

Practice: Editing for Professional Style (Clarity, Conciseness, Parallelism)

This is an ungraded, self-check worksheet to complete on your own to practice sentence-level editing for clarity, conciseness, and parallelism issues. Edit/Revise each sentence for maximum clarity, conciseness, and parallelism. After you are done, please check your answers against the “key” (on Canvas). Also, please keep in mind:

- “Error” categories aren’t discrete, and sometimes a phrase that can be revised might fall into more than one “error” category. For example, canned phrases can also be circumlocutions and instances of excess detail.
- Sometimes there is more than one “error” in a sentence to be edited, and sometimes there is more than one instance of an “error.” For example, there might be multiple instances of nouning in a single sentence.

Explanations and Possible Sentence Revisions “Key”

Your revisions don’t have to look exactly like mine to be “correct.” However, your sentences should “fix” the problems in the originals. “Problems” (or opportunities to professional writing style) in the sentences are highlighted in different color font/s.

1. Each issue of *Hospice Care* has articles from four different perspectives: **legislative**, **health care**, **hospice administrators**, and **inspirational authors**. [[parallelism](#)]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	The list of four items isn’t parallel —they’re different parts of speech: legislative (adjective), health care (collective noun OR adjective), hospice administrators (plural noun), and inspirational authors (plural noun).
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Each issue of Hospice Care has articles from four different perspectives: legislators , health care professionals , hospice administrators , and inspirational authors .
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Each issue of Hospice Care has articles from four different perspectives: legislative , health care , hospice , and publishing [or literature, etc.].

2. The university **is** one of the largest employers in the community, **brings** in substantial business, and the cultural impact **is** also big. [[parallelism](#) / [repetition/redundancy](#)]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	The verbs— is , brings , is —aren’t parallel; <i>or</i> you could say the verbs are redundant
POSSIBLE REVISION:	The university is a major employer, substantial business attraction, and important cultural center.

3. Make sure you double check **all elements of** your work and keep track of any errors and correct **them** as soon as you can. [[repetition/redundancy](#) / [parallelism](#) / [unclear pronoun](#)]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	“all elements of” is redundant ; “them” = unclear pronoun (could refer to “elements” or “errors”)
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Double check, keep track of, and correct errors as soon as possible.
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Check, track, and correct errors as soon as possible.
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Double check your work. Track and correct errors as soon as possible.

4. The customer can **utilize** the ATM **located in** the lobby. [[fewer words & syllables](#) / [repetition/redundancy](#)]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	"utilize" is an unnecessarily long word; "located in" is redundant
POSSIBLE REVISION:	The customer can use the ATM in the lobby.

5. **Please do not hesitate to** contact me **at your earliest convenience should you have any** questions **that I may be of assistance in resolving**. [[canned phrases](#) / [one-word verbs](#) / [circumlocution](#) / [obviousness & excess detail](#)]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	All of the language in red falls under the category of "business-ese"—the longwinded, wordy crap people write when they're <i>trying to sound professional</i> . The red language could be considered canned, multiple verbs, circumlocution, obviousness and/or excess detail. (Why would someone <i>hesitate</i> ? Why would they contact you at an <i>inconvenient</i> time? Why would someone contact you with questions you <i>couldn't</i> answer [or <i>couldn't assist in answering</i>])
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Contact me if you have questions.

6. Sign and date the **contracts** and forward **same** to this office. [[repetition/redundancy](#)]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	"contracts" and "same" are redundant
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Sign, date, and send the contracts to this office.

7. Our travel itinerary **was created by** Rita Inez in the Purchasing Department. [[repetition/redundancy](#) / [passive](#)]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	By definition, an "itinerary" is for travel, so "travel itinerary" is redundant; sentence is positive or neutral, so it should be in active voice.
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Rita Inez, in the Purchasing Department, created our itinerary.

8. For the third year in a row, Perry **has been named** "Employee of the Year" **by** the awards committee. [[passive](#)]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	Sentence is positive or neutral, so it should be in active voice.
POSSIBLE REVISION:	For the third year in a row, the awards committee named Perry "Employee of the Year."

9. If a customer is dissatisfied with service, products, pricing, or delivery, it is suggested that employees work with the customer to resolve the situation quickly. [obviousness & excess detail / fewer words & syllables / passive / unnecessary starter]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	“dissatisfied with service, products, pricing, or delivery” has unnecessary words OR is unnecessarily detailed (what else would the customer be dissatisfied with?); sentence is passive (since sentence is positive or neutral, it should be active) OR “it is” = unnecessary clause starter
POSSIBLE REVISION:	We suggest employees work with dissatisfied customers to resolve the situation quickly.
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Employees should work with dissatisfied customers to resolve problems.

10. When you make an evaluation of media buys, take into consideration the demographics of the group seeing the ad. [nouncing / fewer words & syllables]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	“make an evaluation” and “take into consideration” are both examples of nouncing; “the group seeing the ad” is a lot of words for “audience”
POSSIBLE REVISION:	When you evaluate media buys, consider the audience demographics.

11. We provide assistance to clients in the process of reaching a decision about the purchase of hardware and software. [nouncing / fewer words & syllables]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	“provide assistance” and “reaching a decision” are both examples of nouncing; “the purchase of” is a lot of words for “purchase”
POSSIBLE REVISION:	We help clients decide about buying hardware and software.
POSSIBLE REVISION:	We help clients decide what hardware and software to purchase.
POSSIBLE REVISION:	We help clients decide what hardware and software to buy.

12. We maintain the belief that Web ads are a good investment. [nouncing]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	“maintain the belief” is nouncing; (also, unnecessary “that”)
POSSIBLE REVISION:	We believe Web ads are a good investment.

13. Please perform a thorough evaluation and make a few recommendations about our report. [nouncing]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	“perform a thorough evaluation” and “make a few recommendations” are nouncing (When you “perform an evaluation,” what are you <i>really</i> doing? Evaluating. When you “make recommendations,” what are you <i>really</i> doing? Recommending.)
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Evaluate and recommend changes to our report.

14. **There is** a four year old boy on our block that **has an attachment to** the neighborhood stray cat.

[[unnecessary starter](#) / [nouning](#) / [single meaning](#)]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	“There is” is an unnecessary starter; “has an attachment to” is nouning AND a word with more than one meaning (“attached to” can mean having feelings of affection for; “attached to” can also mean a physical connection to)
POSSIBLE REVISION:	A four year old boy on our block loves the neighborhood stray cat.

15. The **majority** of your semester grade **is dependent upon** your attendance. [[fewer words & syllables](#) / [weak verb](#)]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	“majority” is a big word for “most”; “is dependent upon” is a weak verb (Could also say “the majority of” or “most of” is a generalization .)
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Most of your semester grade depends on attendance.
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Seventy-five percent of your semester grade depends on attendance.

16. Whether or not you get dessert **is contingent upon** your behavior at the table. Therefore, **it is absolutely necessary** that you eat **all of** your green beans. [[fewer words & syllables](#) / [weak verb](#) / [repetition/redundancy](#) / [unnecessary starter](#) / [obviousness & excess detail](#)]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	“is contingent upon” is a weak verb phrase; “contingent upon” are big words for “depends on”; “it is” is an unnecessary clause starter; “absolutely necessary” is a redundant pair; “all of” is excess detail/obviousness (or redundant)
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Eat your green beans or you won’t get dessert. (This revision is an improvement, but “won’t get dessert” is phrased in the negative—it’s not reader-centered.)
POSSIBLE REVISION:	To get dessert, eat your green beans. (This revision is better because it frontloads the reader-benefit and phrases it in the positive.)

17. Both Eric and Noah loved **his** dog. [[unclear pronoun](#)]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	“his” is an unclear pronoun (Who owns the dog? Does “his dog” mean Eric’s dog? Or Noah’s dog?)
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Eric and Noah loved Noah’s dog.
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Eric and Noah loved Eric’s dog.

18. Chris set down his sandwich and noticed a cockroach. He smashed **it** with his fist. [[unclear pronoun](#)]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	"it" is an unclear pronoun (What did Chris smash? His sandwich? Or the cockroach?)
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Chris set down his sandwich and noticed a cockroach. He smashed the cockroach with his fist.
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Chris set down his sandwich. He noticed a cockroach and smashed it with his fist.

19. **In a nutshell**, our job **is to provide service** to people **from all walks of life**. [[clichés & idioms](#) / [weak verb](#) / [nouncing](#)]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	"in a nutshell" and "from all walks of life" are cliché's/idioms; "is to..." is a weak verb; "provide service" is nouncing (What did Chris smash? His sandwich? Or the cockroach?)
POSSIBLE REVISION:	We serve all people.
POSSIBLE REVISION:	We serve everyone.

20. Let's **think outside the box** to take our fundraising **to the next level**. [[clichés & idioms](#)]

EDITING ISSUE(S):	"think outside the box" and "to the next level" are cliché's/idioms
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Let's think creatively to improve fundraising.
POSSIBLE REVISION:	Let's think of new ways to improve fundraising.