

## Effective Word Usage in Scientific Writing

San Francisco Edit

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A sentence should contain no unnecessary words. In scientific manuscripts precise writing is especially important because of the emphasis on conveying quantitative information efficiently. In reporting and recording research, try to be as accurate and precise in describing as in conducting the research.

Following is a list of words and expressions that are useless or incorrect in scientific writing, with suggested alternatives. This is not a complete list but contains some of the most troublesome words most frequently found in scientific manuscripts.

### Don't use

based on the fact that

for the purpose of

fact

prove

plays an important role

decreased number of

time period

longer time period

brown in color

round in shape

a number of

has been shown to be

### Better

because

for / to

evidence

support

is important because

fewer

time

longer

brown

round

some

is

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| by means of                            | by                       |
| it is possible that                    | may                      |
| in order to                            | to                       |
| during the course of                   | during                   |
| a majority of                          | most                     |
| a great number of times                | often                    |
| in other words                         | thus / hence / therefore |
| despite the fact that                  | although                 |
| first of all                           | first                    |
| it is interesting to note that         | <i>eliminate</i>         |
| it may seem reasonable to suppose that | <i>eliminate</i>         |

To ensure accuracy and preciseness in your writing:

- Use an English spelling checker
- Make sure you use words according to the precise meaning understood by the average person.
- Ideally, check whether every word could be deleted or replaced by a better one.

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