

AVOIDING REPETITION

What is Repetition?

Repetition refers to the use of a word, phrase or clause more than once in a passage to emphasise a point. Repetition can either enrich a passage or clutter it with unnecessary information. Let us look at some examples.

Read the following extract.

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep,*

In the above extract, the poet takes the liberty to use repetition in the last two lines as a literary device for poetic emphasis. Such a kind of repetition is granted. Now read the following lines.

Robert Frost was born in 1874 and was an American poet. **Robert Frost** was known for his genuine portrayal of rural life. **Frost** had a very good command over American colloquial speech.

In the above extract, the noun 'Robert Frost' has been repeatedly used. Such kind of repetition elongates the piece and makes it verbose. This does not enrich the passage but makes reading a tedious process.

However, there is another way of writing this passage:

Robert Frost was born in 1874 and was an American poet. **He** was known for his genuine portrayal of rural life. **He** had a very good command over American colloquial speech.

As you can see, the noun has been substituted with a pronoun in the second and the third instances. This has eliminated unnecessary repetition from the sentence.

In this chapter, we will look at ways to avoid unnecessary repetition, through the process of omission and substitution.

Substitution

Using Pronouns to substitute Nouns

Kirti went to the *market* with *her* mother. *She* found *it* crowded and dirty.

In the table below, the sentences on the left have repetitive elements. Examine the improved versions on the right to understand how one can avoid repetition by substituting a pronoun for a noun.

Original	Better
The officer reminded the petty thief of all the times when the thief was saved by the officer.	The officer reminded the petty thief of all the times when he was saved by the officer.
Though Rajan was out of town, Mahesh called Rajan and insisted that Rajan be present for the closing of the deal.	Though Rajan was out of town, Mahesh called him and insisted that he be present for the closing of the deal.
One book from the books at the bottom of the shelf does not belong to the owner of this house.	One of the books at the bottom of the shelf does not belong to the owner of this house.
Mr Kapoor arranged for his daughter to fly to England for further studies but Mr Kapoor did not know that his daughter was not interested in going aboard. His daughter was planning to work for an NGO.	Mr Kapoor arranged for his daughter to fly to England for further studies but he did not know that she was not interested in going aboard. She was planning to work for an NGO.

Using Synonyms

A synonym is a word which is used as a substitute for another word.

Original	Better
The building was constructed five years ago by a renowned builder. The building was then sold to someone else as the builder decided to wrap up his business in the country and move to another continent.	The building was constructed five years ago by a renowned builder . The structure was then sold to someone else as the owner decided to wrap up his business in the country and move to another continent.
Joseph was asked to write an article to the editor of the magazine. He had to write the article to expose the issue of bullying in the school. The issue had been suppressed for a long time.	Joseph was asked to write an article to the editor of the magazine. He had to draft the piece to expose the issue of bullying in the school. The problem had been suppressed for a long time.
The car was caught jumping the signal and was intercepted at the next junction. The car was driven by a man who was drunk and bleeding from his forehead.	The car was caught jumping the signal and was intercepted at the next junction. The vehicle was driven by a man who was drunk and bleeding from his forehead.

More examples of synonyms

Word	Synonym	Synonym
Building	Edifice	Construction
Farm	Field	Meadow
Money	Wealth	Bill
Liquid	Solvent	Fluid

Omission

Avoiding Redundancy

Redundancy occurs when you use more words than necessary to put across a point. Let us look at a few sentences.

Original	Better
I want the homework finished completely before you go out to play.	I want the homework finished before you go out to play.
The children went to the park daily and played with their dog every day .	The children went to the park every day and played with their dog. OR The children went to the park and played with their dog every day .
The group of hikers had planned to return back to the camp site at nightfall.	The group of hikers had planned to return to the camp site at nightfall.
The board ignored the consensus of opinion of the employees while taking this decision.	The board ignored the consensus of the employees while taking this decision.

More examples of wordiness

1. The woman shouted **loudly** at her toddler who spilled the milk.
2. The employees received **added** bonus following the windfall earnings.
3. These samples should be **adequate** enough for reference.
4. Blend **together** all the colours to create a mixture.
5. This is **critically** important for the successful launch of the brand.
6. We are pleased to offer you a **free** gift.
7. The two parts were joined **together** using a strong adhesive.
8. The man's **past** history is not favourable.

Eliminating Wordiness

Wordiness occurs when too many words are used to express something that can be communicated in a few words.

Original	Better
The cacophony of the sounds of the birds brought the wild jungle to life.	The cacophony of the birds brought the jungle to life.
Balsa wood is a kind of wood light in weight and native to Brazil and Bolivia.	Balsa is a light wood native to Brazil and Bolivia.
The evolution of the reptiles overtime helped them survive and continue to live for aeons of years.	The evolution of reptiles helped them survive for aeons.
The artificial prosthesis helped the man stand once again.	The prosthesis helped the man stand once again.

Making verbose sentences concise

Verbosity is the tendency to use a lot of words to express little. A great deal of empty talk covered in too many words makes writing unimpressive.

Verbose	Concise
They are two men, both of whom are alike in their built and in their stature.	They are two men of like built and stature.
The old man told us that the way to the back of his house was full of bushes and thickets.	The old man told us that the way to the backyard was full of bushes and thickets.
During the time I spent living in Raigad I learnt a lot about the physical features of the earth and the atmosphere of the area.	During my stay in Raigad, I learnt a lot about the geography of the area.
They begged before him and requested him to reconsider what he had selected.	They begged him to reconsider his selection.
