

## The Reverse Paramedic Method

The reverse paramedic method is a revision process used to identify unnecessarily wordy sentences that can be made more concise. It also helps to convert writing into passive voice. The reverse paramedic method is an adaptation of the paramedic method described in Richard Lanham's *Revising Prose* created by the Purdue OWL.

### When is this method useful?

- ◇ When you need to write in passive voice such as for lab reports
- ◇ When you need to reduce your word count to meet a required limit

### Steps

#### 1. Circle all prepositions.

Some common prepositions include:

About	Amid	By	In	Over	Underneath
Above	Among	Concerning	Into	Past	Until
According to	Before	During	Like	Since	Upon
Across	Behind	Except	Of	Through	With
After	Beside	For	Off	To	Within
Along	Beyond	From	On	Toward	Without

#### 2. Underline any 1<sup>st</sup> person pronouns or references to the researcher.

First person pronouns are words like I, we, me, us, etc. that are used to refer to a specific person or group.

#### 3. Put brackets around any wind-ups.

Wind-ups are unnecessary phrases at the beginning of a sentence that are being used to lead into the topic of a sentence. Wind-ups are sometimes necessary, but usually important information is included in the main part of the sentence.

Examples:

“In the case of...”

“According to...”

“The next step was to...”

#### 4. Highlight repetitions and cross out any redundancies.

Repetitions occur when some word or phrase is repeatedly used in close proximity. Redundancies are areas of unnecessary or repeated information.

#### 5. Revise your sentence to remove/minimize what you marked in steps 1-3.

You don't have to eliminate everything you've marked, but try to minimize the occurrences. Doing so will make your sentence more concise, which will make your paper easier to read. If your goal is to convert to passive voice, however, you need to reword your sentence to remove all 1<sup>st</sup> person pronouns.

**\*\*Note:** This process can be repeated multiple times for the same sentence.

### Examples

#### Focused on reducing word count:

Original Sentence:

If the two materials have drastically different coefficients of expansion, the difference in the rates of expansion will cause stress on the coupling and will cause the point where the two materials are joined to become weak and less secure. (40 words)

Apply the Reverse Paramedic Method:

[If the two materials have drastically different coefficients of expansion,] the difference in the rates of expansion will cause stress to the coupling and will cause the point where the two materials are joined to become weak and less secure.

New Sentence:

Joining two materials with significantly different coefficients of expansion can cause stress in the coupling due to the different rates of expansion, weakening the joint. (25 words)

#### Focused on converting active to passive:

Original Sentence:

Before we ran any of the tests, we measured the cross-sectional width and thickness of the sample as well as the initial length of the sample.

Apply the Reverse Paramedic Method:

[Before we ran any of the tests,] we measured the cross-sectional width and thickness of the sample as well as the initial length of the sample.

New Sentence:

The initial length, thickness, and cross-sectional width of the sample were measured before running the tests.

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### References

Purdue OWL. (n.d.). Reverse paramedic method. Retrieved from:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/academic\\_writing/reverse\\_paramedic\\_method.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/reverse_paramedic_method.html)

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