



facultad de  
estudios generales

# Redundancy in Essays

---

# Important notice



At the end of this presentation there is a link to a Microsoft Forms quiz. It is recommended that you score an 80% or higher.

Please take your time viewing and studying this material before you proceed with the quiz.

# Objectives

After studying this module, students will:

- Identify redundant elements in their writing.
- Learn to be conscious of repetition.
- Know techniques to fix redundancy.
- Obtain tools that aid in expanding the variation of vocabulary in a paper.

# What is Redundancy?

**And Why You Should Avoid It**

# Definition

- Redundancy happens when there is a presence of unnecessary repetitions or details throughout a text.
- The common ways they occur are when the writer feels the need to elaborate more or the pressure to reach a word count.
- While it may prolong the length of your paper, it is at the cost of the precision and the concision of the writing.

# Example

## Repetitions

- I **think** he was wearing a new sweater, which I **thought** looked great.
  - (Verb/noun/adjective repetition)
- I'm sorry, it was an **unintentional mistake**.
  - (Words with the same meaning)
- The man was **85 years-old**. He was **very old**. As an **older** man, he did not do many **activities**. His **elderly age** limited his **activities**.
  - (All the above = Excess description)

# How It Affects Writing

- It distracts the reader from your main argument.
- Constant usage of similar vocabulary and repetition of words are perceived as uninteresting, monotonous, and annoying.
- It may result in **complicated** sentences or arguments that are **incomprehensible**.
- The reader may think you do not know the subject matter well.

# ANALYSIS OF REDUNDANCY

## Example:

## How it affects the writing:

I **think** he was wearing a new sweater, which I **thought** looked great.

The repetition of verb in the same sentence appears **clumsy**

I'm sorry, it was an **unintentional mistake**.

It confuses the reader into expecting an explanation to compliment the first clause. Instead, the presentation of two words with similar meaning makes the sentence look **incomplete** and **monotonous**

The man was **85-years-old**. He was **very old**. As an **older man**, he did not do many **activities**. His **elderly age** limited his **activities**.

Constant rementioning of details **overshadows** the rest of your information



# How to Identify Redundant Elements

# Different Types of Redundancy

- There are four common ways redundant elements can be found in writing:
  - Repetition of words
  - Repetition of ideas
  - Excess of descriptions
  - Tautology

# Repetition of Words

- Constant use of the same verbs, adverbs, nouns, conjunctions, connectors, etc.
- Examples:
  - He **took** the book while Jennifer was **taking** a nap. → **Verbs**
  - **Baudelaire** wrote “Le spleen de Paris”. Another collection of poetry named “Les fleurs du mal” was also written by **Baudelaire**. → **Nouns**
  - She was a writer **and** painter who loved scenery, **and** she liked to cook too. → **Conjunctions**
  - **Similarly** to his last text, the themes of war and tragedy can be observed by the events of the story. It is one of his new bestsellers due to its subjects, **similarly** to what occurred with the author’s earlier novels. → **Connectors**

# Repetition of Ideas

- Mentioning the same information more than once.

Examples:

- The thesis statement is **the most important** part of an essay. It contains the main idea of what the writer is going to present throughout the work. It is important for it to be concise, since it is an **essential element of your work**. → **Misdirecting** the attention to something you already stated. The sentence is already talking about the importance of concision, **the new focus**.
- Hudson is **one the most prominent candidates** for this following year. As **one of the leading candidates**, he excels well in all fields. → **Overemphasizing** a detail.
- Learning English can **help many people in their future careers**. Although it can be quite difficult for new speakers to learn, **it can benefit them with jobs later on**. → **Unnecessary** to mention the two elements separately, since the reader can make the connections on their own.

# Tautology

- The use of two words or statements with identical meaning.
- Examples:
  - They were **opposing rivals**. → Both mean in conflict/in competition with one another
  - The **armed gunman** entered the store. → The noun already means that the person has a weapon.
  - **I saw** it with **my own two eyes**. → It is stating the obvious.
  - **I made** this scarf **myself**. → The pronoun accompanying the verb already implies who does the action.

# Excess of Descriptions

- Excess of descriptions is the addition of details to extend your work. When used frequently in one segment, it results in an exceeding amount of elements that complicate the comprehension of your essay.
- Example:
  - I shook hands with the man. **He had** brown hair and brown eyes. **He was** six feet tall and skinny. **He wore** overalls and a brown suit coat. There **were** patches on the elbows and the knees. **He also wore a hat** with a hole in it. **He had** a mole beside his nose. **His teeth were crooked**. **His** sister stood beside him. **She had** red hair and blue eyes. **She was** five feet three and plump. **She wore** a dress and an apron, **but no hat**. **Her teeth were also crooked**.
  - While trying to present the description of the characters, the text repeats excessively pronouns, adjectives, and verbs. Although we have **thirteen sentences** in this paragraph, aside from describing the characters appearances, nothing else is conveyed here. This excess **overwhelms** your writing, which confuses and bores the reader.

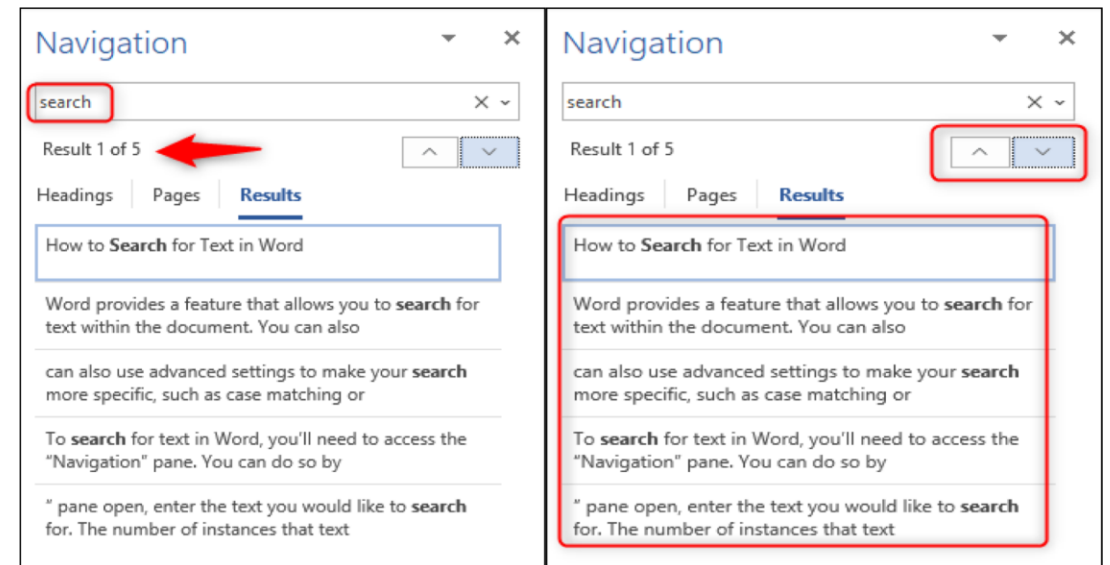
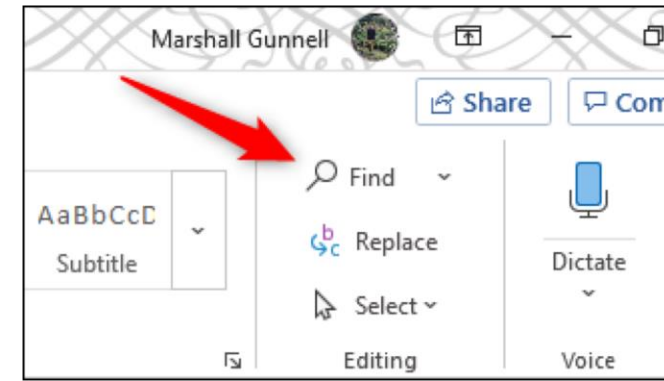
# How to Fix the Problem

---

**Possible approaches to eliminating redundancy**

# Techniques to Identify Redundancies

- The following tools and techniques can help you find repetitions in your writing:
  - Reading your work out loud.
  - Stopping between every paragraph to verify what you have written so far.
  - Asking someone to read your work.
  - Utilizing the **find feature** in the Word program to help you locate where you have repeated words.
    - Make a list beforehand of vocabulary you often use (frequent verbs, name of author, and terminology related to the topic of the essay).
    - Google doc has the same feature by the name **Find and replace**.





# **The Rewriting Process**

---

**And the Three Ways to Approach It**

# 1 Changing

- **Before:** I ate cereal. Becky ate pancakes.
- **After:** I ate cereal. Becky had pancakes.

# 2 Rephrasing

- **Before:** Hudson is one of the leading candidates this year. As one of the leading candidates, he excels in all fields.
- **After:** Hudson is one of leading candidates because he excels in all fields.

# 3 Eliminating

- **Before:** I heard it with my own ears.
- **After:** I heard it.

# When to Change

- The ideal scenario to change redundant elements is when it is a **repetition of words**.
  - In most cases, it can be fixed with an expansion of the vocabulary utilized in your work.
    - Dictionaries and thesauruses are essential for this process.
- It can also be used for **repetition of ideas** if it is **stating the obvious**.
- Example:
  - I **ate** cereal. Becky **ate** pancakes. → I **ate** cereal. Becky **had** pancakes.
    - By utilizing the verb “to have” we not only retain the same meaning of describing what each person ate for breakfast, but we **eliminate the monotonousness due to lack of verb variation**.

# When to Rephrase

- When you have **repetition of ideas**, if it is a case of **overemphasizing** or **misdirecting** a piece of information, this is the best way to approach the rewriting process.
- Usually, a quick way to solve the redundancy is examining **how the two repetitions relate to one another**:
- Do they talk about the same subject? Is it trying to specify a cause and effect relationship between the elements? Or is it another type of relation?
- **Always check** how the two segments relate **before trying to rephrase**.
- Example:
  - Hudson is **one of the leading candidates** this year. As **one of the leading candidates**, he excels in all fields. → Hudson **is one of leading candidates because he excels in all fields**.
  - While you may want to emphasize his prominent status, it is **too close** to one another. Instead, try to expand on **why** this is such an important detail. **After analyzing the information** available, we can establish how the two sentences relate to each other and find a more **concise way** to express your point.

# When to Eliminate

- **Tautology should always be eliminated from your work.**
- Not only does it make your writing style appear **messy**, the reader may interpret that **you do not know what the words mean.**
- The only way to avoid this mistake is to **revise the definitions of your vocabulary.**
- Having someone who is **more familiar** with the language or the subject can also help to identify redundant areas.
- Example:
  - **I heard it** with **my own ears.** → **I heard it.**
    - The majority of tautological elements are in need of **simplification.** Although expanding a statement may clarify the message, if they do not add to the overall meaning, it is a **hindrance to your reader** because it **distracts them.**

# When Excess of Description is present.

- Instances of **excess of description** are the hardest redundancy problem to solve.
- They normally need **more than one of the way to fix them** because they are composed of **various sentences**, but **not the same amount of different ideas**.
- The key is to have **balance**.
  
- Example:
  - The man was **85 years-old**. He was **very old**. As an **older** man, he did not do many **activities**. His **elderly age** limited his **activities**.  
→The man was **85-years-old**. As an **elder**, he can only do **a limited amount of activities**.
    - **Excess should always be simplified** and only use the number of sentences needed to express the essential points. **Eliminate** anything that can be **deduced** and always rephrase to be **direct**.

# Bibliography

- “Avoid Redundancy to Improve Your Grammar”. *Learn Grammar*.  
<https://www.learngrammar.net/english-grammar/avoid-redundancy-to-improve-your-writing>
- Gunnell, Marshall. “How to Search for Text in Word”. *How-To Geek*, February 26th 2020, <https://www.howtogeek.com/658048/how-to-search-for-text-in-word/>
- Hussain, Fatima. “Eliminating Wordiness”. *San José State University Writing Center*, Fall 2011 (Rev. 2014),  
<https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/docs/handouts/Eliminating%20Wordiness.pdf>
- Rapp, Brian. “Writing Concisely and Avoiding Redundancy”. *Writing Commons*.  
<https://writingcommons.org/article/writing-concisely-and-avoiding-redundancy/>
- University of Arkansa. “Avoiding Redundancy”. [https://walton.uark.edu/business-communication-lab/Resources/downloads/Avoiding\\_Redundancy.pdf](https://walton.uark.edu/business-communication-lab/Resources/downloads/Avoiding_Redundancy.pdf)
- Weiland K. M. “Most Common Mistakes, Pt. 58: Too Much Description”. *Helping Writers Become Authors*, April 7th 2017, <https://www.helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com/common-writing-mistakes-much-description/>

After completing the module, click on the following link to take the quiz and send the report to your professor:

<https://forms.office.com/r/CWJHWZ5Xwa>

Thank you for using our services!



To know more about our Center and the services we provide, visit:

<https://generales.uprrp.edu/competencias-linguisticas/>