

final outcome
ancient history
future plans
free gift
terrible tragedy
reflect back

Overused Prepositions

A preposition is a word that describes where, when, or how something happens; they often show connections between two items (usually in time or space). They are some of the most common words in the English language. The problem arises when prepositions are misused and overused to the point of confusion, such as in the following example.

“I work from between 9:00 a.m. to about 5:00 p.m. and take a one-hour break at about noon.”

In this sentence, the words *from*, *between*, *to*, *about*, *at*, and *about* are all prepositions. There are six prepositions in this sentence, which are too many since they’re not all necessary for clarity. We can cut at least half of them.

“I work from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and take a one-hour break around noon.”

In the shortened version, there are only three prepositions: *from*, *to*, and *around*. It’s shorter, more comfortable to read, and more specific.

Informality and Slang

While informality flows easily in speech, writing with informal slang can feel awkward and careless. Slang is typically unacceptable in academic writing, except in niche cases. Since slang terms are also dependent on culture, ethnicity, upbringing, and geography, you also run the risk of offending your reader or being misunderstood when using these words in writing.

Example: “Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* gets hella crazy with its gnarly themes of betrayal, revenge, and the intense struggle with the existential crisis, you know? Since his uncle got totally caught in 4k killing his dad and marrying his mom (ick), Hamlet knows he’s getting slept-on as the heir, but he’s tripping about whether to get payback or just bounce. Honestly, it’s giving

Removing all slang from this paragraph results in a cleaner, more serious passage.

“Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* deals with themes of betrayal, revenge, and the inherently human struggle to figure out the meaning of existence. After receiving supernatural evidence of his uncle murdering his father, marrying his mother, and usurping the throne, Hamlet uses his position as the overlooked heir to plot a complex web of revenge. With court sycophants

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern spying on him under the pretense of friendship, Hamlet seeks his form of justice while tragically playing into a greater network of plots that lead to his death.”

Acceptable Wordiness

In certain writing situations, you must add words that feel unnecessary or excessive. The following situations are cases in which longer or wordy sentences are fine.

Stretching out contractions is not wordiness—contractions are often not considered acceptable in academic writing. Some examples are provided below.

can't – cannot

shouldn't – should not

wouldn't – would not

didn't – did not

