(last updated 05/11/16)

When writing, you should be extremely careful with the words, phrases, and clauses that you use. Even the smallest changes in wording or style can make a big difference in the strength of your prose. This tip sheet shows some common mistakes that could weaken your writing.

Wordiness
Using too many words is probably the most common mistake writers make as they begin to develop their academic voices. To avoid this problem, do not use "filler phrases" or "fluff" to try to stretch your papers to the desired length. Shorten or cut empty words and phrases. **If you are in the difficult situation of having to lengthen a paper, either add another point to your thesis (one that you can fully develop) or expound on the points that you already have by adding detail and examples.**

Refer to the chart below to see the differences between **wordy** and concise statements.

WORDY: *As far as I'm concerned, because of the fact that a situation of discrimination continues to exist in the field of medicine, women have not yet achieved equality with men.*	**CONCISE:** *Because of continuing discrimination in medicine, women have not yet achieved equality with men.*
Some "flabby" phrases are:	**Some corrections might be:**
At all times	*Constantly*
At the present time	*Now/Currently*
At this point in time	*Presently*
For the purpose of	*For*
In order to	*To*
Due to the fact that	*Because*
By means of	*By*
It is true that	*Actually*
It is a fact that	*In fact*
In regards to	*Concerning*
There is/There are	(Try not to use ***there is/there are***[1])

Henry David Thoreau claimed that there were only three rules to writing: "simplify, simplify, simplify." He thought that even complex ideas could be presented in understandable language. When revising, eliminate words, phrases, and sentences that do not further your argument or help you prove your points through examples.