

Precise and Concise Language

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 10



Quick Review

Strong writing is **PRECISE** (each word carries clear meaning) and **CONCISE** (no wasted words). Three moves to practice. (1) **CUT WORDY PHRASES**: 'due to the fact that' → 'because'; 'in the event that' → 'if'; 'at this point in time' → 'now'; 'in order to' → 'to.' (2) **REMOVE REDUNDANCY** — words that repeat meaning already there: 'advance planning' (planning is always in advance), 'completely eliminate' (eliminate already means completely remove), 'end result' (a result IS an end), 'past history,' 'free gift,' 'final outcome.' (3) **REPLACE VAGUE WORDS** with precise ones: 'got' → 'received,' 'earned,' 'caught'; 'nice' → 'thoughtful,' 'polished,' 'comfortable'; 'thing' → the specific noun. Watch out: shorter is **NOT** always better. A cut that removes essential meaning is a bad cut. The goal is to keep every important idea while removing every wasted word.

PRACTICE

Choose the correct answer for each question.

1. Which revision **BEST** makes the sentence more concise **WITHOUT** losing meaning? ORIGINAL: 'Due to the fact that it was raining, we canceled the picnic.'
 - A. Because of the fact of the rain, we canceled the picnic.
 - B. Because it was raining, we canceled the picnic.
 - C. We canceled the picnic.
 - D. Owing to the circumstance that it was raining outside, we canceled the picnic.
2. Which sentence contains **REDUNDANT** language?
 - A. The committee will announce the result on Friday.
 - B. The committee will announce the final end result on Friday.
 - C. The committee will share the decision on Friday.
 - D. The committee will release its findings on Friday.
3. Which revision uses **MORE PRECISE** language? ORIGINAL: 'My uncle got a really nice award at the ceremony last night.'
 - A. My uncle got something nice at the thing last night.
 - B. My uncle received a prestigious award at the ceremony last night.
 - C. My uncle got a really, really nice award at the ceremony last night.
 - D. My uncle, who is a person in my family, got a nice award at the event.



4. Which sentence is BOTH precise AND concise?
- A. In the event that the weather is bad, we will move the game inside.
 - B. If the weather is bad, we will move the game indoors.
 - C. If the weather turns out to be bad in any way, we will move the game inside the building.
 - D. Should it be the case that bad weather occurs, the game will be relocated indoors.
5. Which underlined phrase should be CUT because it is redundant? 'The committee made ADVANCE PLANS to COMPLETELY ELIMINATE the dangerous chemical from the playground.'
- A. advance plans — because all plans are made in advance
 - B. completely eliminate — because eliminate already means completely remove
 - C. from the playground — because it tells where
 - D. Both 'advance' and 'completely' should be cut as redundant
6. Which revision keeps the meaning but cuts the wordiness? ORIGINAL: 'At this point in time, the basketball team is undefeated for the entire season so far this year.'
- A. At this current moment in time, the basketball team is undefeated for the season.
 - B. So far this year at this point, the basketball team has not lost.
 - C. The basketball team is undefeated this season.
 - D. The basketball team.
7. Read the paragraph. Which sentence is WORDY and should be revised? (1) The science fair will be held on Saturday. (2) Due to the fact that many families travel on weekends, the judges will start at noon. (3) Each project will receive feedback from three judges. (4) Winners will be announced at three o'clock.
- A. Sentence 1
 - B. Sentence 2
 - C. Sentence 3
 - D. Sentence 4
8. Which revision is TOO AGGRESSIVE — meaning it cuts essential information? ORIGINAL: 'Because the trail was icy and steep, the rangers closed it to hikers for the weekend.'
- A. The trail was closed.
 - B. Because the trail was icy and steep, the rangers closed it for the weekend.
 - C. The rangers closed the icy, steep trail for the weekend.
 - D. Rangers closed the icy, steep trail to hikers for the weekend.
9. Rewrite this sentence to be more PRECISE and CONCISE. Remove wordiness and redundancy, and replace vague language with specific words. ORIGINAL: 'Due to the fact that the bus was really late, the kids on the team got a nice surprise when their game time was changed.'
- _____
- _____



10. The paragraph below contains ONE redundant phrase. Identify the redundant phrase and explain in one sentence why it is redundant. 'The students gathered in the gym for a free gift from the principal. She thanked them for their hard work all year and handed each one a small notebook. Everyone left smiling.'



Answer Keys

- 1 A B C D
- 2 A B C D
- 3 A B C D
- 4 A B C D
- 5 A B C D

- 6 A B C D
- 7 A B C D
- 8 A B C D
- 9
- 10

Explanations

1. B	B replaces the wordy phrase 'Due to the fact that' with the single word 'Because' — same meaning, fewer words. A only rearranges the wordy phrase and still says 'the fact of.' C is shorter but drops the cause ('because it was raining'), losing essential meaning. D makes the sentence even wordier with 'Owing to the circumstance that' and adds redundant 'outside.'
2. B	B contains TWO redundancies: 'result' already implies an ending, so 'end result' repeats meaning, and 'final' adds the same idea a third time. A, C, and D each name the outcome with one precise noun ('result,' 'decision,' 'findings'). The redundancy in B is the classic 'end result' trap — students often add 'final' or 'end' for emphasis, but it weakens the writing.
3. B	B replaces vague 'got' with the precise verb 'received' and vague 'really nice' with the precise adjective 'prestigious' — same length, sharper meaning. A makes the sentence MORE vague by changing 'award' and 'ceremony' to 'something' and 'thing.' C only intensifies a vague word by repeating 'really.' D adds the wordy filler 'who is a person in my family' and weakens 'ceremony' to 'event.'
4. B	B uses 'If' instead of the wordy 'In the event that' and 'indoors' instead of 'inside the building' — every word carries meaning. A uses the wordy 'In the event that.' C piles on redundant filler ('turns out to be... in any way,' 'inside the building'). D uses 'Should it be the case that' and the stiff passive 'will be relocated' — formal, but not concise.
5. D	Both phrases contain redundancy. 'Plans' already mean future action, so 'advance' adds nothing; 'eliminate' already means 'remove entirely,' so 'completely' adds nothing. A is partly right but ignores the second redundancy. B is partly right but ignores the first. C is wrong — 'from the playground' tells WHERE, which is essential information, not redundancy.
6. C	C replaces 'At this point in time' with no equivalent (the present tense 'is' already conveys 'now') and merges 'for the entire season so far this year' into the precise 'this season.' All meaning is preserved. A keeps the wordy 'At this current moment in time.' B rearranges the wordiness without removing it. D is too aggressive — it cuts the verb and the key claim, leaving only a sentence fragment.
7. B	Sentence 2 uses the wordy phrase 'Due to the fact that,' which can be replaced by the single word 'Because' with no loss of meaning. Sentences 1, 3, and 4 are already tight — each word in them carries information about a time, a number, or an action. The wordiness in sentence 2 is the classic Grade 7 trap of using a long phrase where a single conjunction works.
8. A	A cuts so much that it loses the cause (icy and steep), the agent (rangers), the audience (hikers), and the time (weekend) — only the bare fact survives. B trims one minor phrase but keeps every important idea. C combines the cause into an adjective phrase ('icy, steep') and keeps the rest. D is nearly identical to the original but slightly tighter. Concise writing means removing wasted words, not essential ones.



9.	<p>Answer: Sample answer: Because the bus arrived twenty minutes late, the players received a welcome change to their game time.</p> <p>A strong rewrite makes three moves at once. (1) Replace 'Due to the fact that' with 'Because' to cut wordiness. (2) Replace vague 'really late,' 'kids on the team,' 'got,' and 'nice surprise' with precise alternatives ('twenty minutes late,' 'players,' 'received,' 'welcome change'). (3) Keep every essential idea — the cause, the people, and the result. Any rewrite that shortens the sentence, removes vague words, and preserves meaning is correct.</p>
10.	<p>Answer: Sample answer: The redundant phrase is 'free gift,' because a gift is by definition free — adding 'free' repeats meaning already in the word 'gift.'</p> <p>Strong answers name the exact phrase ('free gift') and explain that 'gift' already implies that no payment is required, so 'free' adds nothing. This is a textbook redundancy along with 'end result,' 'advance planning,' and 'past history.' Any answer that identifies 'free gift' and explains the built-in meaning of 'gift' is correct.</p>




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