# <u>Tip #7</u> NEGATIVES→AFFIRMATIVES



### **Basic Guidelines**

Using negative forms in English, and perhaps any language, requires some thought to optimize their power. The most common negative words used in English are "not" and "no".. However, these rather small words (only two or three letters) are often overlooked by readers all the more because it is so small and so commonly used.

Virtually every sentence contains function words (those that describe relationships between/among words) and content words (the "meat" of your message).

Example	lt is	<u>not</u> nece	ssary for	Joe to fir	hish the exper	iment by Fric	day.
Function words	It is		for	to	the	by.	
Content words		<u>not</u> nece	ssary	Joe fir	nish exper	iment Fric	day.

If the reader forgets or ignores the "not" in this sentence for any reason whatsoever, then the reader will likely internalize and understand the wrong meaning on a more subconscious level:

#### Possible (subconscious) Misinterpretation

Content words <u>necessary</u> Joe finish experiment Friday.
--

The probability that a reader (and an audience too!) will likely misinterpret the intended meaning often increases when "not" is used. Speed reading curricula often caution readers to slow down, or even stop, when encountering "not"; thus, breaking the reader's reading rhythm and in effect wasting some of the reader's time and "intellectual" energy.

A writing (speaking) style that embeds the negative concept in a "positive-looking" word or phrase is generally more effective, and generally improves the probability of better understanding.

What to do:

- use negative prefixes more often and carefully
- embed negatives into a positive-looking "affirmative" words such as verbs, adverbs, and others
- 1. ORIGINAL

The cycle numbers of the 2nd PCR were <u>not much</u> affected. (11)

2. REVISED: ADJECTIVE

The cycle numbers of the 2nd PCR were <u>little</u> affected. (10)

# 2. ORIGINAL

Currently, individuals are well aware of the significance of sustainability but they <u>do not have</u> sufficient governmental support or a social guideline to fully turn these intangible concepts into action and incorporate them into their daily lifestyles. (38)

# 3. ORIGINAL

Individual sea turtles with a grey background in the table were <u>not</u> <u>used in</u> the analysis due to failure of retrieving data-logger. (22)

#### 2. REVISED: VERB

Currently, individuals are well aware of the significance of sustainability but they <u>lack</u> sufficient governmental sup- port or a social guideline to fully turn these intangible concepts into action and incorporate them into their daily lifestyles. (36)

#### 3. REVISED: BETTER VERB CHOICE

Individual sea turtles with a grey background in the table were <u>omitted</u> <u>from</u> the analysis due to failure of retrieving data-logger. (21)

Individual sea turtles with a grey background in the table were <u>excluded from</u> the analysis due to failure of retrieving data-logger. (21)

### 4. Original

When those conditions <u>do not</u> meet the requirement, cured CFRP structures generally <u>do not have</u> sufficient strength. (17)

#### 4. REVISED: VERB/ADJECTIVE

When those conditions <u>fail to</u> meet requirements, cured CFRP structures generally have <u>in</u>sufficient strength. (14)

When those conditions <u>fail to</u> meet requirements, cured CFRP structures generally <u>lack</u> sufficient strength. (14)

5. <u>Original</u>

The cause of the Big Bang is still <u>not</u> <u>known</u>. (10) 5. REVISED: ADJECTIVE VERB

The cause of the Big Bang is still <u>un</u>known. (9)

The cause of the Big Bang <u>remains</u> <u>un</u>known. (8)

### 6. ORIGINAL

However,	det	ailed	ma	nager	ment
guidelines	or	metho	ds	are	<u>not</u>
<u>developed</u> .	(9)				

6. REVISED: ADJECTIVE/OTHER

However, detailed management guidelines or methods are <u>un</u>developed. (8)

However, detailed management guidelines or methods <u>remain</u> undeveloped. (8)

However, detailed management guidelines or methods are <u>yet to be</u> developed. (11)

#### COMMENTS

"... yet to be ..." is an older, more formal phrase and is more positive-looking than "not yet". "... yet..." is almost always followed by an infinitive (不定詞) in such instances.

# 7. ORIGINAL

Two individual sea turtles were <u>not</u> <u>used in</u> the analysis due to failure of retrieving data-logger. (16) 7. REVISED: VERB

Two individual sea turtles were <u>omitted from</u> the analysis due to failure of retrieving data-logger. (15)

Two individual sea turtles were <u>excluded from</u> the analysis due to failure of retrieving data-logger. (15)

8. ORIGINAL

The cell was <u>so</u> scarred <u>that</u> it is was <u>not</u> recognizable. (11)

Negative included in the adverb "too"

Negative included in the preposition "beyond"

#### 8. REVISED: ADVERB/PREPOSITION

The cell was so scarred it that is was <u>un</u>recognizable. (10)

The cell was <u>too</u> scarred <u>to</u> recognize. (7)

The cell was scarred <u>beyond</u> <u>recognition</u>. (6)  $\star$  The following lists are also part of the sections on Negatives.  $\star$ 

more than 550 possible combinations UN-(Old English origin) meanings: not, opposite to, contrary to not affected unaffected not anticipated unanticipated not bound unbound not calculated uncalculated not certain uncertain not contaminated uncontaminated not determined undetermined not founded unfounded not important unimportant not knowingly unknowingly not likely unlikely not mitigated unmitigated not perturbed unperturbed not professional unprofessional not stratified unstratified not written unwritten

Common Negative Frenzes	百足按與記

more than 1 <u>meanings</u> :	30 possible combinations (Greek/Latin origin) not, without	IN-
not accessible	2	inaccessible
not accurate		inaccurate
not coherent		incoherent
not direct		indirect
not efficient		inefficient
not evitable		inevitable
not operable		inoperable
not validate		invalidate

Common Negative Prefixes 否定接頭語

few possible combinations (1 <sup>st</sup> letter is "r") meanings: not, without	IR-
not rational	irrational
not regular	irregular
not religious	irreligious
not religious	incligious
not responsible	irresponsible
not reversible	irreversible
not revocable	irrevocable
not rotational	irrotational

few possible combinations		IL-
	(1 <sup>st</sup> letter is "I")	
<u>meanings</u> :	not, without	
not legal		illegal
not logical		illogical

more than 50 possible combinations <u>meanings</u> : not, remove, expel	DIS-
not association	dissociation
not continuous	discontinuous
not order	disorder
not satisfied	dissatisfied
not similar	dissimilar

unlimited possible combinations NON-(makes 2 distinct groups) <u>meanings</u>: not, absent

not combustible	noncombustible
not competitive	noncompetitive
not conformity	nonconformity
not linear	nonlinear
not polar	nonpolar
not rigid	nonrigid

★ Always consult a collegiate or unabridged dictionary to verify the nuances of words before using them in your final draft.

Subtle, yet important differences in nuance may arise due to the form of the word such as which negative prefix to choose.

unsatisfied vs. dissatisfied

He was <u>not</u> satisfied with his job, but he tolerated the conditions because he has a large family and no company would likely hire him at his age.

He was <u>not</u> satisfied with his job, so he left the company, went back to school, got a degree in systems engineering and now he has a new job at twice the pay. He <u>un</u>satisfied with his job, but he tolerated the conditions because he has a large family and no company would likely hire him at his age.

(no action taken to obtain the desired improvement in working conditions)

He was <u>dis</u>satisfied with his job, so he left the company, went back to school, got a degree in systems engineering and now he has a new job at twice the pay.

(no action taken to obtain the desired improvement in working conditions)

Action Verbs	(動詞)
not accept	reject
not admit	deny
not admit directly	contradict
not agree to do something	refuse
not allow	prevent
not allow inside/outside	bar
not arm	disarm
not believe	disbelieve
not consider	ignore
not continue	discontinue
not do (something)	avoid
not encourage	discourage
not have	lack
not include (accidental)	omit
not include (on purpose)	exclude

not make possible (make impossible)	preclude
not many	few
not permit	forbid
not permit	prohibit
not remember	forget
not succeed	fail
not sure about	doubt

# Adverbs (副詞)

not often	seldom
so <u>X</u> that <u>cannot V</u>	too <u>X</u> to <u>V</u>

Prepositions	(前置詞)
<u>with no</u> care	careless
unable to <u>remember</u>	beyond my memory.
He did <u>not keep</u> his research notes.	He <u>threw</u> his research notes <u>away</u> .
<u>not in</u> stock	<u>out of</u> stock
<u>have no</u> disease	free from disease
<u>have no</u> disease	free from disease

★ Always consult a collegiate or unabridged dictionary to verify the nuances of words before using them in your final draft.