



英文寫作秘訣 009：言簡意賅的表達

難度：中階

隨堂考：下方的句子有 21 個字，請你在意思不變的條件下，將長度縮減 4 個字：

There are several reports that suggest a slight reduction in sugar intake could possibly extend one's lifespan by about 1-3 years. (中譯：幾份報告提到，稍微減少糖攝取量，可能延長人的壽命約 1 到 3 年)

冗長的句子，縮短長度是可行的。

冗長的意思是用太多字說出重點；而精簡則是用較少的字表達論點，對任何形式的英文寫作，精簡的寫作風格是較佳的表現方式。此外，言簡意賅也較容易符合篇幅限制，譬如摘要的篇幅(或字數)通常有限制。

接著介紹三種言簡意賅的寫法：

修改：There is/are [名詞] that [動詞]...

冗長版：**There are several studies that suggest a positive association between more moderate exercise in childhood and bone density.** (中譯：數項研究指出童年適度多運動和骨質密度有正相關)

簡潔版：**Several studies suggest a positive association between more moderate exercise in childhood and bone density.**

說明：前後的意思相等，但簡潔版少用 3 個字！

刪除：概念冗餘之處

冗長版：**This effect could possibly be explained by alternations in biomechanical forces present in the device.** (中譯：這項效果的解釋可能是裝置中的生物機械力出現交替)

簡潔版：**This effect could be explained by alternations in biomechanical forces present in the device.**

說明：could 和 possibly 重複表現了「可能性」的概念，不妨刪去一個。

冗長版：**The nanotubes had an inner diameter of about 60-70 nm.** (中譯：奈米管的內直徑約 60-70 奈米)

簡潔版：**The nanotubes had an inner diameter of 60-70 nm.**

說明：區間範圍含有「大約 about」的概念。

冗長版：The melting point is **very critical** to consider for welding materials. (中譯：熔點是焊接材料的考量重點)

簡潔版：The melting point is **critical to** consider for welding materials.

說明：critical 本身即含有「非常」、「極」的概念。

修改：Due to the fact that, Based on the fact that, In light of the fact that 等用法

這些字眼幾乎直接換成更簡單、易讀的 because 句型就好。

冗長版：WordNet has been successful **based on the fact that** it is available on-line, it is free of charge, and it is a dictionary based on concepts: i.e., it provides much more than just an alphabetic list of words.

(中譯：字網成功的**根據**是線上、免費，而且是觀念式的字典，即內容遠比字詞清單列表豐富)

簡潔版：WordNet has been successful **because** it is available on-line, it is free of charge, and it is a dictionary based on concepts: i.e., it provides much more than just an alphabetic list of words.

(中譯：字網成功是**原因**是線上、免費，而且是觀念式的字典，即內容遠比字詞清單列表豐富)

冗長版：However, **due to the fact that** drug conjugates are utilized as the capture and detection molecules, this type of assay is susceptible to drug and target interference.

(中譯：不過，考量藥物複合體被用在捕捉及偵測分子，這類測定型式有藥物和目標干擾之嫌)

簡潔版：However, **since** drug conjugates are utilized as the capture and detection molecules, this type of assay is susceptible to drug and target interference.

(中譯：不過，**因為**藥物複合體被用在捕捉及偵測分子，這種測定型式有藥物和目標干擾之嫌)

現在你有辦法把一開始的句子縮短了嗎？參考答案請反白下方的文字。

“Several reports suggest a slight reduction in sugar intake could extend one’s lifespan by 1-3 years.”

Uni-edit English Writing Tip 009

Reducing wordiness

Difficulty: Medium

Quick quiz: There are 21 words in the sentence below. Can you reduce it by 4 words while retaining the same meaning?

"There are several reports that suggest a slight reduction in sugar intake could possibly extend one's lifespan by about 1-3 years."

Because this sentence is wordy, yes, you can reduce the number of words.

Sentences that are “wordy” use too many words to make their point. Making your point using few words—i.e. writing concisely—is considered good style in all forms of English writing. In addition, writing concisely makes it easy to meet word counts, especially in the Abstract, where space is usually limited.

Let's look at three ways to reduce wordiness.

Revise: “There is/are [noun] that [verb]...”

Wordy: **There are several studies that suggest** a positive association between more moderate exercise in childhood and bone density.

Concise: **Several studies suggest** a positive association between more moderate exercise in childhood and bone density.

Explanation: The phrases are exactly equivalent in meaning, but the lower version uses three fewer words!

Remove: Conceptually redundant words

Wordy: **This effect could possibly be** explained by alternations in biomechanical forces present in the device.

Concise: **This effect could be** explained by alternations in biomechanical forces present in the device.

Explanation: The idea of ‘possibility’ is duplicated in ‘could’ and ‘possibly’, so ‘possibly’ can be deleted.

Wordy: **The nanotubes had an inner diameter of about 60-70 nm.**

Concise: **The nanotubes had an inner diameter of 60-70 nm.**

Explanation: The idea of “about” is implied by including a range of numbers.

Wordy: **The melting point is very critical to consider for welding materials.**

Concise: **The melting point is critical to consider for welding materials.**

Explanation: The idea of ‘very; extremely’ is implied by the word ‘critical’.

Revise: “Due to the fact that”, “Based on the fact that”, “In light of the fact that”, etc.

These words can almost always be replaced with “because” for a simpler, easier-to-read sentence.

Wordy: **WordNet has been successful based on the fact that it is available on-line, it is free of charge, and it is a dictionary based on concepts: i.e., it provides much more than just an alphabetic list of words.**

Concise: **WordNet has been successful because it is available on-line, it is free of charge, and it is a dictionary based on concepts: i.e., it provides much more than just an alphabetic list of words.**

Wordy: **However, due to the fact that drug conjugates are utilized as the capture and detection molecules, this type of assay is susceptible to drug and target interference.**

Concise: **However, since drug conjugates are utilized as the capture and detection molecules, this type of assay is susceptible to drug and target interference.**

Now you try: Can you make the wordy sentence at the start of the tip more concise? Select the text below with your mouse to uncover the answer.

“Several reports suggest that a slight reduction in sugar intake could extend one’s lifespan by 1-3 years.”