



Expressing yourself concisely and clearly

Being concise and expressing yourself clearly is an important skill to develop for academic writing and as a professional. As you have a limited number of words overall to present some fairly complex ideas in your assignment tasks, you need to choose your words carefully. Here are some tips for writing concisely and clearly:

1. Avoid 'wordiness'

Academic writing does not require extremely long, complicated and indirect sentences. The longer a sentence is, the more difficult it may be for your reader to understand. A short, direct sentence can still convey a complex idea. For example:

Wordy sentence:

In regards to the views of employers, it is not uncommon for them to complain that new university graduates are unable to produce effective written compositions.

Concise sentence:

Employers frequently complain that new university graduates cannot write effectively.

Notice that the concise sentence conveys the same meaning directly and in fewer words. Being able to do this is especially helpful when you have to keep to a word limit about a complex topic.

2. Avoid repetition (in sentences and paragraphs)

In your sentences, avoid 'tautologies'. A tautology is when you say the same thing twice. For example:

postponed to a later date = postponed

These strategies will be *adequate enough* = these strategies will be adequate

In your paragraphs, try to start new sentences with different phrases and vary your choice of words (i.e. use synonyms or different word forms where appropriate).

3. Avoid overly complex and uncommon vocabulary

Use the most appropriate word rather than choosing a word which you think sounds more sophisticated or 'academic'. Simply using synonyms may change the meaning or make your sentence nonsensical. For example:



Overly complex vocabulary:

It is laborious for Course Coordinators to unswervingly respond to all students' questionings exclusively.

Appropriate vocabulary:

It is difficult for the Course Coordinator to directly respond to all students' queries individually.

The use of inappropriate synonyms in the first sentence in this example does not make sense. If you are using a thesaurus to find synonyms, the suggested replacement word may not convey the same meaning that you want to express. Make sure you check how that synonym is used in a sentence.

Useful links *(all open in a new window)*

There may be resources that have been created with your lecturers, addressing assignment tasks and topics specific to your courses. Follow the links below to find out:

[Business](#)

[Education, Arts and
Social Sciences](#)

[Health Sciences](#)

[IT, Engineering and the
Environment](#)