

Common Circumlocutions

Circumlocutions are roundabout expressions that add extra words without extra meaning. When reviewing your writing, see if any phrases can be replaced with *must*, *should*, *because*, *since*, *why*, *can*, *when*, *about*, *may*, *might*, or *could*. Clear, simple words. Use them.

Alternative	Circumlocution
Because, Since, Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the reason for • for the reason that • owing/due to the fact that • in light of the fact that • considering the fact that • on the grounds that • this is why
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on the occasion of • in a situation in which • under circumstances in which
About	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as regards • in reference to • with regard to • concerning the matter of • where _____ is concerned
Must, Should	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is crucial that • it is necessary that • there is a need/necessity for • it is important that • cannot be avoided
Can	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is able to • has the opportunity to • has the capacity for • has the ability to
May, Might, Could	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is possible that • there is a chance that • it could happen that • the possibility exists for

Note: A big thank you to The Writing Lab and The OWL at Purdue University. This document began with their list, which we have modified over many years.