

## Conciseness Exercise

In this exercise, you will write a draft of your section of your business report at home without editing it. Then we will take steps to excise about half the words you originally wrote during an in-class workshop.

### **Part 1: Research/Write** (Complete at home)

Write about 500 words from the topic of your business report assignment without editing it and have a hard copy accessible so you can edit it during our workshop.

### **Part 2: Editing for Conciseness** (In-class Workshop)

In this part of the exercise, you will cut down the prose to roughly half the number of words you have originally written by taking the following steps.

1. Make sure you have a clear focus statement. It should answer the question "what is the main idea of this portion of the report?" or "how is this information relevant/important to the document's purpose?" This statement should be 1-2 sentences.
2. Remove any redundancies, i.e., any point made more than once.
3. Eliminate facts/data/examples that do not support the document's purpose.
4. Break the remaining prose into sections that support the main point you have articulated (see Point 1 above.)
5. Take each of those points, which support the main reason you are writing, and write them as bulleted statements without regard to the existing structure.
6. Rearrange those points with the most important appearing first and the remainder in descending order of importance. This structure is called the "inverted pyramid" and is the way much business communication content is organized. If appropriate, change paragraphs into lists using bulleted or enumerated points.
7. The revised content should begin with the focus statement followed by supporting facts in descending order of importance. You should have about 300-350 words.

Now make your final edit. Tighten your prose so that your document is +/- 250 words using the strategies we've discussed in class (and that you've read about in your textbook), including cutting wordy expressions, eliminating long lead-ins, avoiding fillers, and axing e