CONCISION PRACTICE

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"Perfection is not when there is no more to add, but no more to take away."
-Antoine de Saint Exupery

ARE MY WORDS PRECISE, AND DOES EACH ONE MATTER?

1) **Search for and Destroy Common Pitfalls**

What can you cut?

I think Congress should pass the law.
It is important to consider that Congress could pass the law.
It is important to note that Congress could pass the law.
There are many reasons to love. One reason to love is that it creates more love.
People might consider loving more. This is important because love creates more love.

How could you make these less vague?

Passing the law could really affect the people.
Passing the law could mean large changes.

Revise to cut down on multiple prepositional phrases.

The countries that had defeated Germany gathered outside of Paris and signed the Treaty of Versailles in January of 1919.

This war was of inevitable nature because Athens was growing at a rapid rate, and it brought concern not only to Sparta but also to city states in the surrounding areas.

How can you make these shorter, even by one word, while retaining meaning?

The core of the Earth
I ate all of the cakes.
In order to determine the correct path, I consulted the compass.
Needless to say
The fact that Maduro bribes leaders corrupts Venezuela.
As a matter of fact, Maduro bribes leaders.
I am in the process of gathering data.
I admit to eating all of the cakes.

2) **Work toward Simplicity with Verbs**

How can you simplify these while retaining meaning?

It is his belief that writing is easy.

He made a comparison between apples and oranges.

His success was caused by continued work.

Give an analysis of the data, and then create a summary.

Cost cutting in the Department of Motor Vehicles' annual budget has brought a reduction in services either through shutting down offices or eliminating positions.

The corporate lawyers met in a room for fourteen hours and were able to come up with a list of nine bylaws that would guarantee themselves bureaucratic immortality.

3) Eliminate Redundancies

How can you simplify these by eliminating redundancies?

This study, in assessing the counterinsurgency in Iraq, will apply lessons from the counterinsurgency in Vietnam, in order to propose a universally applicable theory of counterinsurgency.

The cornerstone to the government providing essential emergency services to its citizens is ensuring there has been effective planning to anticipate a variety of challenges to deliver these critical services.

Spending lavishly on expensive weapon systems, while failing to live within our means, undermines the fiscal credibility of the DoD.

When he was in law school, Justice Ehrmantraut published an article, "The Constitutional Limits of Police Surveillance," in the journal *The New England Monthly Law Review*.

The purpose of the phone-alarm service is to provide a wake-up call to travelers who don't carry any kind of alarm clock.

From the underground pamphlets, these future revolutionaries read and learned of the new ideas that would transform their society.

CIRCLE WHICH CONCISION AREAS MIGHT GET YOU, AND CHECK FOR THEM IN REVISION / POLISHING.

Are my words precise, and does each one matter?

I think / I believe
It is important to note/ understand
Unnecessary introductory material
Vague statements
Excessive prepositional phrases
More verbs than needed
Redundancies
Excessive "to be" verbs
Other "ticks" (coaches can help identify):

Viewing the handout without the benefit of the in-person workshop? Make a coaching appointment to review, or email Instructor at cohunt@nps.edu with questions.