The Department of Redundancy Department

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I recently saw a t-shirt that read: "The Department of Redundancy Department." A frequent error most of us make when speaking and writing is using two words, when one word would have been sufficient. Redundant phrases, also known as tautologies, are among the many intriguing English phrases I like to collect (everyone needs a hobby, right?). You can print this list and begin to cut the excess from your writing and speaking. Be sure to send me any you think should be added to the list.

Here are three tips to help you avoid redundancy in your speaking and writing:

Be aware that abbreviations and acronyms might contain the words we often add after them (ATM **machine** — ATM means Automated Teller **Machine**). Eliminate intensifiers that don't really add emphasis, but merely state what is implied in the key word (major breakthrough—breakthrough implies something major, or serious danger—danger implies something serious).

Avoid noun stacks, putting two or more nouns together, when only one is necessary (sum total or time period). As you read this list, look for hints as to where these errors are likely to occur.

From the Redundancy Department:

absolutely essential — essential
absolutely indispensable — indispensable
actual experience or past experience —- experience
added bonus — bonus
adequate enough — adequate or enough
advance notice — notice
advance planning — planning

advance reservations — reservations
advance warning — warning
already exist — exist
and also — and or also
arrived at the conclusion — concluded
ask the question — ask or question
assembled together — assembled
at about — at or about
attach together — attach

basic fundamental — basic or fundamental
blue (or any color) in color — blue (or whatever color)
brief in duration — brief

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cancel out — cancel
capital city — capital
CD-ROM disk — CD-ROM (compact disk, read-only memory)
classify into groups — classify or group
clearly evident — evident
collaborate together — collaborate
completely demolished — demolished,
completely destroyed — destroyed
completely filled — filled
completely forgot — forgot
completely surrounded — surrounded
complete monopoly — monopoly
complete opposite — opposite
component parts — component or parts
consensus of opinion, general consensus — consensus
continue on — continue
contributing factor — factor
cooperate together — cooperate
costs a total of — costs
current status — status

disregard altogether — disregard
doctorate degree — doctorate
DVD disk — DVD (digital versatile disk)

each and every — each or every (not both)
end result — end or result
entirely eliminate — eliminate
estimated ETA — estimated time of arrival or ETA
exactly identical — identical
exact same — exact or same
extreme hazard — hazard

fellow colleague — colleague
few in number — few
filled to capacity — filled
final outcome — outcome
first and foremost — first
foreign imports — imports
former veteran — veteran
free gift — free or gift
frozen ice — ice
full and complete — full or complete
future plans — plans

general consensus — consensus
general public — public
group together — group

honest truth — truth
if and when — if or when
important essentials — essentials
join together, link together — join, link

knowledgeable experts — experts

LAN network — LAN (local area network) or network
large in size — large
look back in retrospect — look back or in retrospect

major breakthrough — breakthrough
may possibly — may
merged together — merged
missing gaps — gaps
month of January — January

mutual agreement, communication, cooperation,
friendship or understanding — drop "mutual"

new breakthrough — breakthrough
new development — development
new innovations — innovations
none at all — none
not sufficient enough — not sufficient
old (adage, cliché, maxim, proverb, relic, saying) — drop "old"
one and the same — the same
original source — source
over and over — repeatedly
overexaggerate — exaggerate

particular interest — interest
past (previous or prior) accomplishment, experience, history, performance, record — drop past, previous or prior

period of time — either period or time
personally, I think — I think
personal opinion — opinion
plan ahead — plan
point in time — either now or today
postpone until later — postpone
potentially capable — capable
protest against — protest

reason is because — reason is or because
regular routine — routine
repeat again — repeat
refer, regress, return, revert back — drop back
roast beef with au jus — with juice or au jus
(au jus is French for "with juice")

RSVP please — RSVP (from the French phrase: "Repondez, s'il vous plait?" "Respond, if you please?"

salsa sauce — salsa or sauce
same identical — same
serious danger — danger
small in size — small
square in shape — square
still remains — remains
successfully completed — completed
sudden impulse — impulse
summarize briefly — summarize
sum total — total

surrounded on all sides — surrounded

technical jargon — jargon
temporary loan — loan
temporary reprieve — reprieve
time period — time or period
totally demolished, totally destroyed — demolished or destroyed
total number — number
totally unnecessary — unnecessary
true fact — fact
tuna fish — tuna
12 noon or 12 midnight — noon, midnight

unite together — unite
unless or until — either unless or until
unmarried bachelor — bachelor
usual custom, usual habit — custom, habit
very unique — unique

weather outside — weather

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