

Vicinity of, neighborhood of—Con.

The cost of production is *in the vicinity of* [about] 50 percent of the selling price.

Its population is *in the neighborhood of* [about] 1,500.

While

For clarity use “while” to mean contemporaneity—“at the time that,” but not to mean “although,” “whereas,” “and,” or “but.”

Appropriate:

Jones mapped while Martin napped.

Inappropriate:

Martin spent 2 weeks resolving geologic problems *while* [whereas] Jones spent a month studying the coal. (Did time move faster for Jones?)

Also:

While [Although] the fault was buried by alluvium we found its trace by trenching.

While [Although] work is progressing it is not completed.

Most of the precipitation falls as snow during the winter months *while* thunderstorms are common during the summer. (Change “while” to “although” or “but” and place a comma after “months.”)

Watershed (see “Drainage basin”)

With (see p. 131, under “Prepositions”)

Needless words and phrases

Many sentences can be strengthened by just deleting needless words and phrases. Like the troublemakers noted in the previous section, the common redundancies shown here in *italic* are easily rectified.

Throughout *the whole of* the Mesozoic Era.

Throughout the *entire* area.

A series of parallel ridges resembling in *their form* *

The problem is *a difficult one*.

There can be no doubt *but* that it is Cretaceous.

The Survey has not *as yet* finished its work in this region.

As yet no ore bodies of this type have [yet] been exploited.

The conditions were favorable for landslides *to occur*. (Or better yet: The conditions favored landslides.)

Equally *as well*.

It occurs in *disseminated* grains scattered through the rock.

Most of the intrusive masses are *of large size*.

The rock is dark green *in color*.

An innumerable number of tiny veins.

Needless words and phrases
Continued

Contemporaneous *in age*.

The beds do not crop out *at the surface*.

This lies *on the southwest side* of the line of the fault. (Or better yet: of the fault line.)

The *color of the* fluorspar is dull green.

A report giving the results of the work is in *process of* preparation.

Subsequent to the formation of [After] the Pleistocene terraces [were formed] *there has been* considerable phosphate [was] deposited *along the streams* in the *form of* flood plains and bars *of* [along] the present streams.

No *side* streams enter Red River from the north.

At its base the formation lies on a remarkably even surface of granite.

About a mile *in a northwesterly direction from* [of] Fort Bayard.

Lenticular *in character*.

Grass Creek almost bisects the basin *into two parts*.

In every respect except size the Ashe County deposits are exactly like *those exhibited by* the Cranberry deposit.

The *down-dropped* block. (An up-dropped block would be peculiar. Write “downthrown block” or “downfaulted block.”)

The ores are of igneous origin *originally*. (Or: The ores are igneous.)

—the highest at 365 meters and others *at lower levels* down to about 300 meters above sea level. (Others than the highest would, of course, be “at lower levels.” The “above sea level” should be transposed after “365 meters”—with the first item to which it applies, rather than the last—to read as follows: —the highest 365 meters above sea level and others down to about 300 meters.)

In addition another similar dike. (If it is “another,” it is “in addition”; if it is “similar,” it can’t be the same one and therefore must be “another.” “A similar dike” tells the whole story.)

Needless words and phrases—
Continued

The phrases “as already stated” or “as described above” are generally unnecessary. Repetition of a statement in another connection may be perfectly justifiable, but the reader need not be reminded that it is a repetition—in fact, the reader may not realize it unless told so by the author. If you wish to refer to a place where a statement is given in more detail, the form “as explained in detail on page 00” or simply “(see p. 00)” may be used, but remember that you or your editor will have to scrupulously check all such entries in the page proof before final printing.

Introductory phrases, such as “It may be said that * * *,” “It might be stated that * * *,” “Concerning this matter it may be borne in mind that * * *,” “In this connection the statement may be made that * * *,” “With respect to the occurrence of these ores it has been found that * * *,” can generally be replaced by single words, as in the following sentence: “*There can be little doubt that this fissure is [undoubtedly] the prolongation of a fault of the same character as the one [like that] already described.*” If you write “It is important to note that * * *,” the reader may wonder if the rest of the report is not important enough to note.

“During the winter months” or “in the summertime” are commonly used for “during the winter” or “in summer.” Necessities of rhyme and meter may justify “the good old summertime,” but Survey reports are not written in metrical form.

“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, “It means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.”

Lewis Carroll