



“**Successfully**” doesn’t often appear on lists of [unnecessary words](#), but it pops up all the time in scientific writing. It tends to happen when the author is describing an achievement—a success, if you will. But maybe writing only “we published the study” sounds boring, or not quite impressive enough. Enter “successfully,” which does seem to punch things up. “We successfully published the study” somehow seems like more of a triumph.

But resist the temptation to add this unnecessary filler word. Check out these real-world “before” examples (which have been slightly edited to preserve anonymity):

The program successfully engaged communities, partners, and health professionals.

We successfully used these new methods for the test program.

Most laboratories were able to successfully identify the pathogens.

The team successfully expressed the genes encoded by the RNA transcript.

Chelating agents can successfully prevent the effects of arsenic toxicity.

We promise: You can delete “successfully” from each of these sentences without taking anything away from the accomplishment. Keep it simple!

Resources

- [CDC Style Guide](#) (see Wordiness and Vocabulary Issues sections)
- [Utilize vs. Use](#)
- [Pretentious Writing](#)
- [Addressing the Issue](#)