Description

Have you ever picked up a research article, only to put it down again before you have finished reading the first page? The research is interesting, but the manuscript is not well written. These issues can affect the impact of your own published work. We all understand the importance of using correct language. A poorly-written manuscript is unlikely to be considered for peer-review or accepted for publication. However, good readability goes beyond technically correct English.

Scientific text is easier to read if the information is presented in a precise and concise way. This means that words and phrases need to be carefully chosen to communicate the intended argument with maximum impact. Redundant phrases do not contribute to the meaning, and removing them improves readability.

Examples of redundant phrases

It can be difficult to spot redundant information in your own manuscript, particularly if you have read and re-read it many times. Consider the following sentences, which may appear in a research manuscript:

- The resulting liquid was purple in color

- Various modifications of the procedure have recently been developed
- The compound exhibited competition with the ligand for binding
- Antibody was added to each individual sample for labelin

At first glance, you may think that nothing is wrong with these sentences. You know what they mean, so what is the problem? Now compare them with the following alternatives:

- The liquid was purple
- The procedure was recently modified
- The compound competed with the ligand for binding
- Samples were labeled with antibody

The phrases in the second list have more impact because they do not include redundant information. For example, it is not necessary to tell the reader that purple is a color. Using too many words to make your point will make the reader lose focus.

Tips on avoiding redundancy

- [Emphasize with care](#). Avoid phrases like 'exactly the same', 'absolutely essential', 'extremely significant', and 'very unique'. Only use intensifiers that add meaning, e.g. 'CO accounts for by far the most pollution'.
- Don't say the same thing twice, e.g. 'completely eliminate', 'end result', 'basic essentials'.
- Avoid double negatives, e.g. 'not unlikely', 'not insignificant'.
- Be precise, not vague, e.g. use specific numbers instead of 'many', 'a number of', 'several', etc. Also, avoid using 'this' and 'that', but specify what you are referring to, even when it seems obvious.
- Eliminate redundant words and phrases, e.g. 'due to the fact that' or 'in order to determine'.

Improve readability with good manuscript structure

Good manuscript structure helps to keep the reader engaged. So how can you ensure your paper is well-structured?

First, make sure that one sentence presents one fact. Explaining many points in one, long sentence can be confusing and hard work for the reader. Sentences can be kept short, dynamic, and interesting by using the [active voice.](#)

Second, check that each paragraph deals with a different topic. Try to introduce the topic, expand on it and make a conclusion within the same paragraph. Your manuscript will flow better if there is a logical transition from one paragraph to the next.

Most manuscripts consist of an abstract, introduction, methods, results, and discussion. The abstract is a concise summary of the work, usually with a maximum length of 300 words. The introduction describes the background information needed to understand the study, and how the work was conducted is explained in the methods section. The study findings are described in the results section and the importance of the findings is emphasized in the discussion. To avoid redundancy, it is important to present information in the relevant section. For example, methodological information

should not be described in the results section, and results should not be repeated in the discussion. Individual journal guidelines will provide more specific instructions with regard to manuscript structure.

The most important thing to keep in mind when writing your manuscript is the reader. You should provide relevant information that clearly explains why, how, and what you did, with emphasis on the main conclusions. Avoiding redundancy using the tips outlined in this article will help you convey meaning to the reader more effectively.

Category

1. Language & Grammar
2. Reporting Research

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