

## Glue Words and Sticky Sentences

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Have you ever read something and not know what it said? Or maybe what you read dragged on without saying anything? Chances are, that piece of writing was filled with glue words and sticky sentences.

Glue words can be conjunctions that connect one part of the sentence to another, Common conjunctions are for, and, or, but, yet, and so. Glue words can also be filler words—words that can be deleted without changing the meaning of the sentence. These are words like just, really, literally, simply, and many more.

Not all glue words are unnecessary. Conjunctions are needed to connect parts of a sentences. It's the overuse of glue words that make a sentence sticky. Sticky sentences can be confusing. When unnecessary words flood a sentence, the main point becomes diluted, making it hard to understand. Sticky sentence can be clunky and difficult to follow, they can go off on a tangent and lose their focus, and many times, what's being said ends up being redundant. It's easy to get lost in a piece of writing (not in a good way) filled with sticky sentences.

Avoid sticky sentences by eliminating the following:

- Unnecessary words
- Redundancies
- Too many conjunctions
- Too many adverbs
- Too many words to convey one thought
- Too many useless words that do not add any meaning
- Long, complex sentences that go on and on before getting to the point
- Non-essential information

To keep your writing from being sluggish, you should be writing “tight.” This is a goal for almost every writer. Many writers strive for shorter sentences that are concise and to the point. This is one way of writing tight. Eliminating unnecessary words is another way. You should strive to have less than 40% glue words in your sentences. There are grammar and editing sites that can track this for you. Some of these programs (not all) actually have a sticky sentence report and give you the glue word percentage. Some may even give you suggestions for rewording.

Glue words can sometimes be deleted without changing the rest of the sentence, as in the following examples.

- Maddie stepped off **of** the escalator and walked **up** to the make-up counter.
- We walked **right on** into the restaurant and sat **down** at the table.
- Before heading **off** to the market, we agreed **that** we would meet for coffee.

Other times, eliminating glue words can involve rewriting the sentence, which is the case with these sentences.

- **Before:** My friend doesn't really care for driving on the highway and because of that she is more than willing to drive around on side streets to get to where she needs to be.

**After:** My friend hates driving on the highway and would rather drive on side streets.

- **Before:** George would much rather work in the garden than to sit down on the sofa all day holding the remote and surfing the television.

**After:** George prefers to garden than to watch television.

- **Before:** We were having so much fun and everything was fine and dandy until several hours later when our mother came home and starting shouting, ranting a raving with her arms in the air, that the house was a mess and that we should be putting the clean laundry away and not be throwing clothes around all over the furniture and the floor.

**After:** We were having fun until Mother came home and scolded us for throwing clothes all over the place.

There are sentences that are complex in a way that is confusing to read, but most of the information is important. In these situations, breaking down the important points into individual sentences would be the effective way to go. Here are some samples:

- **Before:** Last week, while I was shopping at the mall on the east end of the city, my sister called me hysterically on the phone, shouting that her dog ran out the open door and was now missing, and she was in a panic because she had been around the block twice and could not find him.

**After:** Last week, my sister called me. She was in a panic because her dog was missing.

- **Before:** Judy was so overwhelmingly upset over the loss of her goldfish that for days she would get severely sick every time she ate something, to the point that she had to run to the bathroom to throw up.

**After:** Judy was upset over the loss of her goldfish for days. She would even get sick whenever she ate.

- **Before:** With regards to the situation at hand, I believe we would be in a better situation right now had we not been so lackadaisical with our actions at the beginning of this project, which now causes us to have to do more work under pressure that we really do not want to do or deal with, but, unfortunately, there is now way around that, so we simply must go forward and get these things done and learn from this experience for future projects.

**After:** Had we been on top of the project from the beginning, we would be in a better situation. The only thing to do now is move forward with the extra work. Let this be a lesson for future projects.

Lastly, I'll leave you with a list of common glue words to watch out for. The rest is up to you.

A	Every	Is	Should	This
About	For	It	Simply	To
An	From	Just	So	To there
And	Get	Like	Some	Up
Any	Getting to	Literally	Start to	Until
As though	Go	Main	Such	Very
Asked	Have	Make	Such as	Very much
Be	Herself	Much	Than	Was
Begin to	Himself	New	That	Well
But	If	Of	The	What
By	In	On	Then	When
Does	In order to	Over into	There	Will
Down	In regards to	Really	Therefore	With
Even	Into	Said	Think	