Reading is absolutely necessary to write well. Better: Reading is necessary to write well.
4. **Accordingly** – Use simpler replacement, such as *so*. Ex: Accordingly, be careful next time. Better: So, be careful next time.
5. **Accuracy** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: The accuracy of his report wasn’t good. Better: His report wasn’t accurate.
6. **Actual facts** – Redundant phrase. You don’t need *actual*. Ex: Listen to the actual facts of the case. Better: Listen to the facts of the case.
7. **Admit to** – Flabby expression. Drop *to*. Ex: You should admit to stealing the coat. Better: You should admit stealing the coat.
8. **Advance forward** – Redundant phrase. You don’t need *forward*. Ex: The army advanced forward. Better: The army advanced.
9. **Advance planning** – Redundant phrase. You don’t need *advance*. Ex: The heist

required advanced planning. Better: The neist required planning.

10. **Advance warning** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *advance*. Ex: The storm hit with no advance warning. Better: The storm hit with no warning.
11. **Add an additional** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *an additional*. Ex: Add an additional string to your bow. Better: Add a string to your bow.
12. **Add up** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *up*. Ex: Add up your hours and see if you qualify for overtime. Better: Add your hours and see if you qualify for overtime.
13. **Added bonus** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *added*. Ex: Winning the prize was an added bonus. Better: Winning the prize was a bonus.
14. **Almost** – Use approximations such as this sparingly. Specific terms are better. Ex: It was almost time for class. Better: Class started in one minute.
15. **All of** – Flabby expression. Drop *of*. Ex: All of the guests loved the party. Better: All the guests loved the party.
16. **All time record** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *all time*. Ex: He broke the all time record for home runs. Better: He broke the record for home runs.
17. **All things being equal** – Empty Phrase. Don't use it. Ex: All things being equal, we should arrive tonight. Better: If all goes well, we should arrive tonight.
18. **Alternative choice** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *choice*. Ex: He had no alternative choice but to fight. Better: He had no alternative but to fight.
19. **All throughout** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *all*. Ex: War exists all throughout history. Better: War exists throughout history.
20. **Analysis** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: Give an analysis of the data and then create a summary.  
Better: Analyze the data and then summarize it.
21. **And etc.** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *and*. Ex: She loved dogs, cats, frogs, and etc. Better: She loved dogs, cats, frogs, etc.
22. **Anonymous stranger** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *anonymous*. Ex: An anonymous stranger sent her flowers. Better: A stranger sent her flowers.
23. **Appearance** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: His appearance caused cheers from the crowd. Better: He appeared and the crowd cheered.
24. **Area** – Vague Noun. Cut or use more specific word. Ex: James left the area. Better: James left Maryland.
25. **Are/is after** – Clunky verb construction. Use *follow*, or *seek*, or *desire*, or *want*. Ex: The events are after the lecture. Better: The events follow the

lecture. Ex: I don't know what you are after. Better: I don't know what you want.

26. **Armed gunman** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *armed*. Ex: An armed gunman robbed the bank today. Better: A gunman robbed the bank today.
27. **As a matter of fact** – Empty Phrase. Don't use it. Ex: As a matter of fact, I did eat all the candy. Better: Yes, I ate the candy.
28. **As being** – Flabby expression. You don't need *being*. Ex: She is known as being the smartest in the school. Better: She is known as the smartest in the school.
29. **Ascend up** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *up*. Ex: Ascend up the steps to reach the top. Better: Ascend the steps to reach the top.
30. **As far as I'm concerned** – Empty Phrase. Don't use it. Ex: As far as I'm concerned, all politicians lie. Better: All politicians lie.
31. **Ask the question** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *the question*. Ex: Ask the question to your mother. Better: Ask your mother.
32. **Aspect** – Vague noun. Cut or use more specific word. Ex: Commercials are an aspect of television I don't like. Better: I love television, but I hate commercials.
33. **Assemble together** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *together*. Ex: Assemble together the parts included in the box. Better: Assemble the parts included in the box.
34. **As to whether** – Flabby expression. You don't need *as to*. Ex: I didn't know as to whether he'd stay or go. Better: I didn't know whether he'd stay or go.
35. **As yet** – Flabby expression. You don't need *as*. Ex: No word on survivors as yet. Better: No word on survivors yet.
36. **At all times** – Empty phrase. Don't use, or fix. Ex: Be vigilant at all times. Better: Be vigilant.
37. **Attempt** – Use simpler replacement, such as *try*. This word can be an example of nominalization too (verb or adjective turned into a noun). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: Attempt it again. Better: Try again. Ex: His attempt at suicide was met with failure. Better: He attempted suicide but failed.
38. **At the end of the day** – Empty Phrases. Don't use it. Ex: At the end of the day, the toughest survive. Better: The toughest survive.
39. **At the present time** – Empty Phrase. Don't use or fix. Ex: I have no money at the present time. Better: I have no money now. I currently have no money.
40. **At this point in time** – Empty Phrase. Don't use or fix. Ex: At this point in time, let's just forget about our plans. Better: Let's just forget about our plans.
41. **Bald-headed** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *headed*. Ex: He was bald-

needed. Better: He was *data*.

42. **Basic necessities** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *basic*. Ex: Prepare for disasters by stocking basic necessities. Better: Prepare for disasters by stocking necessities.
43. **Belief** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: It's his belief that editing can be done with ease. Better: He believes editing is easy.
44. **Big** – Weak adjective. Replace with something more precise. Ex: He was a big man. Better: He was six feet tall and 250 pounds.
45. **Blend together** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *together*. Ex: The colors blend together nicely. Better: The colors blend nicely.
46. **Bouquet of flowers** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *of flowers*. Ex: The bouquet of flowers was beautiful. Better: The bouquet was beautiful.
47. **Brief moment** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *brief*. Ex: For a brief moment, he was speechless. Better: For a moment, he was speechless.
48. **Brilliance** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: Not all posts achieve brilliance. Better: Not all posts are brilliant.
49. **Cameo appearance** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *appearance*. Ex: The actor's cameo appearance caused a riot. Better: The actor's cameo caused a riot.
50. **Care about** – Flabby verb construction. Use *value* or *like* to save a word. Ex: Do your readers care about grammar? Better: Do your readers value grammar?
51. **Careful scrutiny** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *careful*. Ex: The lawyer read the document with careful scrutiny. Better: The lawyer read the document with scrutiny. Best: The lawyer scrutinized the document.
52. **Carelessness** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: Her carelessness caused his death. Better: He died because she was careless.
53. **Catch on** – Flabby verb construction. Use *resonate* or *spread*. Ex: Hopefully the message will catch on. Better: Hopefully the message will spread.
54. **Caused a drop in X** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: Pay cuts caused a drop in morale within our company. Better: Pay cuts demoralized our company.



55. **Caused considerable confusion** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. In this case, use something more powerful, such as *confused* or *baffled*. Ex: The instructions caused considerable confusion in the class. Better: The instructions baffled the class.
56. **Cease and desist** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *and desist*. Ex: Cease and desist all contact with Mrs. Jones. Better: Cease all contact with Mrs. Jones.
57. **Close proximity** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *close*. Ex: The close proximity of the tourists caused the elephant to charge. Better: The proximity of the tourists caused the elephant to charge.
58. **Closed fist** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *closed*. Ex: He hit me with his closed fist. Better: He hit me with his fist.
59. **Commute back and forth** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *back and forth*. Ex: His commute back and forth exhausted him. Better: His commute exhausted him.
60. **Comparison** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: He made a comparison between apples and oranges. Better: He compared apples with oranges.
61. **Completely destroy** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *completely*. Ex: Joe completely destroyed his room. Better: Joe destroyed his room.
62. **Completely eliminate** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *completely*. Ex: You must completely eliminate your foes. Better: You must eliminate your foes.
63. **Completely engulfed** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *completely*. Ex: Flames completely engulfed the house. Better: Flames engulfed the house.
64. **Completely filled** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *completely*. Ex: He completely filled his cup. Better: He filled his cup.
65. **Connect together** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *together*. Ex: Connect together the two wires. Better: Connect the two wires.
66. **Could possibly** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *possibly*. Ex: You could possibly win. Better: You could win.
67. **Crisis situation** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *situation*. Ex: In a crisis situation try to relax and think clearly. Better: In a crisis try to relax and think clearly.
68. **Current trend** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *current*. Ex: Some say blogging is a current trend that won't last. Better: Some say blogging is a trend that won't last.

69. **Cut down on** – Flabby Phrasal verb. Use *reduce* or *limit*. Ex: You should cut down on your sugar intake. Better: You should limit your sugar intake.
70. **Decrease in strength** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: The Euro decreased in strength against the US Dollar. Better: The Euro weakened against the US Dollar.
71. **Definition** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: His definition of fun was sleeping and watching television. Better: He defined fun as sleeping and watching television.
72. **Depreciate in value** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *in value*. Ex: Assets depreciate in value as each year passes. Better: Assets depreciate as each year passes.
73. **Descend down** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *down*. Ex: Descend down the steps to exit the building. Better: Descend the steps to exit the building.
74. **Description** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: Please give a description of the man who attacked you. Better: Please describe the man who attacked you.
75. **Desirable benefit** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *desirable*. Ex: What desirable benefit does writing offer? Better: What benefit does writing offer?
76. **Did not have much confidence in** – Avoid using *negative constructions* if possible. Readers don't like when you tell them what something *is not*. They like when you tell them what something *is*. Use *distrusted* or *doubted*. Ex: The soldiers did not have much confidence in their officers. Better: The soldiers doubted their officers' abilities.
77. **Did not pay attention to** – Avoid using *negative constructions* if possible. Readers don't like when you tell them what something *is not*. They like when you tell them what something *is*. Use *ignored*. Ex: The soldiers did not listen to their officers. Better: The soldiers ignored their officers' orders.
78. **Did not remember** – Avoid using *negative constructions* if possible. Readers don't like when you tell them what something *is not*. They like when you tell them what something *is*. Use *forgot*. Ex: The soldiers did not remember their orders. Better: The soldiers forgot their orders.
79. **Different kinds** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *different*. Ex: The chart lists five different kinds of animals. Better: The chart lists five kinds of animals.
80. **Difficultv** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the

noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: I'm having difficulty with math. Better: Math is difficult for me. Best: I'm struggling with math.

81. **Due to** – Clunky expression. Use *because* or *revise*. Ex: He got wet due to the rain. Better: He got wet because it rained. Best: The rain got him wet.
82. **Due to the fact that** – Empty phrase. Delete or use *because* or *since*. Ex: Due to the fact that I write, I love books. Better: Because I write, I love books.
83. **During the course of** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *the course of*. Ex: The forecast will change during the course of the day. Better: The forecast will change during the day.
84. **Dwindle down** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *down*. Ex: She loved to shop, so her savings dwindled down. Better: She loved to shop, so her savings dwindled.
85. **Each and every** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *and every*. Ex: I loved each and every one of them. Better: I loved each one of them.
86. **Ease** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: He thinks editing is a task you can do with ease. Better: He thinks editing is easy.
87. **Eliminate altogether** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *altogether*. Ex: We should reduce or eliminate altogether speeding ticket fines. Better: We should reduce or eliminate speeding ticket fines.
88. **Eliminate entirely** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *entirely*. Ex: We could eliminate entirely testing and students would still learn. Better: We could eliminate testing and students would still learn.
89. **Emergency situation** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *situation*. Ex: We have an emergency situation at the school. Better: We have an emergency at the school.
90. **Empty out** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *out*. Ex: Empty out the dishwasher. Better: Empty the dishwasher.
91. **End result** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *end*. Ex: Study and the end results will please you. Better: Study and the results will please you.
92. **Encouragement** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: His encouragement helped my success. Better: He encouraged me and I succeeded.
93. **Enter in** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *in*. Ex: Enter in your name and email address. Better: Enter your name and email address.
94. **Equal to one another** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *to one another*. Ex:



They are equal to one another in size, but Joe is faster. Better: They are equal in size, but Joe is faster.

95. **Eradicate completely** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *completely*. Ex: We must eradicate completely these roaches. Better: We must eradicate these roaches.
96. **Every single person** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *single (unless referring to marital status)*. Ex: Every single person should attend. Better: Every person should attend. Or: Everyone should attend.
97. **Evolve over time** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *over time*. Ex: Relationships evolve over time. Better: Relationships evolve.
98. **Exact same** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *exact*. Ex: They spoke at the exact same time. Better: They spoke at the same time.
99. **Facilitate** – Use simpler replacement, such as *help, yield, or aid*. Ex: Patience facilitates understanding. Better: Patience aids understanding.
100. **Facility** – Stilted phrase. Say exactly what an object is (school, hospital, government building). Ex: The facility had a large cafeteria. Better: Johnson Elementary School had a large cafeteria.
101. **Factor** – Dull, unnecessary word. Replace with a verb. Ex: Avid reading was a factor in his writing ability. Better: Avid reading helped his writing.
102. **Failure** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: His failure was caused by not studying hard enough. Better: He failed because he didn't study hard enough.
103. **Fall/Fell down** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *down*. Ex: If you fall down, try again. Better: If you fall, try again.
104. **Favorable approval** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *favorable*. Ex: The drawings received favorable approval from the planning board. Better: The drawings received approval from the planning board. Best: The planning board approved the drawings.
105. **Fellow classmate** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *fellow*. Ex: A fellow classmate teased Johnny. Better: A classmate teased Johnny.
106. **Fellow colleague** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *fellow*. Ex: A fellow colleague saw Jim stealing the office supplies. Better: A colleague saw Jim stealing the office supplies.
107. **Few in number** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *in number*. Ex: First-time homebuyers are too few in number to absorb excess inventory. Better: First-time homebuyers are too few to absorb excess inventory.
108. **Figure out** – Clunky verb construction. Use *determine, guess, or decide*. Ex: I can't figure out who's who. Better: I can't determine who's who.

109. **filled to capacity** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *to capacity*. Ex: The stadium was filled to capacity with anxious fans. Better: The stadium was filled with anxious fans. Best: Anxious fans filled the stadium.
110. **Final conclusion** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *final*. Ex: He came to a final conclusion that he hated his job. Better: He came to a conclusion that he hated his job. Best: He concluded that he hated his job.
111. **Finally** – Weak linking term. Be more precise. Ex: Finally, he got the job. Better: After five interviews, he got the job.
112. **Final outcome** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *final*. Ex: Death was the final outcome. Better: Death was the outcome.
113. **Final ultimatum** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *final*. Ex: I gave him a final ultimatum. Better: I gave him an ultimatum.
114. **Find out** – Clunky verb construction. Use *determine*, or *learn*. Ex: Find out what matters and what doesn't. Better: Learn what matters and what doesn't.
115. **First and foremost** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *first and*. Ex: He remains first and foremost a businessman. Better: He remains foremost a businessman.
116. **First conceived** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *first*. Ex: He first conceived the idea to start a business while he was a freshman in college. Better: He conceived the idea to start a business while he was a freshman in college.
117. **First of all** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *of all*. Ex: First of all, I didn't tell him your name. Better: First, I didn't tell him your name.
118. **Fly/flew through the air** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *through the air*. Ex: The bird flew through the air above us. Better: The bird flew above us.
119. **For all intents and purposes** – Empty phrase. Don't use it. Ex: For all intents and purposes, the relationship was doomed. Better: The relationship was doomed.
120. **Foreign imports** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *foreign*. Ex: He believes foreign imports hurt our country's economy. Better: He believes imports hurt our country's economy.
121. **Former graduate** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *former*. Ex: She was a former graduate of Harvard. Better: She was a graduate of Harvard. Best: She was a Harvard graduate.
122. **For the most part** – Empty phrase. Don't use it. Ex: For the most part, I enjoy editing. Better: I enjoy editing.
123. **For the purpose of** – Empty phrase. Don't use. Ex: I practice yoga for the purpose of improving my posture. Better: I practice yoga to improve my posture.

124. **Former veteran** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *former*. Ex: Uncle Bob was a former veteran of Vietnam. Better: Uncle Bob was a veteran of Vietnam. Best: Uncle Bob was a Vietnam veteran.
125. **Free gift** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *free*. Ex: You get a free gift if you complete the survey. Better: You get a gift if you complete the survey.
126. **Frequently** – Imprecise Phrase. Use something more specific. Ex: I frequently wash my car. Better: I wash my car daily.
127. **Frozen ice** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *frozen*. Ex: He fell through the frozen ice. Better: He fell through the ice.
128. **Frozen tundra** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *frozen*. Ex: The frozen tundra was stretched out before them. Better: The tundra was stretched out before them.
129. **Fuse together** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *of together*. Ex: Fuse together the wires and continue with the next step. Better: Fuse the wires and continue with the next step.
130. **Future plans** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *future*. Ex: What are your future plans for college? Better: What are your plans for college?
131. **Gather together** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *together*. Ex: Gather together your things and leave. Better: Gather your things and leave.
132. **General public** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *general*. Ex: The portable bathrooms are for the general public. Better: The portable bathrooms are for the public.
133. **Get** – Weak verb. Cut it or use stronger verbs such as *become, land, acquire, or retrieve*. Ex: You need to get motivated. Better: Motivate yourself. Ex: How many clients did you get through blogging? Better: How many clients did you land through blogging?
134. **Get out of** – Weak phrasal verb. Use *exit*. Ex: Get out of the building. Better: Exit the building.
135. **Give in** – Weak phrasal verb. Use *concede, or quit*. Ex: Don't give in. Better: Don't quit.
136. **Go ahead and** – Clunky expression. You don't need it. Just start with the verb that follows this expression. Ex: I might have to go ahead and call the cops. Better: I might have to call the cops.
137. **Go back over** – Clunky verb construction. Use *reread, reexamine, or reevaluate*. Ex: Let's go back over the case files. Better: Let's reexamine the case files.
138. **Go into** – Clunky verb construction. Use *enter, or visit, discuss, or explain*. Ex: I will go into the school today. Better: I will visit the school today. Ex: I will go into detail about blogging during the lecture. Better: I will explain blogging

during the lecture.

139. **Go on** – Flabby verb construction. Use *continue*. Ex: I could go on quoting famous people, but I won't. Better: I could continue quoting famous people, but I won't.
140. **Grateful every day** – Flabby phrase. Use *eternally grateful*. Ex: I'm grateful every day. Better: I'm eternally grateful.
141. **Grew/Grow/Grown in size** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *in size*. Ex: He grew in size since I last saw him. Better: He grew since I last saw him.
142. **Had a discussion concerning** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: We had a discussion concerning the proposed changes. Better: We discussed the proposed changes.
143. **Had/have a conversation (about)** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: We had a conversation about money. Better: We talked money.
144. **Harder than it has to be** – Empty phrase. Use *harder than necessary*. Ex: You're making it harder than it has to be. Better: You're making it harder than necessary.
145. **Has/have to be** – Clunky verb construction. Use *must be*. Ex: This has to be the right place. Better: This must be the right place. Ex: I have to be strong for her. Better: I must be strong for her.
146. **Have a need for** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: Do you have a need for me? Better: Do you need me?
147. **Heat up** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *up*. Ex: Heat up the soup. Better: Heat the soup.
148. **Helps keep** – Clunky verb construction. Use *keeps* or another strong verb. Ex: Outlining helps keep your thoughts straight. Better: Outlining clarifies your thoughts.
149. **Here's the thing** – Colloquial expression. You can do without it.
150. **Hollow tube** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *hollow*. Ex: He slid down the hollow tube at the water park. Better: He slid down the tube at the water park.
151. **I feel (that)** – Timid expression. If you believe something, just say it. Besides, you can't "feel" an opinion. Ex: I feel that college isn't that much fun. Better: College sucks!

152. **I believe (that)** – Flabby expression. If you believe something, just say it. Ex: I believe everyone should study music. Better: Everyone should study music.
153. **If you need to** – Flabby if clause. Rework the sentence. Ex: If you need to get more clients, you need to market yourself properly. Better: Market yourself properly and you'll gain more clients.
154. **If you want/wish/would like to** – Flabby *if* clause. Rework the sentence. Ex: If you want to get good grades, listen to your teachers. Better: Listen to your teachers and you'll get good grades.
155. **I might add** – Flabby phrase. Delete it. Ex: I'm an excellent writer, I might add. Better: I'm an excellent writer.
156. **Increase in strength** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: You'll see an increase in strength with exercise. Better: Exercise will strengthen your body.
157. **Individual** – Whenever possible and appropriate, use a simpler replacement, such as *man*, *woman*, or *person*. Ex: If you're the type of individual who likes adventure, skydiving is for you. Better: If you're an adventurous person, skydiving is for you.
158. **Initial** – Whenever possible and appropriate, use a simpler replacement, such as *first*. Ex: My initial thought was to flee. Better: My first thought was to flee."
159. **Integrate with each other** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *with each other*. Ex: The two systems must integrate with each other to share data. Better: The two systems must integrate to share data.
160. **Intensity** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: She has a high level of intensity. Better: She is intense.
161. **Intention is** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: My intention is to sleep all day. Better: I intend to sleep all day.
162. **In terms of** – Flabby phrase. Delete it. Ex: The job offer was tempting in terms of salary. Better: The job's salary was tempting.
163. **In my opinion** – Flabby phrase. Delete it. Ex: In my opinion, blogging rocks! Better: Blogging rocks!
164. **In order to** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *in order*. Ex: In order to succeed, you must work hard. Better: To succeed, you must work hard.
165. **In spite of that fact that** – Flabby phrase. Use *although*. Ex: In spite of that



- fact that I might, I don't own a car. Better: Although I might, I don't own a car.
166. **In the event of** – Flabby phrase. Use *if*. Ex: In the event of someone pointing a gun at you, don't resist. Better: If someone points a gun at you, don't resist.
  167. **In the event that** – Flabby phrase. Use *if*. Ex: In the event that you win, you'll receive a trophy. Better: If you win, you'll receive a trophy.
  168. **In the process of** – Flabby phrase. Delete it. Ex: I'm in the process of quitting my job. Better: I'm quitting my job.
  169. **Introduced a new** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *a new*. Ex: They introduced a new software upgrade. Better: They introduced a software upgrade.
  170. **Introduced for the first time** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *for the first time*. Ex: The new owners were introduced for the first time at the company meeting. Better: The new owners were introduced at the company meeting.
  171. **Investigation** -Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: My investigation led to solving the case. Better: I investigated and solved the case.
  172. **Is aware of** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: He is aware of his bad reputation. Better: He knows his reputation stinks.
  173. **Is in love with** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: He is in love with Judy. Better: He loves Judy.
  174. **Is interesting to me** – Weak to-be verb construction. Revise it. Ex: Editing is interesting to me. Better: Editing interests me.
  175. **It is / it's** – Grammar expletive that robs your sentence of strength. Avoid it. Ex: It's two hours before the game starts. Better: The game starts in two hours.
  176. **It seems like** – Flabby phrase & a grammar expletive. Delete it. Ex: It seems like you hate me. Better: Apparently you hate me.
  177. **It would be** – Grammar expletive that robs your sentence of strength. Avoid it. Ex: It would be polite if you said hi to her. Better: Be polite and say hi to her. Ex: It would be nice if we had more vacation time. Better: I wish we had more vacation time.
  178. **Join together** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *together*. Ex: They join together as one. Better: They join as one.
  179. **Joint collaboration** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *joint*. Ex: The joint

collaboration between state and federal agencies failed. Better: The collaboration between state and federal agencies failed.

180. **Kneel down** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *down*. Ex: Kneel down before Zod. Better: Kneel before Zod.
181. **Knowledgeable expert** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *knowledgeable*. Ex: She's a knowledgeable expert in her field. Better: She's an expert in her field.
182. **Lacked the ability to** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences, such as *wasn't able to* or *couldn't*. Ex: He lacked the ability to read. Better: He couldn't read.
183. **Later time** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *time*. Ex: Call me at a later time. Better: Call me later.
184. **Led to the destruction of** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: The fire led to the destruction of the town. Better: The fire destroyed the town.
185. **Lift up** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *up*. Ex: Lift up the weight. Better: Lift the weight.
186. **Live studio audience** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *live*. Ex: The band played to a live studio audience. Better: The band played to a studio audience.
187. **Made a decision to** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: He made a decision to leave. Better: He decided to leave.
188. **Made/make an announcement** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: He made an announcement that he was getting married. Better: He announced he was getting married.
189. **Made it to** – Flabby phrase & a grammar expletive. Use *arrived*, or *reached*. Ex: They made it to their destination. Better: They reached their destination.
190. **Made out of** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *out*. Ex: It was made out of wood. Better: It was made of wood.
191. **Major breakthrough** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *major*. Ex: The invention was a major breakthrough in nuclear technology. Better: The invention was a breakthrough in nuclear technology.
192. **Major feat** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *major*. Ex: Bending horseshoes is a major feat of strength few can match. Better: Bending

horse shoes is a feat of strength few can match.

193. **May/might possibly** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *possibly*. Ex: She may possibly get the job. Better: She may get the job.
194. **Meaningful** – Weak adjective. Delete it or redo your sentence. Ex: It was a meaningful gesture. Better: The gesture touched me.
195. **Meet together** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *together*. Ex: The two roads meet together at the traffic circle. Better: The two roads meet at the traffic circle.
196. **Meet with each other** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *with each other*. Ex: We met with each other to discuss her offer. Better: We met to discuss her offer.
197. **Merge together** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *together*. Ex: Our companies should merge together. Better: Our companies should merge.
198. **Mix together** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *together*. Ex: Oil and water don't mix together. Better: Oil and water don't mix.
199. **Most unique** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *most*. Ex: His poetry is most unique. Better: His poetry is unique.
200. **Movement** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: My movement startled the cat. Better: I moved and startled the cat.
201. **Mutual cooperation** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *mutual*. Ex: We need mutual cooperation to succeed. Better: We need cooperation to succeed.
202. **Mutual respect for each other** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *for each other*. Ex: My father and I have mutual respect for each other. Better: My father and I have mutual respect. Or: My father and I respect each other.
203. **Need to do to** – Clunky verb construction. Use *need to or must do*. Ex: That's all you need to do to succeed. Better: That's all you must do to succeed.
204. **Never before** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *before*. Ex: Never before have I been so offended. Better: Never have I been so offended.
205. **New innovation** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *new*. Ex: It was a new innovation to content marketing. Better: It was an innovation to content marketing.
206. **New invention** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *new*. Ex: The new invention would change the world. Better: The invention would change the world.
207. **None at all** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *at all*. Ex: None at all survived. Better: None survived.
208. **Not honest** – Avoid using negative constructions if possible. Try to say what

something *is* instead. Ex: He *is* not honest. Better: He *is* dishonest.

209. **Not important** – Avoid using negative constructions if possible. Try to say what something *is* instead. Ex: It's not important. Better: It's unimportant/trivial/minor.
210. **Now pending** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *now*. Ex: Our request is now pending. Better: Our request is pending.
211. **Off of** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *of*. Ex: Get your plate off of the counter. Better: Get your plate off the counter.
212. **Offered a suggestion** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: I offered a suggestion of a place to eat. Better: I suggested a place to eat.
213. **On a regular basis** – Flabby phrase. Use *regularly* instead. Ex: I exercise on a regular basis. Better: I exercise regularly.
214. **Open up** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *up* (*unless talking about someone revealing something to you*). Ex: Open up the windows. Better: Open the windows.
215. **Originally created** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *originally*. Ex: Nobody truly knows when the world was originally created. Better: Nobody truly knows when the world was created.
216. **Outside in the yard** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *outside*. Ex: The kids are playing outside in the yard. Better: The kids are playing in the yard.
217. **Outside of** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *of*. Ex: He puked outside of the bar. Better: He puked outside the bar.
218. **Over exaggerate** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *over*. Ex: She tends to over exaggerate. Better: She tends to exaggerate.
219. **Palm of my hand** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *of my hand*. Ex: He placed the gun in the palm of my hand. Better: He placed the gun in my palm.
220. **Passing fad** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *passing*. Ex: Selfies are a passing fad. Better: Selfies are a fad.
221. **Past experience** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *past*. Ex: My past experiences are what made me who I am today. Better: My experiences are what made me who I am today.
222. **Penetrate into** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *into*. Ex: The bullet can easily penetrate into the wood. Better: The bullet can easily penetrate the wood.
223. **Period of time** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *of time*. Ex: Dinosaurs ruled during that period of time. Better: Dinosaurs ruled during that period.
224. **Personal friend** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *personal*. Ex: He's a

personal friend of mine. Better: He's a friend of mine.

225. **Personal opinion** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *personal*. Ex: It's just my personal opinion. Better: It's just my opinion.
226. **Pick and choose** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *and choose*. Ex: Pick and choose your friends wisely. Better: Pick your friends wisely.
227. **Pick out** – Flabby phrase. Use *choose* instead. Ex: Pick out an outfit to wear. Better: Choose an outfit to wear.
228. **Pick up on** – Flabby phrase. Use *notice, or sense* instead. Ex: He didn't pick up on the subtle nuances. Better: He didn't notice the subtle nuances.
229. **Play up** – Flabby phrase. Use *emphasize* instead. Ex: You need to play up your best features. Better: You need to emphasize your best features.
230. **Plunge down** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *down*. Ex: The stock market plunged down today. Better: The stock market plunged today.
231. **Point out** – Flabby phrase. Use *emphasize, say, mention, or state* instead. Ex: Let me point out the rules first. Better: Let me mention the rules first.
232. **Polar opposites** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *polar*. Ex: The two friends are polar opposites. Better: The two friends are opposites.
233. **Postpone until later** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *until later*. Ex: You should postpone your appointment until later. Better: You should postpone your appointment.
234. **Pouring down rain** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *down*. Ex: The pouring down rain ruined the picnic. Better: The pouring rain ruined the picnic.
235. **Preheat** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *pre*. Ex: Preheat the oven before you prepare your ingredients. Better: Heat the oven before you prepare your ingredients.
236. **Present time** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *time*. Ex: He's not available at the present time. Better: He's not available at present.
237. **Protest against** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *against*. Ex: You must protest against tyranny. Better: You must protest tyranny.
238. **Put off** – Flabby phrase. Use *postpone, delay, or stall* instead. Ex: He put off his dentist appointment. Better: He postponed his dentist appointment.
239. **Put together** – Flabby phrase. Use *assemble, build, or built* instead. Ex: They put together the child's toy. Better: They assembled the child's toy.
240. **Raise up** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *up*. Ex: Raise up the flag. Better: Raise the flag.
241. **Reaction** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: My reaction caused everyone to be surprised.



better. The way I reacted surprised everyone.

242. **Really** – Flabby modifier. Try to do without, or think of a more powerful word you are modifying. Ex: I'm really hungry. Better: I'm starving.
243. **Reason why** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *why*. Ex: I'll never know the reason why she left. Better: I'll never know the reason she left. Or: I'll never know why she left.
244. **Refer back** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *back*. Ex: You'll have to refer back to the instructions. Better: You'll have to refer to the instructions.
245. **Refusal** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: His refusal to leave forced me to call the cops. Better: He refused to leave, so I called the cops.
246. **Reply back** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *back*. Ex: Reply back to this email to get the special offer. Better: Reply to this email to get the special offer.
247. **Resulted in a decrease (an increase)** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: The mandate resulted in an increase in taxes. Better: The mandate increased taxes.
248. **Revert back** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *back*. Ex: Revert back to the saved file if you experience problems. Better: Revert to the saved file if you experience problems.
249. **Safehaven** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *safe*. Ex: That area is a safe haven for smugglers. Better: That area is a haven for smugglers.
250. **Same exact** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *exact*. Ex: I have the same exact phone cover as you. Better: I have the same phone cover as you.
251. **Seriousdanger** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *serious*. Ex: You're in serious danger. Better: You're in danger.
252. **Shock** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: What he revealed caused a shock to his family. Better: What he revealed shocked his family.
253. **Short** – Weak Adjective. Replace with something more precise. Ex: Bob was a short man. Better: Bob was four feet tall.
254. **Show up** – Weak verb construction. Use *appear*, *enter*, *visit*, or *arrive* instead. Ex: If you show up early, call me. Better: If you arrive early, call me.
255. **Situation** – Vague noun. Be more specific if possible. Ex: The situation got worse. Better: The riot got worse.
256. **Small** – Weak Adjective. Replace with something more precise. Ex: My desk is

small. Better: My desk is only three feet wide.

257. **So** – Unnecessary intensifier. Delete. Ex: It was so delightful. Better: It was delightful.
258. **Spell it out in detail** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *in detail*. *And you can use define, or explain instead*. Ex: Did you spell it out in detail for him? Better: Did you spell it out for him? Or: Did you explain it to him?
259. **Spend** – If this word is followed by an *ing* verb, modify your sentence. Ex: How many hours do you spend writing each day? Better: How many hours do you write each day?
260. **Start off/out** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *off/out*. Ex: Let me start off by saying thanks. Better: Let me start by saying thanks.
261. **Starts to** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *to*. Ex: If it starts to rain, close the window. Better: If it starts raining, close the window.
262. **Stillpersist** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *still*. Ex: If symptoms still persist, call your doctor. Better: If symptoms persist, call your doctor.
263. **Stillremains** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *still*. Ex: Even after all the bombing raids, the building still remains. Better: Even after all the bombing raids, the building remains.
264. **Suddenimpulse** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *sudden*. Ex: I had a sudden impulse for chocolate cake. Better: I had an impulse for chocolate cake.
265. **Surprise** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). Use the verb or adjective form for more powerful sentences. Ex: Her actions were the cause of his surprise. Better: Her actions surprised him.
266. **Surrounded on all sides** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *on all sides*. Ex: They were surrounded on all sides by enemies. Better: They were surrounded by enemies. Or: Enemies surrounded them.
267. **The first step is to** – Flabby phrase. Use *first*, or *start by* instead. Ex: The first step is to realize you have a problem. Better: Start by realizing you have a problem.
268. **Take a look at** – Redundant phrase & Nominalization. You don't need *take a*. Ex: Take a look at this photo. Better: Look at this photo.
269. **Take action (to)** – Flabby verb construction. Use *act* instead. Ex: You must take action to resolve the matter now. Better: You must act to resolve the matter now.
270. **Takes up/Taking up** – Flabby verb construction. Use *consume* instead. Ex: If blog chores take up too much of your time, outsource them. Better: If blog chores consume too much of your time, outsource them.

271. **Talk about** – Flabby verb construction. Use *discuss* instead. Ex: Let's talk about it. Better: Let's discuss it.
272. **Tall** – Weak Adjective. Replace with something more precise. Ex: The building is tall. Better: The building is six hundred feet tall.
273. **Temper tantrum** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *temper*. Ex: The kid is having a temper tantrum. Better: The kid is having a tantrum.
274. **The (most) important thing is to** – Flabby expression. Delete it. Ex: The most important thing is to remain positive. Better: Remain positive.
275. **The reason** – Flabby phrase. Delete it. Ex: The reason you hate me is because I'm beautiful. Better: You hate me because I'm beautiful.
276. **There's / There is** – Grammar expletive that robs your sentence of strength. Avoid it. Ex: There's time to change your mind. Better: You have time to change your mind.
277. **There are / There were** – Grammar expletive that robs your sentence of strength. Avoid it. Ex: There are some bloggers who seem to have all the luck. Better: Some bloggers seem to have all the luck.
278. **There will be** – Grammar expletive that robs your sentence of strength. Avoid it. Ex: There will be some people who fail the class. Better: Some people will fail the class.
279. **This is a (insert noun here) that** – Flabby construction. Use *this (insert noun here)*. Ex: This is a subject that students love. Better: Students love this subject.
280. **Time and time again** – Flabby phrase. Use *repeatedly* instead. Ex: You will see it time and time again. Better: You will see it repeatedly.
281. **Took up** – Flabby phrase. Use *consumed* or *occupied* instead. Ex: It took up all my time and energy. Better: It consumed all my time and energy.
282. **Transformation** – Nominalization (wordiness introduced when someone uses the noun equivalent of a verb or adjective). His transformation into an athlete caused shock among his peers. Ex: He transformed into an athlete and shocked his peers.
283. **Try to figure out** – Flabby phrase. Use *determine*, *guess* or *decide* instead. Ex: Try to figure out what you want in life. Better: Decide what you want in life.
284. **Two equal halves** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *two equal*. Ex: Cut the fruit in two equal halves. Better: Cut the fruit in halves.
285. **Utilize** – Use simpler replacement, such as *use*. Ex: Utilize your time wisely. Better: Use your time wisely.
286. **Very** – Flabby modifier. Use a stronger word that *very* is modifying. Ex: I was very scared. Better: I was petrified.
287. **Went back over** – Flabby phrase. Use *reread* or *reevaluated* instead. Ex: They

went back over the case files. Better: They reread the case files.

288. **When it comes to** – Flabby phrase. Use *when*, *with* or delete the phrase instead. Ex: When it comes to creating blog posts, you must choose headlines wisely. Better: When creating blog posts, you must choose headlines wisely. Best: Choose headlines wisely when you create a blog post.
289. **Which is** – Flabby phrase you can live without. Ex: Chocolate, which is my favorite flavor, is also the name of my cat. Better: Chocolate, my favorite flavor, is also the name of my cat.
290. **Who is** – Flabby phrase you can live without. Ex: His brother, who is a doctor, lives in Washington. Better: His brother, the doctor, lives in Washington.
291. **Will be different** – Flabby *to-be* verb construction. Revise. Ex: Each instance will be different. Better: Each instance will differ.
292. **Within that time frame** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *frame*. Ex: You must sign the paperwork within that time frame. Better: You must sign the paperwork within that time.
293. **With reference to** – Flabby phrase. Use *regarding* instead. Ex: With reference to what you said earlier, I don't agree. Better: Regarding what you said earlier, I don't agree.
294. **Write down** – Redundant phrase. You don't need *down*. Ex: Write down your name on this sheet of paper. Better: Write your name on this sheet of paper.
295. **You can** – Flabby verb helpers. Delete or revise. Ex: You can visit Oz by following the Yellow Brick Road. Better: To visit Oz, follow the Yellow Brick Road.
296. **You're going to** – Flabby phrase. Use *you'll* instead. Ex: You're going to learn about writing in class today. Better: You'll learn about writing in class today.
297. **You're going to have/need to** – Flabby phrase. Use *you'll have to*, or *you must* instead. Ex: You're going to need to exercise each day. Better: You'll need to exercise each day.

**About the Author:** Shane Arthur is a former copyeditor for Jon Morrow's kick-butt Guest Blogging Certification Program which teaches writers just like you how to get their work featured on the world's biggest blogs and online magazines.