



### Watch out for redundant word pairs

The Writer-Editor Services team often tells our CDC/ATSDR colleagues to “write like you talk.” Writing conversationally, even when communicating about serious scientific topics, can help you sound less stuffy and more natural. It can also help you avoid [gobbledygook](#) and make your writing more accessible.

Using simple words is one way to write like you talk. Using contractions is another. But you don’t want to get *too* casual, and there’s one sure way to overdo it: **redundant word pairs**.

Be skeptical of phrases like “each and every,” “any and all,” “dribs and drabs,” “leaps and bounds,” “neat and tidy,” “nook and cranny,” “over and done with,” “peace and quiet,” “plain and simple,” “rant and rave,” and “so on and so forth.” True, these phrases are conversational, but they’re also unnecessary. You want your writing to be fresh, not tired.

So, here’s a tip: slow down, pause, rewind, rethink, rephrase, rewrite. Writing is about saying yes, and giving yourself permission. But after you’re finished, go back and edit your work carefully. Editing is sometimes about saying no and denying yourself permission. It’s about reconsidering all those ready-made phrases that shot out of your brain and onto your screen at the speed of thought.

Avoid these phrases:

- aid and abet
- all and sundry
- care and attention
- cease and desist
- fit and proper
- forever and ever
- free and clear
- full and complete
- hale and hearty
- house and home
- kith and kin
- law and order
- null and void
- over and above

- part and parcel
- power and authority
- prim and proper
- sole and exclusive
- terms and conditions
- vim and vigor
- will and testament

Please give and provide your thoughts and comments!