# CONCISION

Concision entails delivering just the right amount of information to the reader. To achieve concision, writers must identify and remove unnecessary language to shift the reader's focus toward the necessary language. In order to communicate clearly to readers, writers need to limit excess verbiage while providing adequate information.

## 7 PRINCIPLES OF CONCISION

1. **Delete meaningless words** – Words like "totally" or "literally" typically appear as vocal fillers.
   - ✖ Writers really need to delete various unnecessary words in individual sentences.
   - ✓ Writers need to delete unnecessary words in sentences.

2. **Delete doubled words** – In phrases like "first and foremost" or "any and all," only one of the pairs is necessary.
   - ✖ To make the order full and complete, the baker puts each and every bagel in the box.
   - ✓ To make the order complete, the baker puts every bagel in the box.

3. **Delete what readers can infer** – Phrases like "close proximity" or "false pretense" each contain a word that implies the next one.
   - ✖ The company develops future plans to award a free gift to every 100th customer.
   - ✓ The company plans to award a gift to every 100th customer.

4. **Replace a phrase with a word** – Writers should change a phrase such as "in spite of these various conditions" to "nevertheless" to create a more concise sentence.
   - ✖ Office workers with more tasks than they can handle need to try to decide which ones are more important than others.
   - ✓ Office workers with an overflow of tasks need to prioritize.

5. **Change negatives to affirmatives** – Williams notes that "the affirmative is more direct" (126).
   - ✖ If someone is not careful while driving, he or she may not notice potholes.
   - ✓ If someone is careless while driving, he or she may overlook potholes.

6. **Delete adjectives and adverbs** – Writers should remove descriptors that do not impact the central meaning of the sentence.
    - ✖ The library remains ==completely== closed on Sundays to ==dutifully== respect the ==hallowed== Sabbath.
    - ✓ The library remains ==closed== on Sundays to ==respect== the Sabbath.

7. **Balance hedges and intensifiers** – Writers should carefully choose words that decrease or increase tonal confidence, such as "probably" and "indisputably."
    - ✖ Research ==allegedly== shows that ==some== students who attend the Writing Lab ==might== improve.
    - ✖ Research ==undoubtedly== shows that ==all== students who attend the Writing Lab ==certainly always== improve.
    - ✓ Research shows that ==students who attend the Writing Lab improve==.

*Note: Williams further suggests limiting metadiscourse. See "Medadiscourse" handout for details.

PRACTICE NOW