Concision

Definition: The practice of minimizing words in a sentence in order to convey an idea clearly.

Rules:

1. Avoid repeated language and redundant information
   - Example: In the event that I cannot learn to edit my own writing, my editors will in the not too distant future grow tired.
   - Revision: If I can’t learn to edit my own writing, my editors will help anyway.

2. Remove empty or unnecessary words
   - Example: Their software programs demonstrated and showed that many companies and businesses could benefit and profit from eliminating unnecessary overhead and expenses.
   - Revision: Their software showed that companies could profit from eliminating unnecessary overhead.

3. Take out obvious information
   - Example: When predators hunt animals, their primary responses are to flee or fight.
   - Revision: When hunted, animals’ responses are to flee or fight.

4. Change passive sentence to active voice
   - Example: An accident was gotten into when a dog was hit by my car.
   - Revision: I got into an accident when I hit a dog with my car.

5. Use your vocabulary – replace several vague words with one or two specific ones.
   - a. Example: The politician talked about several of the merits of after-school programs in his speech
   - b. Revision: The politician touted after-school programs in his speech.

6. Combine sentences
   - Example: Ludwig’s castles are an astounding marriage of beauty and madness. By his death, he had commissioned three castles.
   - Revision: Ludwig’s three castles are an astounding marriage of beauty and madness.

Tips:

- Avoid repeated ideas or filler language in a sentence.
- Remove words that have no meaning. Aim to use straightforward and minimalistic diction.
- Take out the excess language but not important details.
- Simplify the idea without looking at the words.

Choppiness

**Definition:** The use of short sentences back to back. The effect is that language shifts and changes irregularly and breaks paper organization and rhythm.

**Rules:**

1. **Identify connections between ideas by combining sentences**
   
   - Example: She took dance classes. She had no natural grace or sense of rhythm. She eventually gave up the idea of becoming a dancer.
   
   - Revision: She took dance classes, but she had no natural grace or sense of rhythm, so she eventually gave up the idea of becoming a dancer.

2. **Join together actions by the same agent/subject**
   
   - Example: Her name is Sam. She is 12. She likes candy. She especially likes sour patch kids.
   
   - Revision: Twelve-year-old Sam likes sour patch kids candy.

3. **Use appositives between double commas**
   
   - Example: Jesse Ventura has denied an interest in running for the senate. Ventura is the former governor of Minnesota.
   
   - Revision: Jesse Ventura, the former governor of Minnesota, has denied an interest in running for the senate.

4. **Turn minor details into adjectives.**
   
   - Example: The boy asked his father a question. The boy is five years old. The question was about death.
   
   - Revision: The five-year-old boy asked his father a question about death.

5. **Revise the syntax of the sentence**
   
   - Example: The project was launched last month after we got really great funding from many sources.
   
   - Revision: Once funding was secured, the project was launched.

**Tips:**

- Combine choppy sentences into one or two longer ideas.
- Avoid choppy language, unless the writing genre asks for it.
- Do not attach too many clauses to one sentence.
- Aim for clarity by simplifying the idea.
- Vary the lengths of your sentences so that they are not all the same number of words.

http://writing.umn.edu/sws/assets/pdf/quicktips/choppysentences.pdf