

HARVARD & HARDSHIP

THE PATH TO ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE SHOULD NOT BE A SECRET

Concise Writing Exercise

**Read the paragraph once, then use a pen to mark out words and/or phrases that are either:*

1) redundant, or

2) can be said shorter

Compare your edits with the answer sheet. No worries if you don't get them all, or if your edits are a bit different from those on the answer sheet. There is no one, "right" answer, as a paragraph can be shortened in a plethora of ways. Also, spotting redundancy and restructuring a sentence to make it shorter is a skill that requires practice. The more you do it, the better you will become.

I had just entered the 9th grade, and I was totally new to being a high school student. I didn't know anything about high school! More than likely, there would be many new obstacles, challenges, and social situations I would have to learn how to overcome. Nevertheless, I was determined to do my best, beat the odds, and experience new things. I especially appreciated my advanced social studies class. It gave me the opportunity to interact with many different cultures and people. I also enjoyed mock trial. As the member-engagement chairperson, I was responsible for recruiting new students into the club. One legal case that interested me involved a situation where the prosecuting attorneys tried to appeal the decision, but were unsuccessful. Furthermore, I became more and more interested in politics, and I felt that I needed to acquire more knowledge about the political process. Therefore, to develop a better understanding of the political process and legalities, I wish to major in political science.

HARVARD & HARDSHIP

THE PATH TO ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE SHOULD NOT BE A SECRET

Concise Writing Exercise

Answer Sheet: Angel's Edits

**Remember, there is no one, "right" answer, as a paragraph can be shortened in a plethora of ways. The following is only meant to give a few examples of how to reduce redundancy and "say it shorter." You will get better at this overtime with more practice.*

- 1) I had just entered the 9th grade, and I was totally new to being a high school student. I ~~didn't know anything about high school!~~ ~~Probably~~ ~~More than likely~~, there would be many new obstacles, ~~challenges~~, and social situations I would have to learn how to overcome.
- 2) Nevertheless, I was determined to do my best, beat the odds, and ~~experience new things~~. I especially appreciated my advanced social studies class.
- 3) ~~It gave me the opportunity to interact~~ with many different cultures ~~and people~~.
- 4) I also enjoyed mock trial. As the member-engagement chairperson, I was responsible for recruiting ~~new~~ students into the club.

Kommentar [AE1]: Delete the second sentence: "I didn't know anything about high school." That fact (about being new to high school) was already made very clear in the opening sentence. [REDUNDANCY]

Kommentar [AE2]: "More than likely" is not wrong. However, if you are trying to get your word count down, "probably" is a shorter way to say the same thing. [SAY IT SHORTER]

Kommentar [AE3]: Obstacles and challenges are the same thing. [REDUNDANCY] Either totally remove "challenges," or replace it with another thing you would have to overcome.

Kommentar [AE4]: This is personal, but I don't like the word "thing" in final drafts of essays. "Thing" is a good placeholder for a rough draft, but it is too boring to submit in a final, revised essay. Here is a better, more colorful phrase: "gain new experiences."

Kommentar [AE5]: [SAY IT SHORTER] Examples on how to say it shorter: Provided interactions with... OR Allowed me to interact with...

Kommentar [AE6]: [REDUNDANT] By interacting with different cultures, it is given that you interacted with different people.

Kommentar [AE7]: [REDUNDANT] Typically, to recruit means that you are recruiting new people. (Think about it: who else, other than new members, would you recruit?)

HARVARD & HARDSHIP

THE PATH TO ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE SHOULD NOT BE A SECRET

- 5) One ~~legal case~~ that interested me ~~involved a situation where _was when~~ ~~the prosecuting attorneys the prosecution~~ ~~tried to appeal the decision, but were unsuccessful~~ ~~unsuccessfully tried to appeal the decision.~~
- 6) Furthermore, I became ~~more and more increasingly~~ interested in politics, and I ~~felt that I needed to acquire~~ ~~desired~~ more knowledge about the political process.
- 7) ~~Therefore, to develop a better understanding of~~ the political ~~and legal~~ process and ~~legalities~~, I wish to major in political science.

Kommentar [AE8]: [REDUNDANT] "legal case" is redundant because it's pretty obvious that the case was a legal one.

Kommentar [AE9]: [SAY IT SHORTER]

Kommentar [AE10]: [REDUNDANT] and [SAY IT SHORTER] "Prosecuting attorneys" becomes "the prosecution." It is evident that the prosecution is made up of attorneys. What else would they be made up of?

Kommentar [AE11]: [SAY IT SHORTER]

Kommentar [AE12]: [SAY IT SHORTER] "more and more" is not incorrect, per se, but "increasingly" conveys the same idea in a more precise manner.

Kommentar [AE13]: [SAY IT SHORTER]

Kommentar [AE14]: [SAY IT SHORTER]