

Quick Tip of the Week

Did you know . . .

Using too many words to say something (also referred to as **wordiness**) can oftentimes make your language boring as well as annoy your listener or readers. What I mean is this, imagine you run into your best friend and you have a conversation that goes like this:

Friend: *I just wanted to let you know that* I got an A on my math test.

You: Really? That's great news.

Friend: *I just wanted to let you know that* I went to the movies last night to reward myself.

You: Oh, yeah? I went to the movies last night too.

Friend: *I just wanted to let you know that* Noah will be coming over tonight.

You: Ok. Well, you're starting to sound like a robot and it's really weirding me out. I'll see you later.

You would think that if your friend really just wanted you to know these things, they would come right out and say it, right? Notice that your friend could have said everything you needed to know without ever having to say *I just wanted to let you know that*- even once. Although, in spoken conversation wordiness is a little more forgivable (your friend could have said it once and it would have been fine). Here are couple more examples of wordiness or unnecessary word usage.

Wordy: I'm going *to go ahead and* eat a sandwich.

Concise: I'm going to eat a sandwich.

Wordy: *I would like to* introduce you to my friend, May.

Concise: This is my friend, May.

Wordy: *In order to* grow tall, trees need a lot of water.

Concise: To grow tall, trees need a lot of water.

So far however, we have only talked about wordiness in spoken language, but imagine for a second that your friend wrote this way, or even worse, that every letter they sent you was written this way and you had to read them all at once. How boring would that be? Now, imagine being an English teacher and having to read a bunch of papers written like this all the time.

Being able to vary your sentence structure without being too wordy not only makes it easier to read your writing, but it also makes you sound like a very good writer. The trick is to just come out and say what it is you want to say without too much extra filling. To get better at being more of a concise writer takes a lot of practice, so I recommend that you write, write, write as often as you can and then scan your writing to search out these offending phrases.

<http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/>

