

## The Paramedic Method of Editing

When editing your work, this method of editing is designed to eliminate all sorts of unnecessary phrases and wordiness from your writing, in the hopes that your writing will increase in clarity and persuasive power as a result:

**Step 1: Circle the prepositions.** Prepositional phrases often create wordiness and some s-l-o-w reading. (around, at, by, for, from, in, of, on, over, outside, through, since, under, up, with, etc.)

**Step 2: Draw a box around the “to be” verbs.** (am, is, are, was, were, etc.) This is also a good way to catch passive voice besides looking for uses of “by.”

**Step 3: Find the subject.** Ask yourself, “Where’s the action?” and “Who is kicking whom?” Figure out who is actually performing the action in this sentence. Who or what is the main subject? Revise the sentence and place the actor at the front of the sentence

**Step 4: Clarify the action.**

a) Now that you know who is doing the action (who is doing the kicking!), revise the sentence to give that actor a simple action verb. This action may originally appear as a noun (e.g. change “a demonstration” to “demonstrates”).

b) Replace or eliminate coordinating conjunctions when appropriate. Rather than using a more generic coordinating conjunction like “and” describe the relationship between parts of the sentence using subordinating conjunctions.

List of Coordinating Conjunctions	List of Subordinating Conjunctions (from Hacker Manual, p. 14)	
For	After	Unless
And	Although	Until
Nor	Because	When
But	Before	Where
Or	If	Which
Yet	Since	Who
So	That	

**Step 5: Eliminate the slow wind-ups at the beginning of sentences.** “I believe that...” and “In my opinion,...” These kinds of beginnings aren’t necessary and they slow down the reader. Instead, jump right into the sentence.

Common Empty Phrases (from Hacker Manual, p. 2)	
Along the lines of	In order to
At the present time	In spite of the fact that
Because of the fact that	In the event that
By means of	Until such time as
Due to the fact that	It is x that/ There are

**Step 6: Eliminate any redundancies and meaningless words.** This includes “that,” “his/her poem,” “for example,” and “very.”

Example:

Main Actor

Main Action

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Revised Sentence:

This editing method eliminates wordiness, increasing clarity and persuasive power.

#### DO NOT USE THESE WORDS:

- “his poem”/“the poem”/“throughout the poem”
- “that”
- “very”
- “For example”/“for instance”
- “clearly” or “it’s obvious”
- “adds/creates meaning” or “deeper meaning”
- “I” or “my” (I can’t believe I even have to put this on this list)

#### DO:

- Clearly use the definitions of your operative word in topic sentences
  - But don’t just start randomly defining words unnecessary throughout your essay
- Quote, cite, and analyze research **and** your poem
- Make sure your operative word is actually in your thesis