

Eliminating Linguistic Gridlock

Drive your point home
without driving your readers crazy

Breaking linguistic gridlock

Needless words:

- Weight down your text
- Muddy/weaken your point
- Fatigue/annoy the reader
- Drive readers away

Primary gridlock culprits

- Throat-clearers
- Redundancies
- “Helper” verbs
- Qualifiers
- Repetition
- Superfluous words/phrases

Throat-clearers

“As expected...”

Throat-clearers

- Be sure to ...
- It is important to remember that ...
- Never forget that ...
- There's no denying that ...
- The truth is ...
- The fact of the matter is ...
- Not surprisingly ...
- It is common wisdom/knowledge that ...
- Everyone recognizes/understands that ...
- I want to start off by saying...

Redundancies

Could potentially

Completely overhaul

Necessarily need

Launch a new campaign

Further expand

Past history

Prior experience

Future plans/advance planning

10-year anniversary

Added bonus

Adequate enough

“Helper” verbs

They were able to finish the project

The CEO took the opportunity to delegate

The mayor decided to appoint

Within months they began posting videos

“Helper” verbs

They were able to finish the project

They finished the project

The CEO took the opportunity to delegate

The CEO delegated

The mayor decided to appoint

The mayor appointed

Within months they began posting videos

Within months they posted videos

Make verb tenses do the work

He will retire ~~later~~ this year.

She was promoted ~~earlier~~ this month.

***In these cases, “earlier” and “later” offer
no additional information, just vagueness.***

Qualifiers

Have sometimes been known to

Can occasionally

Seemingly

It would appear that

Some marketers have been known to

Might potentially

Could conceivably

*Know what you want to say,
and say it with assurance.*

Repetition

“In other words...”

“In a nutshell...”

Needless words/phrases

Is currently looking for

Is in the process of building

Over a period of three months

At least three paragraphs or longer

By Oct.15, if not sooner

There are many people who prefer

The month of September

The year 2009

A period of six weeks

The city of New Orleans

The state of Idaho

Needless words/phrases

~~Is currently~~ looking for

~~Is in the process of~~ building

~~Over a period of~~ three months

~~At least three paragraphs or longer~~

~~By Oct.15, if not sooner~~

~~There are many people who~~ prefer

~~The month of~~ September

~~The year~~ 2009

~~A period of~~ six weeks

~~The city of~~ New Orleans

~~The state of~~ Idaho