

## Editing: Lesser Reductions, Part 2

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Theodore Cheney explains that “Redundancies are words that can be eliminated from a piece of writing, *without changing the significance of the passage.*” Pleonasm is one such type of redundancy.

### Pleonasm

Pleonasm is having in a sentence unnecessary words that can be deleted without changing the meaning or the structure of the sentence. For example:

Before	After
Her motive was <i>more or less</i> jealousy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Her motive was jealousy.</li> <li>▪ She was jealous.</li> </ul>
<i>Both</i> Jack and Jill went up the hill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jack and Jill went up the hill.</li> <li>▪ Both went up the hill.</li> </ul>
The boys leaped in the deep puddles <i>of water.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The boys leaped in the deep puddles.</li> </ul>

Cheney lists some single-word substitutes for pleonastic phrases:

Phrase	Substitute
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the reason is because</li> <li>▪ based on the fact that</li> <li>▪ due to the fact that</li> <li>▪ inasmuch as</li> <li>▪ in light of the fact that</li> <li>▪ on account of the fact that</li> <li>▪ on the grounds that</li> </ul>	because
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ in the matter of</li> <li>▪ in the neighborhood of</li> <li>▪ a number of</li> <li>▪ in the approximate amount of</li> <li>▪ concerning the nature of</li> <li>▪ in regard to</li> <li>▪ with reference to</li> <li>▪ of the order of magnitude</li> </ul>	about

Phrase	Substitute
▪ despite the fact that	although
▪ in the not-too-distant future	soon
▪ in the very near future	
▪ neat in appearance	neat
▪ at this time	now
▪ at this point in time	
▪ at the present	
▪ disappear from sight	disappear

Other pleonasms to beware:

- In any shape or form
- More preferable
- Predict in advance
- Once again

Next week we'll look at the final types of redundancies: prolixity, circumlocution, and repetition.

—Lee Allen Howard

**Source:** Cheney, Theodore A. Rees. *Getting the Words Right: How to Rewrite, Edit & Revise*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books, 1983.