

V. SUPERLATIVES AND THE SUPERFLUOUS

The purposes of composition are various; one purpose, for instance, is to make a record for the writer's own use, as in a diary. That does not involve responsibility to others. There is also the writing meant to influence opinion—to be persuasive and pleasing. With such writing we need not concern ourselves at this stage of our study. The prime purpose of technical writing is to be informative—to convey information; therefore it must be clear beyond the chance of misunderstanding.

Such clearness is impossible if meaningless or ill chosen words are sprinkled through the text. Discard the trivial phrases that are constantly at your elbow. Brush aside a host of vapid superlatives. Metternich exclaimed: "The superlative is the mark of fools". It is a false emphasis, like the underlining in a school-girl's letter. For example, the little word 'very' can be deleted nine times out of ten; it is an impediment to terse and perspicuous writing, as the multitudinous hand-baggage of the British tourist is to his travel. 'Very' supposes comparison. A mine with a 1000-ft. shaft is *very* deep to the scribe who writes from the Joplin district, in Missouri, but it seems a shallow hole to a man living at Calumet, Michigan. A vein that is 10 feet across may be considered *very* wide at Cripple Creek, Colorado, but it is only a 'stringer' to the miner at the Homestake, in South Dakota. Ore assaying \$20 in gold is *very* rich at Juneau, Alaska, where 10,000 tons of \$1 ore is crushed daily, but it is relatively low-grade to the pocket-miner at Alleghany, in California. It is all a matter of comparison; unless the reader knows your standards of depth, width, or richness, your 'very' has no significance.

"Where erosion was *very* rapid or oxidation *very* shallow"

is a statement that immediately raises the question: What is the writer's scale of rapidity or shallowness?

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle says:

It is **certain** that the Germans were **very** outclassed upon the three days of June which I allude to.

The "certain" and the "very" suggest exaggeration. An adverb, such as 'greatly', has been omitted before "outclassed". He misplaced "to"; for he meant "the three days in June to which I allude".

After William T. Tilden had won the world's championship in tennis at Wimbledon, a writer in the London 'Times' remarked:

Tilden is a **very** good player **indeed**.

Cela va sans dire. One can hardly imagine a more unnecessary remark apropos of that subject at that place and at that time. It was as much to the point as it would be to say that bread is excellent food or that Shakespeare was a skilful writer.

The use of 'very' may defeat its purpose. Some words, like 'perfect' and 'unique', can not be qualified. If a thing be 'perfect', a 'very' can not make it more so. To say that a machine "makes a *very* perfect separation of the slime from the sand" is tantamount to saying that it makes an "almost perfect", which is an 'imperfect', separation. A perfect separation is 100%, which is the limit to that kind of perfection.

'Unique' is a word that is immune from qualification.

The manager of the Mount Boppy refers to **one of the most** unique sections of the mine.

Here the superlatives smother each other. If several such "sections" existed in the mine, not one of them was unique. The one first disclosed may have been unique; the second killed the uniqueness of it.

A **rather** unique suggestion

A **very** unique tool is illustrated in Fig. 10.

The process is **somewhat** unique.

A **very** unique child, said I.

Each of these four quotations contains a superfluous adverb.

If a thing be unique, that sufficeth. Similarly, such words as 'obvious', 'vertical', 'straight', 'moral', and 'honest' are not intensified by using an adverb; they are weakened. "A *very* vertical shaft" and "a *perfectly* straight adit" suggest the gilding of refined gold.

The vein is **very** vertical.

Constructing a tramway in a **perfectly** straight line . . .

A straight line is the perfection of straightness.

It is **very** obvious that the mine is worth the price asked.

It is obvious or it is not; it can neither be more obvious nor almost obvious. From the unnecessary emphasis one may suspect that it was not at all obvious that the mine was worth the price.

This reagent is **very** inexpensive.

A thing that is "very inexpensive" should be gratuitous.

The present-day prospector will be **entirely** extinct if the new mining law is passed.

To be 'extinct' is to be 'quenched' or 'extinguished'; it is a word that can not be intensified, that is, it is strongest when standing alone.

Gun-cotton is pressed into the requisite form in a wet state, in which condition it is **very** safe to handle.

The "very" weakens "safe", because the over-emphasis raises a doubt.

This scraper does not work **very** well in coarse material.

Probably he meant that it worked badly in such material.

Lord Roberts is a **very** honest man.

So said the 'Westminster Gazette'. This suggests that perhaps politically his honesty was considered not above suspicion.

Charles E. Hughes is **exceedingly** honest, **extremely** moral, but not in the least progressive.

Here the superlatives sap the strength of the sentence, and reduce it to mere verbiage.

The formation of the insoluble lime tungstate is **very** rare and has only been observed in one or two instances.

This statement is weakened by false emphasis. "The formation of the insoluble tungstate of lime is rare." That tells the story.*

These remarks do not refer to idiomatic phrases such as: "In *very* truth, he is a man". Idiomatic phrases are a law unto themselves. Here 'very' is an adjective; as also in "the *very* roots of human life". 'Very' makes a strong adjective, but a weak adverb. I would add this: If you employ 'very' infrequently, you will find it very useful on occasion.

He uses a solution of **about 2%** cyanide, which is **perhaps** sufficiently strong.

This does not provoke confidence in the accuracy of the writer's metallurgical method; evidently he ought to make some experiments with a view to removing his own doubts concerning the right proportion of cyanide.

It required only a **very limited number** of [few] bulkheads to complete the reservoir.

If he knows what he is talking about, he ought to state the number; what he says is that a 'few' were needed, but other engineers might have different ideas as to the fewness.

'Limited' is used carelessly as a synonym for 'small', 'scant', and 'slight'.

He has a **limited** [an insufficient] knowledge of cyanidation.

* It is customary to write 'lime tungstate', but as the insolubility refers to the tungstate rather than to the lime, I have written "tungstate of lime".

Anybody's knowledge of anything is limited.

The fire-wood was bought at the **limited** [low] price of \$4 per cord.

He based his confidence on a **limited** [slight] acquaintance with the standard textbooks.

Even a word like 'great' has little meaning if worked to death. A newspaper reporter, describing the submarine 'Deutschland', said:

The **great** hull has been pressed out of one sheet of steel. The only break in the smooth contour is at the bow where her **great** anchors hang. But even here it is hardly a break, for the anchors fit snugly into **great** pockets that still maintain the roundness of the hull. The conning tower rises like the hump of a camel in the **great** boat's back.

The Patent department is one of **great** national importance.

If it be of "national" importance, it must be "great". The significant word is "national", and the attaching of "great" belittles it.

'Small' is over-worked as well as 'great'; for example:

When a **small** particle of gold is ejected from the mortar-box of a stamp-mill . . .

By mixing a few **small** particles of clean gold with some **small** particles of quartz . . .

A 'particle' is a minute portion of matter, the termination '-icle' or '-cule' (as in 'animalcule') representing the Latin diminutive. The only way further to indicate the minuteness of the particle is to state the size of it; "small" adds nothing to the meaning.

The same criticism applies to "fine" in the following:

A **fine** slime that is thickened in Dorr classifiers . . .

'Most' is another word much over-worked and likely to hinder the flow of thought, as water is retarded by a riffle.

The ore deposit is **most** extraordinary.

This can be done **most** effectually in one way only.

In both quotations the 'most' should be deleted.

'Doubtless', 'without doubt', and 'undoubtedly' are inter-

jected in a careless way as an equivalent for 'perhaps' or 'probably', instead of being held to their true significance.

Doubtless the vein will persist in depth.

The men, **without doubt**, are honest in their intentions, but their methods are most objectionable.

'Certain' is a word of uncertain meaning.

A **certain** kind of oil is necessary in the flotation process.

Here 'certain' is used as a synonym for 'specific', but it would be better to specify what kind of oil is required. Delete 'certain' and state whether it be pine-oil, wood-creosote, or olive-oil, for example.

These gates are opened to a width giving a **certain** [fixed or uniform] number of tons per hour.

Tuberculosis occurs to a **certain** extent among the miners.

In this example 'certain' either means nothing or it implies uncertainty.

There is a tendency to limit the profit to a **certain** [fixed] percentage of the capital employed.

To keep the cost **within certain limits** [to a fixed limit] . . .

Avoid the habitual use of 'certain', so that when you do employ it there will be no uncertainty as to your meaning.

'Certainly', like its corresponding adjective, is another bluff word; fuller of sound than of significance. Here is a quotation from the New York 'Annalist':

Certainly, Dr. Jastrow's article is stimulating to thought and can be read with interest by British bankers, remarks this authority. But one finds few to accept his conclusions as a whole. **Certainly** American banking enterprise is finding an outlet in South America; **certainly**, also, America's new banking system should help New York to take an increasing share in international finance; **certainly**, also, British banks in South America will need all their skill and energy in the future.

These four 'certainlys', one of which might be emphatic whereas the four cancel one another, are like the coughs of a self-conscious speaker. The addition, twice, of 'also' increases the clumsiness of the performance.

'Considerable' is a woolly word, usually out of place in a technical statement.

Considerable [numerous] data of this kind are given by Lewis and Shorter.

Considerable [deep] oxidation explains the absence of sulphides.

A considerable amount of ore was sent to custom-mills before the company built its own mill.

Some, even approximate, figure should replace "considerable", which depends for its value upon the writer's—and the reader's—notion of what is a large tonnage.

The plans for a plant of any considerable magnitude are not warranted.

Delete "considerable", and substitute a phrase that is more specific. Is it the cost that is the obstacle or the lack of sufficient ore? Then write either "The plans for an expensive plant are not warranted by the funds available" or "The plans for a plant of large capacity are not warranted by the tonnage of ore assured".

'Some', like 'considerable', is used in a loose, and usually meaningless, way.

Scotland produced some 3,500,000 tons of oil-shale.

This mine has yielded some 100,000 oz. of gold.

This process has met with some considerable success in the treatment of antimonial gold ores.

In two of these quotations "some" is redundant; it means 'about' or 'approximately', and that is suggested sufficiently by the round figures. The last one is so woolly in texture as to be ludicrous.

'More or less' is another phrase it is well to discard in technical writing, which aims to be precise.

The ore has been subjected to more or less oxidation.

The workmen are more or less inclined to resent the order.

Delete 'more or less' in these examples.

The application of more or less complicated formulas is superfluous.

The impression that the bases of calculation are more or less certain-ties [safe].

'More or less' is rarely needed, least of all in a discussion of accurate methods of appraisal.

Leaving no record other than scanty ruins, more or less perfectly [partly] entombed in the drifting sand-dunes [sand].

Do not imagine that the interlarding of qualifying phrases like 'more or less', 'to a greater or less extent', or even adverbs like 'about' and 'approximately', adds to the accuracy of your information or to the precision of your statement.

Crystals penetrated to a greater or less extent the substance of rock fragments.

The spaces between have been more or less completely filled by cementing materials.

Ore-shoots are likely to be associated to a greater or less degree with fissures.

These three quotations come from the same technical article, written by a geologist that mistook the decoration for the substance of scientific truth.

'Approximate' and 'approximately' are used too often as an elegant variation from 'about'.

He is approximately ninety years old.

The "ninety" is an evident approximation.

The mine is approximately six miles from the town.

The approximate distance is about four miles.

The "four" is an approximation, otherwise a fraction would be used, such as $3\frac{3}{4}$ or $4\frac{1}{4}$. The distance will depend on the road one takes; moreover, in practical life, the exact distance is less important than the condition of the road; a four-mile haul over a good road is less expensive than a two-mile haul over a bad one. Be accurate; do not affect it.

'Probably', 'perhaps', 'about', and 'rather' are sprinkled in the sentences of engineers with the idea apparently of indicating carefulness of statement, but care is shown better by precision than by studied moderation of language.

A sampling plant was built perhaps five years ago.

Ascertain when the plant was built and give the date.

The lode is **probably** about ten feet wide.

Measure the lode and give its average width, as well as you can. All such averages are subject to a reasonable discount; the insertion of 'probably' and 'about' will not avail if the average width of the lode should prove to be six feet.

'Quite' is used as a synonym for 'very', when 'very' would be superfluous; it is also used as a moderator, like 'somewhat' and 'rather'. Our British friends use it lavishly:

The mine is said to be **quite** rich.

The manager is reported to be **quite** a competent man.

The pump operates **quite** well enough for the purpose.

In all of these "quite" is redundant. If used at all, it should be employed in its true sense of 'completely', 'entirely', 'to the utmost extent', 'nothing short of', 'absolutely', as in:

The evidence is **quite** conclusive.

The building of the mill was not **quite** finished.

This was a fine clay **quite** free from sand.

'Rather' is another ineffective word when used as an adverb.

The quartz is **rather** hard and the walls are **very** straight.

Delete the words indicated. Likewise in the two following quotations:

The movement of minerals shows a **rather** remarkable concentration.

This is **more** especially true of the smaller veins.

'Present' and 'presence' are usually redundant; so are 'found to be' and 'known to be'.

The metallic minerals **present** in the ore . . .

The **presence** of other sulphides was [were] noted in this ore.

In most of these veins lead is the most important mineral **present**.

The refractory minerals, **when present**, are barite and sphalerite.

The formation, **where present**, **varies** [ranges] from a few [feet] to 200 feet thick [in thickness].

The sandstone is **known to be** jointed in places.

In this region the deposits are **found to be** low-grade.

The limestone is **found** exposed on the western slope.

In the foregoing eight examples the words in **bold-face type** are superfluous. On the other hand, as Mr. Wood * points out, such phrases may be omitted improperly where they are required to complete the sense of a statement, as in:

The rich ore, when examined closely, consists [is seen to consist] of fine-grained drusy quartz.

Under the microscope the grains of sand are [seen to be] completely coated with iron.

'Occur' is a vapid word.

Alluvial deposits **occurring** at the bottom of valleys are always worked in this way.

The bottom of a valley is a logical place for an alluvial deposit. Delete "occurring".

This phenomenon **occurring** within the atom is not affected by any chemical or physical agencies that have yet been applied from without.

A 'phenomenon' is an appearance; it is seen or detected by sight. Substitute 'as observed' for "occurring".

Local economic conditions were favorable for a strike to **occur**.

Delete "to occur".

The section of the mine in which the fire **occurred** was principally worked by top-slicing.

"The part of the mine on fire was worked principally by top-slicing."

'The fact that' is employed by sundry writers for the purpose, apparently, of adding to the impressiveness of their remarks.

Notwithstanding [although] the fact that its resonant din was not permitted within the walls of Solomon's temple, this humble tool was indispensably [?] associated with some of the noblest works of antiquity.

He is referring to the hammer.

Due to the fact that the ore is considered high-grade [; therefore] it is not proposed to build a concentrating mill.

* 'Suggestions to Authors', by George McLane Wood, p. 86.

Delete the first five words and insert 'therefore' as shown, or re-arrange thus: "Owing to the high grade of the ore it will be unnecessary to concentrate before smelting".

'Fact' is a word much over-worked, as in

I am aware of the fact that . . .

The fact that the ore is wet makes it difficult to handle.

In the first quotation, the words marked can be omitted to advantage. In the second, it is the wetness of the ore, not the fact, that causes trouble. The use of the word 'fact' does not emphasize or strengthen, as seems to be imagined. 'Fact' means something that has happened; in most cases in which it is used properly we might better say, not

"The fact is, I had an idea that . . .

But, preferably,

"The truth is, I had an idea that . . .

"Indeed, I had an idea that . . .

The lack of machinery in Mexico made necessary the use of other forms of power—man-power and mule-power.

The "powers" after "man" and "mule" are redundant; they detract from the simplicity and force of the statement.

The recovery was from 80% to 90% of the gold contents of [in] the slime.

Sundry colloquial phrases, of a childish character, are allowed to creep into serious writing.

Living as he did in Glasgow, he understood the Scotch.

Other important outbreaks were the several fires which took place in the Holbrook mine.

These mines are noted for the pioneer work in [the] electrolytic production of zinc done there.

The work of fire-fighting is rendered hazardous owing to [by] the large amount of caving and air-blasts which take place.

The reason that they do not is because of the tacit agreement observed by the members of the union.

The lack of space led to the substitution of boxes for barrels where the latter had been generally used.

Delete the words indicated.

How could one substitute boxes for barrels if barrels had not been in use?

'Et cetera' or 'etc.' is improper after 'for example', or 'such as'.

The ore contains various sulphides, such as galena, blende, pyrrhotite, etc.

Delete "etc." and insert 'and' before "pyrrhotite".

After the copper sulphides, such as chalcocite and chalcopyrite, etc., are reduced to a fine state of comminution . . .

The "etc." is not wanted. He had in mind these two sulphides, and no others. The "etc." suggests that he had something up his sleeve.

This silly little abbreviation is also used to round a statement or to make it seem more inclusive, thus:

Telluride ore is found in the Contention, Old Judge, Telegraph, Sarah Jane, etc.

He had mentioned all the mines in which, so far as he knew, telluride ore had been found. The "etc." was a mere flourish. It reminds one of items in the social column of a local newspaper, such as:

Mrs. Ebenezer J. Judkins gave an elegant dinner party, her guests being Mr. and Mrs. Algernon H. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Adams Wheelock Brown, and others.

No one else was present, but it sounded fine and large to add "and others".

. . . depending upon the season of the year [and] time of day, etc.

Deposits of this type occur in several mines, for example, the Telegraph, Commercial, [and] Old Jordan, etc.

The gangue consisted of quartz, etc. [and other minerals].

Here "etc." is used merely to hide sloth or ignorance.

The last example might be changed to: "The gangue consisted chiefly of quartz".

Sir Clifford Allbutt * writes: "I do not say that 'etc.' is

* 'Notes on the Composition of Scientific Papers', second edition, pp. 158-159.

not to be used, but its use should be rare, and chiefly for the omission of parts of quotations and the like. When used by the author to eke out his own matter or to save himself trouble, the reader is disposed to exclaim, 'If you have anything more to say, pray say it; if not, finish your sentence properly; 'etc.' conveys no meaning at all''.

The assay-results showed discrepancies; of course, some of these were inevitable, because in an ore of this kind it is unlikely, of course, that a uniform average would be shown.

'Of course' is a literary hiccup. Speakers use it when striving to gain time in their search for an idea. It should be used sparingly in serious writing.

'However', 'therefore', 'nevertheless', 'moreover', and similar adverbial connectives should be used sparingly. They are better placed parenthetically within the sentence than at the beginning.

However, the ore is more refractory than was supposed.

"The ore however is more refractory than was supposed".

Therefore it is impossible to come to any other conclusion.

"It is impossible therefore to come to any other conclusion."

The British have a way of disarming criticism by using qualifying words and phrases like 'somewhat', 'on the whole', 'be this as it may', 'we venture to conclude'. Gracious as these may be in some forms of expression they should be excluded from technical writing, which is best when most explicit and least upholstered.

The working costs have not been abnormally high, running, as they have done, only a trifle in excess of the average of the whole of the Witwatersrand.

The statement is meant to disarm criticism by its gentle verbiage.

A somewhat important development is announced from El Oro.

It is rather rare to see such a rich vein.

This "orgy of moderation", as it has been termed, is almost a disease among our British friends; it has grown from their

love for "the emphasis of under-statement", as Thomas Hardy calls it. British technical writers appear to shy at plain statements of fact as if it were bad form to be explicit. This fault, however, is not unknown in America. The editor of the 'Saturday Evening Post' says:

That war, on the whole, lowers the morale of the personnel is possible.

He tries to give dignity to an obvious platitude by inserting a qualifying phrase.

The average run of ore contained about 30% silica, more or less.

He must have been decidedly uncertain about it, for he protects his 30% both fore and aft.

Many other examples of redundant * words and phrases can be cited, for the careless writer not only uses the wrong words, but seems unable to exclude a host of mere diluents, so that between the wrong and the superfluous it becomes as difficult to trace his meaning as to follow a mountain stream when it meanders through a morass.

In an area which [that] had previously been stoped . . .

It could not have been stoped otherwise than "previously".

Throughout the whole of the Carboniferous period . . .

They are both alike.

This is like the common colloquial reference to "two twins".

The problem is a difficult one.

Equally as well.

The rock is of a brown color.

The orebodies are of a large size.

The color of the blende is a yellowish brown.

At its base the formation lies in a remarkably even surface of granite.

This lies on the south side of the line of the fault.

"This lies south of the fault." As Mr. Wood, from whom I take several of my examples, says:† "Introductory phrases

* 'Redundant' is derived, through the French, from the Latin *redundare*, to overflow.

† 'Suggestions to Authors', p. 89.

like 'It may be said that', 'It might be stated that', 'Concerning this matter it may be borne in mind that', 'In this connection the statement may be made that', 'With respect to the occurrence of these ores it has been found that', perhaps intended to 'break it gently' to the reader, are generally superfluous or can be replaced by single words, as in the following sentence: '*There can be little doubt that this fissure is [doubtless] the prolongation of a fault of the same character as the one [like that] already described*'".

Avoid tautology,* which means the saying of the same thing twice in different words.

He spoke in a **monotonous** tone [monotone].

Records were started with this **ultimate** end in view.

He cannot return home before the **final** completion of the mill.

To a literary person this is as nauseating as the spreading of jam on cake, and cream on top of both. Obviously the writers of the above excerpts did not know or realize that 'ultimate' comes from a Latin word meaning 'last', and that 'completion' carries the idea of finality.

Some things are understood from the terms employed; avoid redundancies such as

This oil will serve **equally** as well as oleic acid.

The railway should be finished in nine months **time**.

Three hours of **time** are required for the treatment.

During the summer **months** the machinery will be transported to the railway station or river port nearest the mine.

One might question "railway-station" and "river-port", because either 'railway' and 'river' or 'station' and 'port' might suffice, but I think the writer is justified in using his couples in order to make his meaning clear.

We have completed a **rather** unique shaft; the work was **practically** completed in a little more than five months **time**.

This reminds me of the miner that asked the waiter to bring him some of "that damned *fromage de Brie* cheese", and of a

* From the Greek *ταὐτο*, same, and *λόγος*, word.

San Francisco newspaper proprietor that spoke of "the *tout ensemble* of the whole".

The mill is three miles **distant** from the mine.

The peak is 12,750 ft. **high** above sea-level.

It is best to use zinc sheets of two feet by three feet **in size**.

In the summer time the cost of hauling is reduced considerably.

The tunnel will cut the vein 128 metres below the outcrop **on the surface**.

An outcrop is essentially **surficial**.

In ordinary **quicksilver** amalgamation the flakes of platinum float on the surface.

An amalgam is an alloy of mercury with another metal; amalgamation involves the use of quicksilver. I am reminded of an announcement appearing in an evening paper, in which it was stated that the lady who had just become Duchess of Westminster had "one son, a boy"; and the Duke himself had "two daughters, both girls".

Joseph P. Tumulty in his Wilson book says:

I was **profoundly** and **deeply** disappointed at the apparent hesitant, uncertain attitude of the Governor-elect.

'Profoundly' and 'deeply' mean the same; one comes from the Latin and the other from Old English. As applied to "attitude", the two adjectives "hesitant" and "uncertain" mean much the same. All that he meant to say was:

"I was deeply disappointed at the apparent hesitation of the Governor-elect."

Another writer says:

There are other **adverse** conditions **militating** against the expansion of the industry.

To militate is to fight against a thing, which thing becomes an adversary, or the exponent of an adverse condition.

The rectangular **shaped** package

The teeth of files are **very** brittle and easily broken, especially when the files are new. For this reason files should not be **promiscuously** mixed with other tools.

The "very" is redundant and the "promiscuously" is

tautological. 'Promiscuous' means of mixed composition; it comes from the Latin *miscere*, to mix.

Here are a few more examples of redundancy:

It is barely 40 years ago since the process was first introduced.

Moreover, too, we have reason to feel certain that . . .

Had another process been used, who knows but that the mines might not have paid dividends until today.

The figures are absolutely accurate.

They could not be more than "accurate".

Together with the bullion that some of the mines actually produced . . .

So firm was the foundation that no vibration at all could be noticed.

The "at all" merely raises a doubt; "methinks he doth protest too much".

When used alone it would give just as good results.

Here also the excess of emphasis is unconvincing.

Under such conditions it is quite impossible to obtain trustworthy results.

If it be "impossible", it can not be done. "Quite" is a childish frill; it is used much by the British, particularly in conversation; it is not a literary adverb.

In Russia the infant mortality is something enormous.

The ship's rolling, as she burns the coals out, is something appalling.

The variation in the results obtained . . .

The most important improvement made was to adopt a second pulley.

Minor fluctuations are likely to occur in such a plant from time to time.

The short revolving furnace would permit a longer treatment time than could be obtained by the stack furnace alone.

The effect was exactly the opposite to that sought and expected.

Here are some tautologies:

England has had to budge from her position of splendid but lonely isolation.

These boats can be used either on the ocean or on inland lakes.

This was confirmed by the surrounding circumstances.

Circum means 'around'.

He enjoys the universal esteem of all men.

If Germany should **again** regain her liberty of action . . .
It was **frequently** his wont to ride to the mine before breakfast.
With the **consequent** result that the price fell rapidly . . .

All results are **consequential**.

To ensure effective **leaching treatment** . . .
This is an important consideration in **cyanidation treatment**.

Leaching is a method of treating an ore; so is **cyanidation**.

The **minimum exit opening** is three inches.

An **exit** is an opening or passage by which something goes out.

The arrival of an **anniversary date** in the life of such person . . .

An **anniversary** marks the yearly return of a given date.

In **calcareous materials lime** predominates.

"**Calcareous**" means 'of, or containing, **lime**'.

These young men died that the dominion of right and reason should be **more** firmly established among men.

The comparative is weaker than the positive. If "**more**" be omitted, the statement has the ring of success; as it is, the suggestion is that "the dominion of right and reason" was *not* firmly established and that they died to support a tottering structure.

The secret of a vigorous style is the rejection of the superfluous word.

Permit me to quote Henry James again; he was addressing students—young women of the highest type—when he said: "I am asking you to take it from me, as the very moral of these remarks, that the way we say a thing, or fail to say it—fail to learn to say it—has an importance in life that it is impossible to overstate—a far-reaching importance, as the very hinge of the relation of man to man".

Henry James spoke thus "in those days when his sentence was a straight young thing that could run where it liked, instead of a delicate creature swathed in relative clauses as an invalid in shawls".*

* Rebecca West.