

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)