Conciseness
Conciseness focuses on conveying thoughts clearly and efficiently to promote the readers’ understanding. This does not mean that the sentences are short, but rather that the writer chooses his/her words wisely, carefully, and intentionally.

Eliminate wordiness and redundant words and phrases.
- After the first draft, review your paper to make sure that you are not being vague or repetitive.
- Restating an important point using different words is okay, but rephrasing readily understood terms can be redundant (repetition for no good reason).
  Ex. I took my cat to the vet who was an animal doctor. (Though the example is silly, the italics section is obviously not necessary and is, therefore, redundant)
- Also avoid grammatical redundancy: double subjects (my sister she is), double comparisons (more easier than), and double negatives (couldn’t hardly).
- Omit the following redundant pairs of words that imply each other:
  past history basic fundamentals final outcome true facts
terrible tragedy sudden crisis future plans free gift
past memories various differences end result
each individual important essentials

Delete unnecessary words and recast wordy phrases.
Ex. I went to see a person who gives expert advice. (consultant)
Watch for empty or vague words such as area, aspect, element, factor, feature, field, kind, situation, thing, and type (may signal wordiness)

Avoid words such as just, very, really unless they are absolutely necessary (they rarely add anything significant to a story or argument).
Ex. I really want to be a teacher. → I want to be a teacher.
Ex. I just wish that I had a piece of chocolate. → I wish I had a piece of chocolate.
For clarity of descriptive sentences, the following words and phrases should be eliminated from use:

kind of  a lot  generally  really  just
sort of  individual  type of  specific  actually
even  basically  particular  definitely  extremely
very  especially  somewhat  what  thing/something

For clarity and brevity, eliminate redundant categories that describe shape, size, and number.

Ex. He was in a confused state. → He was confused.
Ex. She was honest in character. → She was honest.

In the following redundant phrases, delete the general category term and leave the specific descriptive word:

of a strange type  often times/oftentimes
economic field  in a confused state
at an early/late time  heavy/light in weight
large/small in size  period in time
of a bright/dull color  round/flat in shape
unusual in nature  of an uncertain condition
extreme in degree  in order to
in this day and age  nowadays
for the purpose of  in my opinion I think that at this point in time
on a daily basis  due to the fact that
of cheap/expensive quality
honest/dishonest in character

Certain words need to be followed by a noun for clarity. The following are examples: this, that, these, those, few, many, all, every, each, several, most, etc.

Ex. This was a poor idea. → This idea was poor.
Ex. Many do not follow directions the first time. → Many student drivers do not follow directions the first time.

Avoid the use of expletives it and there when they do not refer to any particular thing or person. Instead, restructure the sentence or identify to what or whom it and there refers.

Ex. There are three students in the classroom. → Three students are in the classroom.
Ex. It is crazy that school was cancelled. → That school was cancelled is crazy.
To prevent wordiness and promote clarity, avoid verbs that are nonspecific and reflect passive voice. To strengthen writing, use verbs that state clear meaning and thus prevent the use of –ion, -ance, and –ence nouns.

Ex. She has an abhorrence to loud noises. ➔ She abhors loud noises.

To strengthen writing, use verbs that best describe and define meaning. The verbs make, get, let, have, and had are often overused when better verbs should be used.

Ex. I am going to college to get an education so I can make more money. ➔ I am going to college to obtain an education so I can earn more money.
Ex. Odysseus traveled a great distance to make it home. ➔ Odysseus traveled a great distance towards home.
Ex. I had a cold for a week. ➔ I suffered a cold for a week.

Elevate writing past elementary levels through choices of words that best clarify meaning. For example, avoid words such as nice, good, bad, interesting, and unique when these words are open to readers’ interpretation (often the opposite of the writer’s intent) and convey little meaning.

Ex. I thought the food at that restaurant was bad. ➔ I thought the food at that restaurant was cold, and the hamburger seemed to be spoiled.
Ex. Last night’s movie was interesting. ➔ The plot of the movie was captivating because of its unexpected and unusual storylines.

Avoid broad and general verbiage, especially with the use of words such as something, thing(s), and what. Use words that specifically identify what or whom is being discussed.

Ex. I see what you mean. ➔ I understand the concept of your thoughts.
Ex. Something is wrong with the car. ➔ The car continually vibrates when I accelerate.

For formal and informal papers, avoid colloquial expressions, clichés, slang language, internet-speak, and informal language. In order to write for clarity, these expressions and informal forms of writing must be avoided so the reader will be able to understand meaning.

Ex. He needs to step up and be a man. ➔ He needs to mature and act like an adult.
Ex. When it comes to doing things the right way, she takes the cake. ➔ Regarding Janelle’s ability to think or act, she continually uses poor judgment and displays irrational behavior.