

One way to [cut the clutter](#) in our writing is to eliminate repetitious expressions. Because we so often see and hear redundancies (such as "free gifts" and "foreign imports"), they can be easy to overlook. Therefore, when editing our work, we should be on the lookout for needless repetition and be ready to eliminate expressions that add nothing to what has already been said. Now does this mean that repetition must be avoided at all costs, or that good writers never repeat themselves? Certainly not. As discussed in [Cohesion Strategies](#), careful repetition of key words and sentence structures can help establish clear connections in our writing. And in [Effective Rhetorical Strategies of Repetition](#), we consider how writers may rely on repetition to emphasize or clarify a central idea.

Our concern here is with eliminating *needless* repetition--redundant expressions that make writing longer, not better. Following are some of the common redundancies. In certain contexts, some of these phrases may serve a purpose. More often, however, the phrases just weigh down our writing with unnecessary words. We can eliminate the needless repetition in each case by omitting the word or phrase in parentheses.

## A

(absolutely) essential  
(absolutely) necessary  
(actual) facts  
advance (forward)  
(advance) planning  
(advance) preview  
(advance) reservations  
(advance) warning  
add (an additional)  
add (up)  
(added) bonus  
(affirmative) yes  
(aid and) abet  
(all-time) record  
alternative (choice)  
A.M. (in the morning)  
(and) etc.  
(anonymous) stranger  
(annual) anniversary  
(armed) gunman  
(artificial) prosthesis  
ascend (up)  
ask (the question)  
assemble (together)  
attach (together)  
ATM (machine)  
autobiography (of his or her own life)

## B

bald(-headed)  
balsa (wood)  
(basic) fundamentals  
(basic) necessities  
best (ever)  
biography (of his--or her--life)

blend (together)  
(boat) marina  
bouquet (of flowers)  
brief (in duration)  
(brief) moment  
(brief) summary  
(burning) embers

## C

cacophony (of sound)  
cameo (appearance)  
cancel (out)  
(careful) scrutiny  
cash (money)  
cease (and desist)  
circle (around)  
circulate (around)  
classify (into groups)  
(close) proximity  
(closed) fist  
collaborate (together)  
combine (together)  
commute (back and forth)  
compete (with each other)  
(completely) annihilate  
(completely) destroyed  
(completely) eliminate  
(completely) engulfed  
(completely) filled  
(completely) surround  
(component) parts  
confer (together)  
connect (together)  
connect (up)  
confused (state)  
consensus (of opinion)

(constantly) maintained  
cooperate (together)  
could (possibly)  
crisis (situation)  
curative (process)  
(current) incumbent  
(current) trend

## **D**

depreciate (in value)  
descend (down)  
(desirable) benefits  
(different) kinds  
disappear (from sight)  
drop (down)  
during (the course of)  
dwindle (down)

## **E**

each (and every)  
earlier (in time)  
eliminate (altogether)  
emergency (situation)  
(empty) hole  
empty (out)  
(empty) space  
enclosed (herein)  
(end) result  
enter (in)  
(entirely) eliminate  
equal (to one another)  
eradicate (completely)  
estimated at (about)  
evolve (over time)  
(exact) same  
(exposed) opening  
extradite (back)  
(face) mask  
fall (down)  
(favorable) approval  
(fellow) classmates  
(fellow) colleague  
few (in number)  
filled (to capacity)  
(final) conclusion  
(final) end  
(final) outcome  
(final) ultimatum  
(first and) foremost  
(first) conceived  
first (of all)

fly (through the air)  
follow (after)  
(foreign) imports  
(former) graduate  
(former) veteran  
(free) gift  
(from) whence  
(frozen) ice  
(frozen) tundra  
full (to capacity)  
(full) satisfaction  
fuse (together)  
(future) plans  
(future) recurrence

## **G**

gather (together)  
(general) public  
GOP (party)  
GRE (exam)  
green [or blue or whatever] (in color)  
grow (in size)

## **H**

had done (previously)  
(harmful) injuries  
(head) honcho  
heat (up)  
HIV (virus)  
hoist (up)  
(hollow) tube  
hurry (up)

## **I**

(illustrated) drawing  
incredible (to believe)  
indicted (on a charge)  
input (into)  
integrate (together)  
integrate (with each other)  
interdependent (on each other)  
introduced (a new)  
introduced (for the first time)  
(ir)regardless  
ISBN (number)

## **J**

join (together)  
(joint) collaboration

## **K**

kneel (down)  
(knowledgeable) experts

## **L**

lag (behind)

later (time)  
LCD (display)  
lift (up)  
(little) baby  
(live) studio audience  
(live) witness  
(local) residents  
look (ahead) to the future  
look back (in retrospect)

## **M**

made (out) of  
(major) breakthrough  
(major) feat  
manually (by hand)  
may (possibly)  
meet (together)  
meet (with each other)  
(mental) telepathy  
merge (together)  
might (possibly)  
minestrone (soup)  
mix (together)  
modern \_\_\_\_\_ (of today)  
(mutual) cooperation  
(mutually) interdependent  
mutual respect (for each other)  
(number-one) leader in \_\_\_\_\_

## **N**

nape (of her neck)  
(native) habitat  
(natural) instinct  
never (before)  
(new) beginning  
(new) construction  
(new) innovation  
(new) invention  
(new) recruit  
none (at all)  
nostalgia (for the past)  
(now) pending

## **O**

off (of)  
(old) adage  
(old) cliché  
(old) custom  
(old) proverb  
(open) trench  
open (up)  
(oral) conversation  
(originally) created  
output (out of)

(outside) in the yard  
outside (of)  
(over) exaggerate  
over (with)  
(overused) cliché  
(pair of) twins  
palm (of the hand)  
(passing) fad  
(past) experience  
(past) history  
(past) memories  
(past) records  
penetrate (into)  
period (of time)  
(personal) friend  
(personal) opinion  
pick (and choose)  
PIN (number)  
pizza (pie)  
plan (ahead)  
plan (in advance)  
(Please) RSVP  
plunge (down)  
(polar) opposites  
(positive) identification  
postpone (until later)  
pouring (down) rain  
(pre)board (as an airplane)  
(pre)heat  
(pre)record  
(private) industry  
(present) incumbent  
present (time)  
previously listed (above)  
proceed (ahead)  
(proposed) plan  
protest (against)  
pursue (after)

## **R**

raise (up)  
RAM (memory)  
reason is (because)  
reason (why)  
recur (again)  
re-elect (for another term)  
refer (back)  
reflect (back)  
(regular) routine  
repeat (again)  
reply (back)  
retreat (back)

revert (back)  
rise (up)  
round (in shape)

## **S**

(safe) haven  
(safe) sanctuary  
same (exact)  
(sand) dune  
scrutinize (in detail)  
self-\_\_\_\_\_ (yourself)  
separated (apart from each other)  
(serious) danger  
share (together)  
(sharp) point  
shiny (in appearance)  
shut (down)  
(single) unit  
skipped (over)  
slow (speed)  
small (size)  
(small) speck  
soft (in texture) [or (to the touch)]  
sole (of the foot)  
spell out (in detail)  
spliced (together)  
start (off) or (out)  
(still) persists  
(still) remains  
(sudden) impulse  
(sum) total  
surrounded (on all sides)

## **T**

tall (in height)  
tall (in stature)  
(temper) tantrum  
ten (in number)  
three a.m. (in the morning)  
(three-way) love triangle  
time (period)  
(tiny) bit  
(total) destruction  
(true) facts  
(truly) sincere  
tuna (fish)  
(twelve) noon or midnight  
(two equal) halves

## **U**

(ultimate) goal  
undergraduate (student)  
(underground) subway  
(unexpected) emergency

(unexpected) surprise  
(unintentional) mistake  
(universal) panacea  
(unnamed) anonymous  
UPC (code)  
(usual) custom

## **V**

vacillate (back and forth)  
(veiled) ambush  
(very) pregnant  
(very) unique  
visible (to the eye)

## **W**

(wall) mural  
warn (in advance)  
weather (conditions)  
weather (situation)  
whether (or not)  
(white) snow  
write (down)