

Wordiness: Nominalizations

A nominalization is a noun formed from another part of speech, sometimes because it makes for a precise meaning in an academic context, but often out of a mistaken sense that it "sounds better/smarter."

Appropriate nominalization

An appropriate nominalization is one that is an accepted term in the language of the discipline in which you are working.

Sometimes a nominalization reduces wordiness; if the meaning is clear, keep it.

e.g. *Academic prose frequently uses nominalizations for valid reasons.*

Nominalization (derived from nominal) is an accepted term in rhetorical discourse; if this sentence is part of an essay in a Writing course, keep the term. Besides, rephrasing it would be cumbersome. *Academic prose frequently uses nouns formed from other parts of speech, for valid reasons.*

Inappropriate nominalization

Inappropriate nominalizations are not part of the discipline and add unnecessary words.

Solution

Return inappropriate nominalizations to their original source words.

- *First-year students experience success when they engage fully in their studies → First-year students succeed when they engage fully in their studies.*
- *Universities are engaged in the pursuit of new knowledge → Universities pursue new knowledge.*
- *The researcher made a mistake when she confused causation and correlation → The researcher mistook causation for correlation.*
- *The frequency of her mistakes caused the destruction of the student's confidence → Frequent mistakes destroyed her confidence.*