

## **How to Reach a Word Count**

### **APSU Writing Center Handout**

In many academic assignments, you may encounter word count limits. Here are some strategies for both expanding your ideas and writing concisely.

#### **Elaborate Concepts**

Look for sections of your writing where you can provide more detail or examples to clarify your points.

#### **Use Supporting Evidence**

Strengthen your argument by including additional research from credible sources.

#### **Break Up Your Main Points**

Introduce each new idea in its own paragraph, supporting it with evidence and using transitional sentences.

#### **Review Transitional Sentences**

Add more specific details that link your paragraphs together smoothly.

#### **Ask How and Why Questions**

Challenge yourself to add two or three more sentences to each existing paragraph by asking: “Is there anything more I can explain or expand on?”

## **Address Opposing Viewpoints**

Consider possible counterarguments and defend your position.

## **Writing Concisely**

Even though you may need to expand your paper to meet a word count requirement, it is still crucial to write concisely. Clear, concise writing makes your arguments stronger, helps your reader follow your ideas more easily, and ensures that your paper maintains a professional tone.

## **Eliminate Redundant Pairs**

Avoid unnecessary phrases like “each and every,” “true facts,” or “basic essentials.”

## **Delete Unnecessary Filler Words**

In academic writing, eliminate vague or overused words such as “like,” “really,” “both,” “just,” “quite,” and “often.”

## **Identify and Reduce Prepositional Phrases**

Delete phrases such as “in terms of,” “with regard to,” “there are,” “I believe,” “I think,” and “the reason why is because.” Instead, use words such as “about,” “because,” or “since.”

## **Replace a Phrase with a Word**

Instead of writing “in the event that” or “in the likelihood of,” use more concise alternatives such as “if” or “when.”

## Condense Wordy Phrases

Simplify phrases to reduce word count:

- “Concerning the matter of” → “About”
- “Regardless of the fact that” → “Although”
- “With the exception of” → “Except”
- “In the process of” → “During” or “While”
- “It is often the case that” → “Often”

## References

The Writing Studio. (2017, April 4). *Ways to Expand an Essay*. Reynolds Community College.

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The Writing Center. (2018). *Writing Concisely*. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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