

Redundancy means to use more words than are necessary to convey a meaning. For example, *free gift* is redundant because a *gift* is something that is received at no cost, (i.e. gifts are always free). Similarly, *sink down* is redundant since sink means to move down. It is easy for redundancy to creep into the language when writers and speakers are either not aware of a word’s definition or they employ a phrase that is commonly used to the point that it “sounds right.”

Redundancy is related to wordiness – which is the use of too many words. The most important distinction is that redundancy uses words with the same meaning, while wordiness uses more words than are needed. Both redundancy and wordiness should be avoided.

In the following is a list of commonly used, redundant expressions and an example of the correct wording.

REDUNDANT	CORRECT
advance forward	advance
advance planning	planning
appears to be	is
as to whether	whether
attach together	attach
basic essentials	essentials
blue in color	blue
but nevertheless	nevertheless
cheaper in cost	cheaper
circle around	circle
close proximity	proximity
combine together	combine

completely eliminate	eliminate
completely finished	finished
connect together	connect
consensus of opinion	consensus
descend down	descend
disappear from view	disappear
each and every day	each day, every day, daily
end result	result
few in number	few
filled to capacity	filled
final outcome	outcome
first priority	priority
follow after	follow
free gift	gift
gather together	gather
important essentials	essentials
last of all	last
lift up	lift
local resident	resident
may possibly	possibly

never at any time	never
new beginning	beginning
original source	source
past history	history
penetrate into	penetrate
personal opinion	opinion
postponed until later	postponed
refer back	refer
repeat again	repeat
return back	return
separate apart	separate
small/large in size	small, large
square/round in shape	square/round
surround on all sides	surround
total annihilation/extinction/destruction	annihilation/extinction/destruction
true facts	facts
violent explosion	explosion
3 p.m. in the afternoon	3:00 p.m.

Exercise 1: In the following sentences underline the redundant expression, and then revise the sentences to eliminate redundancy. (Hint: look at the table above for guidance.)

1. Her handbag was square in shape.
2. Detectives search for the true facts in an investigation.
3. The consensus of opinion on the basic fundamentals created the shortest meeting of the year.
4. If you refer back to the day of March 18 at eight o'clock in the morning, you will recall seeing a woman wearing a dress that was red in color gather together her belongings before crossing the street.
5. Even though she had performed the operation a numerous number of times, she still reviewed the basic essentials each and every day.
6. The first priority appears to be to group together the children that live in close proximity to one another.
7. The local residents filled to capacity the new auditorium as they waited to hear the developer recount the past history of the archaeological site.
8. Advance planning can avoid total destruction of a historical site.
9. Fruit at Winn Dixie may possibly be cheaper in cost than fruit at Publix, but nevertheless it is of poorer quality.
10. In my personal opinion, we should refer back to last year's budget to see how we postponed that expenditure until a later time.

Exercise 2: Revise the following sentences to eliminate redundancy. Not all the expressions used in the following sentences are contained in the table. You should be “hearing” redundant expressions as you read these sentences.

1. Physical aerobic exercise is recommended for healthy hearts.
2. Conrad sold houses in a large 600-acre housing development.
3. Modern antiques that have been made recently have been offered at high prices.
4. Last of all, I would like to completely finish this exercise before I go to bed.
5. Although my future plans are uncertain, I intend to adhere to my basic and fundamental belief that humans were meant to be lazy.

REDUNDANT IDEAS

Redundancy can also occur when one idea is unnecessarily repeated in a sentence.

Example: Astonished, the natives stared at the automobile in amazement.

Astonished and **amazement** have the same meaning and are, therefore, redundant in the sentence. **The sentence should be rewritten to eliminate one of the words.**

Revised: The natives stared at the automobile in amazement.

Exercise 3: In the following sentences, ideas are repeated. Underline the redundant expressions and rewrite the sentences to achieve clarity.

1. People pay good money and spend hard-earned dollars for labor-saving devices to save time from their busy lives.
2. Mall researchers often interview and talk to many people who are respondents for their surveys.
3. In a very real sense, the side effects of today's medical discoveries have created many health complications, including results that are not related to a drug's purpose.
4. In point of fact, people who fail to have success in their careers frequently give up too easily and are not tenacious in sticking to their goals.
5. If you want to have a clear direction in your career, your skills and achievements should be written down in a written inventory that you incorporate into your career path.

(ANSWERS TO REDUNDANCY EXERCISES)

Exercise 1: In the first sentence of each pair, the redundant words are underlined. In the second sentence, the redundancy has been eliminated.

1. Her handbag was square in shape.
A: Her handbag was square.
2. Detectives search for the true facts in an investigation.
A: Detectives search for the facts in an investigation.
3. The consensus of opinion on the basic fundamentals created the shortest meeting of the year.
A: The consensus on the fundamentals created the shortest meeting of the year.
4. If you refer back to the day of March 18 at eight o'clock in the morning, you will recall seeing a woman wearing a dress that was red in color gather together her belongings before crossing the street.
A: If you refer to March 18 at 8:00 a.m., you will recall seeing a woman wearing a dress that was red gather her belongings before crossing the street.

OR, TO ELIMINATE WORDINESS:

A: If you refer to March 18 at 8:00 a.m., you will recall seeing a woman wearing a **red** dress gather her belongings before crossing the street.
5. Even though she had performed the operation a numerous number of times, she still

reviewed the basic essentials each and every day.

A: Even though she had performed the operation a number of times, she still reviewed the essentials every day.

6. The first priority appears to be to group together the children that live in close proximity to one another.

A: The priority is to group the children that live in proximity to one another.

7. The local residents filled to capacity the new auditorium as they waited to hear the developer recount the past history of the archaeological site.

A: The residents filled the new auditorium as they waited to hear the developer recount the history of the archaeological site.

8. Advance planning can avoid total destruction of a historical site.

A: Planning can avoid destruction of a historical site.

9. Fruit at Winn Dixie may possibly be cheaper in cost than fruit at Publix, but nevertheless it is of poorer quality.

A: Fruit at Winn Dixie may be cheaper than fruit at Publix, but it is of poorer quality.

10. In my personal opinion, we should refer back to last year's budget to see how we postponed that expenditure until a later time.

A: In my opinion, we should refer to last year's budget to see how we postponed that expenditure.

Exercise 2: In the first sentence of each pair, the redundant words are in bold letters. In the second sentence, the redundancy has been eliminated.

1. **Physical** aerobic exercise is recommended for healthy hearts.

A: Aerobic exercise is recommended for healthy hearts.

2. Conrad sold houses in a **large** 600-acre housing development.

A: Conrad sold houses in a 600-acre housing development

3. "Modern antiques" **that have been made recently** have been offered at high prices.

A: "Modern antiques" have been offered at high prices.

4. Last **of all**, I would like to **completely** finish this exercise before I go to bed.

A: Last, I would like to finish this exercise before I go to bed.

5. Although my **future** plans are uncertain, I intend to adhere to my **basic and** fundamental belief that humans were meant to be lazy.

A: Although my plans are uncertain, I intend to adhere to my fundamental belief that

humans were meant to be lazy.

Exercise 3: In the first sentence of each pair, the redundant expressions are in bold letters. Notice how the bold letters make the repetition of ideas very apparent. The second sentence of each pair is rewritten to eliminate the redundancy.

1. People **pay good money** and **spend hard-earned dollars** for **labor-saving** devices to **save time** from their busy lives.
A: Busy people spend hard-earned dollars for labor-saving devices.
2. Mall researchers often **interview** and **talk** to many **people** who are **respondents** for their surveys.
A: Mall researchers often interview many respondents for their surveys.
3. **In a very real sense**, the **side effects** of today's **pharmaceutical** discoveries have created many health complications, **including results that are not related** to a **drug's** purpose.
A: The side effects of today's pharmaceutical discoveries have created many unrelated health complications.
4. **In point of fact**, people who **fail to have success** in their careers frequently **give up too easily** and are **not tenacious in sticking** to their goals.
A: People who fail in their careers frequently do not tenaciously stick to their goals.
5. If you want to have a **clear direction in your career**, your skills and achievements should be **written down** in a **written inventory** that you incorporate into your **career path**.
A: If you want to have a career path, your skills and achievements should be inventoried.